



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA


DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

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Deputy State Superintendent

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TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATES 2017–18

The purpose of this memo is to inform Superintendents and Charter School Directors of any updates to testing policy and procedures for the upcoming school year. Listed below are updates for 2017–18.

The State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the latest reauthorization of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act and was approved by the U.S. Congress in December 2015. This law provides significant federal support for programs to serve students in kindergarten through twelfth grade and replaces the No Child Left Behind law of 2002. The most recent draft of the Consolidated State Plan for the ESSA has been posted to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction website at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/succeeds/>.

This draft has been submitted to the Governor for review, and the State Board of Education (SBE) is scheduled to approve the plan at its September meeting. The following are highlights of accountability information included in the draft plan:

1. Effective with the passage of Session Law 2017-57 (state budget bill) the indicators for the ESSA accountability model are the same as those used to calculate School Performance Grades. This alignment ensures one accountability system for North Carolina.
2. Long-term goals and measures of interim progress have been developed and included in the draft plan. These include goals for grades 3–8 mathematics, grades 3–8 English language arts (ELA)/reading, high school mathematics, high school ELA/reading, 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate, and English Learner (EL) progress.
3. Additional details regarding minimum number of students in subgroups, inclusion of exited ELs in subgroup analyses, and testing/accountability changes for recently arrived ELs.

The Accountability Services Division will host a webinar on September 19, 2017, to review the ESSA State Plan. Also, the implementation details of the plan will be shared in breakout sessions at the October 9–10, 2017, Test Coordinators Meeting. Information on the webinar and the Test Coordinators Meeting will be posted on the Testing News Network (TNN).

Mathematics at Grade 8

Effective for the 2017–18 school year and beyond, the ESSA no longer requires students enrolled in grade 8 and taking NC Math 1 to be assessed on both the grade 8 end-of-grade (EOG) and the end-of-course (EOC) mathematics assessments. Flexibility has been granted to states if the mathematics EOC is used for federal accountability and is administered to grade 8 students.

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

In May, the SBE voted to eliminate double testing for eighth grade students by approving SBE policy ACCT-021. Students enrolled in grade 8 taking NC Math 1 will have their scores from the NC Math 1 assessment used for federal accountability in grade 8. The scores for these students will not be banked for use at the high school level. Students completing NC Math 1 in grade 8 must take NC Math 3 in high school, and their scores for this assessment will be used for federal accountability in high school at the end of grade 11. Additional information about the use of scores, mathematics pathways for students, and an FAQ are included with the memo, *Grade 8 Mathematics Testing* sent to LEA Superintendents/Charter School Directors on June 28, 2017.

Inclusion of Recently Arrived English Learners (ELs)

The ESSA requires that each state develop a plan for the inclusion of recently arrived ELs in the State Accountability Model. Effective with the 2017–18 school year and beyond, all students identified as ELs, including students in their first year in United States schools, must participate in the statewide testing program in *all* subject areas (i.e., standard test administration with or without accommodations). The table below describes how North Carolina will include ELs in the accountability model for content assessments. This plan will *not* be applied to the Beginning-of-Grade 3 ELA/Reading test for the 2017–18 school year.

Recently Arrived EL (by year)	Year 1 (ELA, Math, Science)	Year 2 (ELA, Math, Science)	Year 3 and beyond (ELA, Math, Science)
EL Takes Assessments?	Yes	Yes	Yes
EL Receives Individual Student Report?	Yes	Yes	Yes
EL Included in Accountability System?	No	Included for Growth	Included for Proficiency and Growth

The ESSA requires that each state determine if students who have exited EL status (using the English language proficiency [ELP] assessment) will be included in subgroup reporting for the accountability model. Effective with the 2017–18 school year and beyond, students will be considered Monitored Former English Learners (MFELs) for four (4) years after they exit EL status and thus be a part of the EL subgroup for all disaggregated data (e.g., ELA, Math, Science, Graduation Rate).

The following chart is an example of how a student will be included in the EL subgroup after exiting EL status:

Year	EL Identification	ELP Assessment Participation	Included in the EL Subgroup
2016–17	EL	Takes ELP assessment and exits EL status	Yes
2017–18	Exited Year 1	Not tested on the ELP assessment	Yes
2018–19	Exited Year 2	Not tested on the ELP assessment	Yes
2019–20	Exited Year 3	Not tested on the ELP assessment	Yes
2020–21	Exited Year 4	Not tested on the ELP assessment	Yes
2021–22	N/A	Not tested on the ELP assessment	No

WIDA Screener for English Learners

North Carolina previously used the paper-based WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) to screen students for EL identification. The W-APT is being phased out for grades 1–12 by WIDA at the end of August 2017 and will no longer be supported. North Carolina will continue to use the Kindergarten W-APT for the 2017–18 school year. The replacement for W-APT is the WIDA Screener Online. This screener was developed to provide better alignment to the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment and operates in a similar manner to the ACCESS assessment with respect to technology requirements and platform.

In early May, all existing WIDA account holders were granted permissions to begin accessing WIDA Screener training modules. The completion of these modules and review of supporting resources prepare districts to administer WIDA Screener Online. On July 10th, permissions were granted to all existing test coordinators in the WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS). WIDA AMS is the system where student information is uploaded/housed and where test sessions are scheduled.

NC Check-Ins

The NC Check-Ins for ELA/reading and mathematics are interim assessments administered throughout the school year to provide teachers and parents with immediate feedback for guiding subsequent instruction. For the 2017–18 school year, school participation in the NC Check-Ins is voluntary and open to all local education agencies (LEAs) and charter schools. The NC Check-Ins are provided in both paper-and-pencil and online formats and are available at grades 4–6 in mathematics and at grades 5–7 in ELA/reading.

Materials

Effective with the 2017–18 school year, the North Carolina Testing Program will provide all assessments in both online and paper-and-pencil formats. LEAs and charter schools testing online should decrease their paper/pencil test book orders on the TNN Test Materials Order System to adjust for online administrations. If testing online, paper material orders should be consistent with the number of test booklets required to accommodate students who have a documented need requiring paper for accessibility and to provide enough copies in the event of special circumstances or emergency situations in which online testing may not be possible (e.g., technical issue, items not displaying appropriately).

If you have questions or need clarification regarding these updates, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator.

MPM/TLH/jlk

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