



# New York State Teacher Certification Examinations™

## Understanding Candidate Score Reports

Assessment of Teaching Skills—Written (ATS–W); Original Content Specialty Tests<sup>1</sup>;  
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

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.nystce.nesinc.com).

### **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 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 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.