




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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Director of Accountability Services

TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATES 2018–19

As we begin another school year, thank you for providing on-going input and feedback on testing and accountability in North Carolina. This involvement is always critical, and it has been even more important during our transition to the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). At its September meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) will approve the 2017–18 accountability results as required by state statute and the ESSA. As you know, this release always coincides with the beginning of a new school year. Thus, this memo addresses key aspects of testing and accountability for the 2018–19 school year, and please note, the 15-point scale for School Performance Grades is in effect for the 2018–19 school year, the last year of the current provision in state statute.

In addition to this memo, we will continue to host webinars to share detailed information with you throughout the school year, and as always, we welcome any suggestions or feedback on how we may better serve our schools.

Mathematics Assessments

The new mathematics North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* and *Extended Content Standards* adopted by the State Board in 2016 and 2017 will be implemented this school year in elementary and middle grades 3–8 and in high school courses NC Math 1 and NC Math 3. With the adoption of new mathematics content standards, new end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) general assessments and EOG/EOC alternate assessments were developed to align with the new content standards. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is required to establish new academic achievement levels based on the scores from the first administration of newly revised assessments.

The standard setting process for all of North Carolina's new mathematics assessments and their alternates will occur in summer 2019. This process results in scores being delayed, meaning students will not receive test scores until after the standard setting process is completed in summer 2019. Therefore, effective with the 2018–19 school year and beyond, State Board policy TEST-003 provides public schools an exception for "all students enrolled in a course during the initial implementation year of the new assessment for that course where scores are not immediately available due to standard setting." Schools do not have to follow the requirement to use results from the initial implementation year for EOC assessments as a minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the student's final grade for each respective course. As stated in the SBE policy for this exception, public schools can choose to adopt policies regarding the use of EOC assessment results in assigning final grades. The NCDPI will not provide a state-level raw score conversion table; however, the raw score will be provided to facilitate Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and charter schools that decide to have a local policy that requires the end-of-course score to be included in the final grade for the course.

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

New North Carolina English Language Arts Standards

New North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* and *Extended Content Standards* for K–12 English Language Arts (ELA) were adopted by the State Board in 2017 for implementation in 2018–19. This will be the final year that the EOG, EOC, and the NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessments will assess the 2010 ELA/Reading standards operationally. To eliminate standalone field testing for students receiving instruction in the *Standard Course of Study*, the EOG grades 3–8 ELA/reading assessments and the EOC English II assessment will include embedded field test items that are aligned with the new standards. Students receiving instruction through the *Extended Content Standards* will participate in a standalone field test in spring 2019.

Additional Grades Added for NC Check-Ins

This year the NC Check-Ins will be available in paper/pencil and online formats at grades 4–8 in ELA/reading and at grades 3–8 in mathematics. The new content standards will be assessed only in the mathematics NC Check-Ins. Participation is on a voluntary basis, and LEAs/charter schools may determine the administration days for each NC Check-In within the NCDPI-designated windows. The NC Check-In windows for 2018–19 are as follows:

- NC Check-In 1: October 15–November 30, 2018
- NC Check-In 2: January 2–February 8, 2019
- NC Check-In 3: March 4–April 12, 2019

To access the specifications for the NC Check-Ins, visit

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/nccheckin/2018-19assessedstandards-math3-8.pdf> to view the 2018–19 Assessed Standards for Mathematics 3–8 and visit

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/nccheckin/2018-19assessedstandards-ela4-8.pdf> to view 2018–19 Assessed Standards for English Language Arts/Reading 4–8.

Grade 3 Reading Portfolio

The Grade 3 Reading Portfolio has been updated with 24 new passages, two per standard. Likewise, 24 passages, two per standard have been designated as instructional. The portfolios have been shipped to districts and schools.

New Online Calculator in NCTest

Effective with the 2018–19 school year, the NCTest platform will offer a calculator feature for all calculator active sections on the EOG, EOC, NCFE and NC Check-In assessments. Handheld calculators will still be part of the materials distributed to students, allowing students to choose to use the online calculator, the handheld calculator, or both. The online calculator is embedded into the online tutorials and students may practice using the online calculator by visiting <https://www.desmos.com/> and choosing one of the following options: For grades 3–5 choose the "Four Function" button, for grades 6–8 choose the "Scientific" button, and for NC Math 1 and beyond click "Start Graphing" in red at the top of the screen.

Adherence to the 10/20 Day Rule Process

State Board policy TEST-003 states that “public school students may drop a course with a required EOC assessment within the first ten (10) days of enrollment in a semester schedule or within the first twenty (20) days of enrollment in a year-long schedule.” If it is determined by the principal that a student should be withdrawn from the course after the first 10/20 days, the school must request approval from the Director of Accountability Services. If the request is approved, the school must notify the parent/guardian and the student in writing of any change to EOC testing requirements. Immediately following this notification, the school must remove the student from the course and change the student’s schedule to reflect the new course code in PowerSchool. If a request is denied, the student will remain in the original course and shall participate in the appropriate EOC assessment at the completion of the course. (See the August 23, 2017 memo, *Adherence to the 10/20 Day Rule*, posted on the Testing News Network [TNN] for additional information on the process for notification of withdrawal after 10/20 days.)

ACT Mixed-Mode Testing

Effective this year, schools will be permitted to administer the ACT assessment “mixed-mode,” which means that a school can administer the test in both the paper/pencil and online modes. The decision to administer the ACT mixed-mode may be made at the school-level, meaning not all schools in a district must do mixed-mode. Schools choosing to administer the assessment mixed-mode will be permitted to test students using all the available paper/pencil and online test dates provided by ACT. Schools choosing this option will be required to follow all directives from ACT for successful paper/pencil and online testing. Please note, schools choosing to administer the ACT mixed-mode can administer the assessment only once to each eligible student in either paper/pencil or online, not both.

Required Online Administration of ACT WorkKeys

For the 2018–19 school year, schools will be required to administer the ACT WorkKeys assessment online. Schools are encouraged to review the online ACT WorkKeys technology requirements using the following link: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/workkeys-for-educators/assessments/administration.html>. If LEAs/charter schools do not have the technology capability to support administering the WorkKeys online to students, a letter indicating the reason(s) for the hardship and a plan for increasing technology capacity must be submitted to the Director of Accountability Services. An approved letter must be on file with the NCDPI before paper tests can be ordered from ACT. Please note that a letter does not need to be submitted to the Director of Accountability Services for approval for students with disabilities who have documented accommodations that dictate a paper/pencil mode is necessary for accessibility.

Changes in ACT WorkKeys Test Coordinator and School Test Coordinator Roles and Responsibilities

To improve procedures that ensure WorkKeys examinees are tested under standardized and secure conditions, the Division of Accountability Services, in collaboration with the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Division, has redefined the roles and responsibilities of the WorkKeys test coordinator and the school test coordinator. Effective with the 2018–19 school year and beyond, the LEA and charter school test coordinators will serve in the role of WorkKeys test coordinator. LEA and charter school test coordinators will have the responsibility of overseeing the test administration, reporting, and other accountability measures associated with the WorkKeys assessment. Responsibilities of the LEA and charter school test coordinators will include, but are not limited to, training school test coordinators who are responsible for WorkKeys test administration procedures, overseeing all WorkKeys testing logistics, and meeting the deadlines set forth in the ACT WorkKeys Schedule of Events (SOE).

Additionally, the school test coordinator listed in the Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE) will be the point of contact for all communications sent to the school from ACT. The school test coordinator will be responsible for the administration of the ACT WorkKeys assessment to include, but not limited to, attending both required local and ACT WorkKeys training, ordering and receiving materials, maintaining test security, and the proper return of all materials to ACT. The ‘WorkKeys TC’ position has been removed from EDDIE to reflect this change. However, CTE staff will continue to be responsible for identifying all eligible students for the assessment and will share this information with the school test coordinators.

WorkKeys Testing Windows

The ACT WorkKeys testing window for fall 2018–19 will be December 3–7, which is one week instead of two weeks as it has been in past years. The spring testing window has been moved to April 1–12. The spring date was changed so that WorkKeys testing will not conflict with mid-year schedule changes, ACCESS testing, or ACT testing.

WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificates

Beginning in 2018–19, the WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) information will be disseminated to schools through the Division of Accountability Services so that schools may print certificates locally.

Plan for Increasing Technology Capability

The Division of Accountability Services plans to continually increase the number of required online administrations annually. In 2017–18, all state-developed assessments were delivered online, and of those assessments, thirteen (13) were required online administrations. LEAs and charter schools should make intentional decisions to increase local technical infrastructure and device capacity to facilitate the ease of online test administrations. (See the April 16, 2018 memo, *Online Testing Updates 2018–19*, posted on TNN for additional information on required online administrations for 2018–19.)

Justification for Exceeding 1.0 Percent Participation on the Alternate Assessment

Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards. The ESSA requires states to ensure that the total number of students assessed in each subject using the NCEXTEND1 does not exceed 1.0 percent of the total number of all students assessed in each subject. Districts and charter schools that anticipated exceeding the 1.0 percent in the 2017–18 school year were required to provide the NCDPI a justification of the need to assess more than 1.0 percent of their students on the NCEXTEND1 in any subject. The justification was due to the NCDPI by May 4, 2018 (see the March 15, 2018 memo, *Justification Required for Exceeding 1.0 Percent Participation in the Alternate Assessment*, posted on the TNN).

Additionally, the ESSA requires states to “make the information submitted by the local education agencies (LEAs) publicly available, provided that such information does not reveal personally identifiable information about an individual student.” Of the justifications submitted to the Department, only those LEAs/charters which exceeded 1.0 percent in the 2017–18 school year will be posted (i.e., justifications received from LEAs/charters that did not exceed 1.0 percent participation in 2017–18 will not be posted). The 2017–18 LEA and charter school justifications will be posted following approval of the accountability data in October by the State Board of Education.

As always, thank you for all you do for our schools and for ensuring that we appropriately instruct and assess all students in North Carolina. If you have questions or need further clarification regarding information contained within this memo, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC).

EH/TLH/jlk

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