



New York State Teacher Certification Exams

Scoring and Interpretation

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New York State Teacher Certification Exams: Scoring

The New York State Teacher Certification Examinations are standardized tests on a variety of education subjects. In terms of test design, the exams can be broken into two groups; the Educating All Students (EAS) test and the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST) are newly developed and were implemented in 2014, while the Multi-Subject Tests (MST), Content Specialty Tests (CST), Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST), and Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written (ATS-W) share an earlier design.

The newly designed exams (EAS and ALST) have scores ranging between 400 and 600, with a minimum passing score of 520; candidates who score 520 or higher pass, while those who score lower than 520 do not.

The remaining exams (MST, CST, LAST, and ATS-W) have scores ranging between 100 and 300, with a minimum passing score of 220; candidates who score 220 or higher pass, while those who score lower than 220 do not.

The following documents provide additional information on the scoring of the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations, and more information can be found at <http://www.nystce.nesinc.com/>.



New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™

Understanding Candidate Score Reports

Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), Educating All Students (EAS),
Revised (Sept. 2013) School Building Leader (SBL)

Candidates who take the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™ (NYSTCE®) can view their score reports as PDF documents on the Internet and may also elect to have them sent via email. The score report includes information regarding the candidate's Pass/Did Not Pass status for the test, the total test score, and additional performance information, if applicable. An individual's test scores are reported to the candidate, the New York State Education Department, and the institution that the candidate indicated during registration, unless the candidate notified Evaluation Systems in writing not to release scores to that institution.

Interpreting the Total Test Scores

The results for each of these NYSTCE tests are reported as a score in the range from 400 to 600. The minimum passing score for each test is 520. A candidate with a total test score of 520 or above passes the test. A candidate with a total test score below 520 does not pass the test. The minimum passing score was established by the New York State Commissioner of Education, with input from New York State educators. The total test score is based on the *total* number of selected-response test questions answered correctly and on the score(s) for any constructed-response assignment(s) on the test. Each selected-response question counts the same toward the total score. There is no penalty for wrong answers.

Interpreting Detailed Performance Information

Performance indices are provided for the selected-response and constructed-response components of the ALST and Revised (Sept. 2013) SBL examinations. This information is descriptive only and may help assess strengths and identify areas where additional preparation may be necessary. There is no "passing" score associated with individual test components.

Performance Index Definitions

- ++++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is well above the level represented by the minimum passing score.
- +++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is just at or above the level represented by the minimum passing score.
- ++ Performance on the skills and knowledge is just below the level represented by the minimum passing score.
- +

Responses to the Constructed-Response Written Assignments

Constructed-response assignments are scored by at least two qualified New York State educators. Scorers are unaware of the identities of the individuals whose responses they score. Scorers receive extensive orientation in standardized scoring procedures and take a qualifying assessment to ensure that they are ready to score. For most constructed-response assignments, scores are assigned according to a four-point scale that describes various levels of performance.

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Scorers judge the *overall effectiveness* of each response while focusing on a set of characteristics that have been defined by New York State educators as important for the test. Scorers provide an overall judgment; they do not indicate specific errors. Candidates do not pass or fail the constructed-response section. If a candidate's response is blank, unrelated to the assigned topic or off-task, unreadable, written in a language other than the target language, or contains an insufficient amount of original work to score, or is otherwise unscorable, the candidate will receive a "U" (unscorable) and may not pass the test. The response should be the candidate's original work, written in his or her own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. The performance characteristics against which responses are scored and examples of strong responses to sample written assignments are provided in the study guide for each test. Study guides are available on the NYSTCE website at www.nystce.nesinc.com.

Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST)

The ALST consists of the selected-response section and three constructed-response items (written assignments). The selected-response section counts for 40% of the total test score. There are two focused-response written assignments (each counting for 15% of the total test score) and one extended-response written assignment (counting for 30% of the total test score). A candidate's responses to the ALST focused-response written assignments are evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated command of relevant skills, such as the extent to which the response meets the requirements of the assignment; demonstrates understanding of and engagement with the provided sources; presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis, evaluation, and integration; and is focused and clear. A candidate's response to the ALST extended-response written assignment is evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated command of argumentative writing skills, such as the extent to which the response conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis of topics and sources; presents evidence from the provided sources to support analysis and synthesis; logically organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information using formal style and precise language; and demonstrates command of the conventions of standard written English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. To prepare for the ALST written assignments, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignments in the study guide and obtaining feedback on his or her response from faculty members or other advisors.

Educating All Students (EAS)

The EAS consists of the selected-response section and three constructed-response items (written assignments). Constructed-response items share scenario-based stimulus material with several selected-response items. The selected-response section counts for 70% of the total test score, and each constructed-response item counts for 10% of the total test score. A candidate's response to written assignments are evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated command of the relevant knowledge and skills, such as the extent to which the response meets the requirements of the assignment; demonstrates understanding of and engagement with the provided exhibits; and presents relevant support. To prepare for the EAS written assignments, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignments in the study guide and obtaining feedback on his or her responses from faculty members or other advisors.

Revised (Sept. 2013) School Building Leader (SBL) Assessment

The revised SBL is composed of two parts, administered as two separate tests. Each part consists of the selected-response section and several performance tasks. For Part One, the selected-response section counts for 40% of the total test score. For Part Two, the selected-response section counts for 25% of the total test score. Part One includes three performance tasks (written assignments): one extended performance task and two shorter performance tasks. Part Two also includes three performance tasks (written assignments): two extended performance tasks (the second of which comprises four short written assignments) and one shorter performance task. A candidate's response to written assignments is evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated command of the relevant knowledge and skills, such as the extent to which the response addresses all parts of the assignment; demonstrates the relevant knowledge and skills accurately and effectively; and provides appropriate examples and details that demonstrate sound reasoning and reflects a strong understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills. To prepare for the SBL written assignments, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignments in the study guide and obtaining feedback on his or her responses from faculty members or other advisors.



New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™

Understanding Candidate Score Reports

Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST); Assessment of Teaching Skills—Written (ATS–W); Original Content Specialty Tests¹; Original (2008) School Building Leader, School District Leader, and School District Business Leader Assessments

Candidates who take the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™ (NYSTCE®) can view their score reports as PDF documents on the Internet and may also elect to have them sent via email. The score report includes a section for each test taken on the test administration date indicated on the report. Each section includes information regarding the candidate's Pass/Did Not Pass status for that test, the total test score, and the performance on the major content subareas of the test. An individual's test scores are reported to the candidate, the New York State Education Department, and the institution that the candidate indicated during registration, unless the candidate notified Evaluation Systems in writing not to release scores to that institution.

Interpreting the Total Test Scores

The results for each of these NYSTCE tests are reported as a score in the range from 100 to 300. The minimum passing score for each test is 220. A candidate with a total test score of 220 or above passes the test. A candidate with a total test score below 220 does not pass the test. The minimum passing score was established by the New York State Commissioner of Education, with input from New York State educators. The total test score is based on the *total* number of selected-response test questions answered correctly and on the score(s) for any constructed-response assignment(s) on the test. Each multiple-choice question counts the same toward the total score. There is no penalty for wrong answers.

Interpreting Subarea Performance

Subarea performance for these NYSTCE tests is also reported on the 100 to 300 scale and is intended to provide feedback on performance in the major subareas of the test. This information is descriptive only and may help assess strengths and identify areas where additional preparation may be necessary. In general, performance in the 220 to 300 range indicates an area of strength, while performance below 220 suggests an area where the candidate is not yet prepared. Because subareas have differing numbers of test questions, it is not possible to average performance across subareas to arrive at the total test score. There is no "passing" score associated with individual subareas.

Responses to the Constructed-Response Assignments

Constructed-response assignments are scored by at least two qualified New York State educators. Scorers are unaware of the identities of the individuals whose responses they score. Scorers receive extensive orientation in standardized scoring procedures and take a qualifying assessment to ensure that they are ready to score. For most constructed-response assignments, scores are assigned according to a four-point scale that describes various levels of performance. Scorers judge the *overall effectiveness* of each response while focusing on a set of characteristics that have been defined by New York State educators as important for the test. Scorers provide

¹ Includes content specialty tests that have not been updated in 2014 or beyond

an overall judgment; they do not indicate specific errors. Candidates' scores for the constructed-response assignments for these NYSTCE tests are converted to a scale from 100 to 300. In general, performance of 220 or above indicates the candidate is prepared, while performance below 220 indicates the candidate is not yet prepared. Candidates do not pass or fail the constructed-response section. If a candidate's response is blank, unrelated to the assigned topic, illegible or incomprehensible, in a language other than the target language, of insufficient length to score, or otherwise unscorable, the candidate will receive a "U" (unscorable) and may not pass the test. The performance characteristics against which responses are scored are provided in the preparation guide for each test. Preparation guides are available on the NYSTCE website at www.nystce.nesinc.com.

LAST Constructed-Response (Written) Assignment

The Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST) written assignment counts for 20% of the test score, and the multiple-choice section counts for 80%. A candidate's response to the LAST written assignment is evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated ability to comprehend and focus on a unified, controlling topic; select and use a strategy of expression that is appropriate for the intended audience and purpose; present a reasoned, organized argument or exposition; use support and evidence to develop and bolster ideas and account for the views of others; and express him- or herself clearly and without distractions caused by inattention to sentence and paragraph structure, choice and use of words, and mechanics (i.e., spelling, punctuation, capitalization). The response is evaluated on the basis of the candidate's demonstrated ability to express and support opinions, not on the nature or content of the opinions expressed. The final version of the response should conform to the conventions of edited American English. The response should be the candidate's original work, written in his or her own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. The NYSTCE LAST preparation guide contains an example of a strong response to a sample LAST written assignment. To prepare for the LAST written assignment, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignment in the preparation guide and obtaining feedback on his or her response from faculty members or other advisors.

ATS–W Constructed-Response (Written) Assignment

The Assessment of Teaching Skills—Written (ATS–W) written assignment counts for 20% of the test score, and the multiple-choice section counts for 80%. A response to the ATS–W written assignment is evaluated on the basis of the extent to which it fulfills the charge of the assignment, accurately and effectively applies the relevant knowledge and skills, and is supported by appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills. The ATS–W written assignment assesses teaching knowledge and skills, not writing ability. However, the candidate's response must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of these factors by scorers. The candidate should present a thoughtful, reasoned response to the assignment, supported by detail, argument, and evidence. The written response should be the candidate's original work, written in his or her own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. The final version of the response should conform to the conventions of edited American English. The NYSTCE ATS–W preparation guides (Elementary and Secondary) each contain an example of a strong response to a sample ATS–W written assignment. To prepare for the ATS–W written assignment, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignment in the preparation guide and obtaining feedback on his or her response from faculty members or other advisors.

CST Constructed-Response Assignment (applies to original CSTs that have not been updated in 2014 or beyond)

For most Content Specialty Tests (CSTs) (excluding CSTs for languages other than English, the American Sign Language CST, and the Blind and Visually Impaired CST), the constructed-response assignment counts for 10% of the test score, and the multiple-choice section counts for 90%. (For more information on individual

CSTs, refer to the appropriate preparation guide.) A candidate's response to a CST constructed-response assignment is evaluated on the basis of the extent to which it fulfills the charge of the assignment, accurately and effectively applies the relevant knowledge and skills, and is supported by appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills. The constructed-response assignment for most CSTs assesses content knowledge and skills, not writing ability. However, the candidate's response must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of these factors by scorers. The candidate should present a thoughtful, reasoned response to the assignment, written in his or her own words, and not copied or paraphrased from some other work. The final version of the response should conform to the conventions of edited American English. Each NYSTCE CST preparation guide contains an example of a strong response to a sample CST constructed-response assignment. To prepare for the CST constructed-response assignment, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignment in the preparation guide and obtaining feedback on his or her response from faculty members or other advisors.

CSTs for Languages Other than English and BEA Constructed-Response Assignments (applies to original CSTs that have not been updated in 2015 or beyond)

The CSTs for languages other than English and the Bilingual Education Assessments (BEAs) contain writing and speaking constructed-response assignments. Each NYSTCE preparation guide for these tests contains information regarding the approximate percentage of the test score derived from the constructed-response assignments. The preparation guides also present sample constructed-response assignments and evaluation criteria for the assignments. To prepare for the constructed-response assignments on CSTs for languages other than English and BEAs, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignments in the preparation guide and obtaining feedback on his or her responses from faculty members or other advisors.

School Leadership Assessments Written Assignments (does not apply to Revised (Sept. 2013) School Building Leader assessment)

For both parts of the Original (2008) School Building Leader, School District Leader, and School District Business Leader assessments, there are two written assignments on each test. For each test, the multiple-choice section counts for 50%—approximately 17% for Assignment One and approximately 33% for Assignment Two. A candidate's response to a written assignment is evaluated on the basis of the extent to which it fulfills the charge of the assignment, accurately and effectively applies the relevant knowledge and skills, and is supported by appropriate examples and/or sound reasoning reflecting an understanding of the relevant knowledge and skills. The written assignments assess content knowledge and skills, not writing ability. However, the candidate's responses must be communicated clearly enough to permit valid judgment of these factors by scorers. The candidate should present a thoughtful, reasoned response to each assignment, written in his or her own words, and not paraphrased from some other work. The final version of the responses should conform to the conventions of edited American English. The Original (2008) School Building Leader, School District Leader, and School District Business Leader preparation guides each contain an example of a strong response to a sample of each type of written assignment. To prepare for the written assignments, a candidate may wish to practice by responding to the sample assignments in the preparation guide and obtaining feedback on his or her responses from faculty members or other advisors.