



# PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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September 8, 2020

**TO** LEA Superintendents  
Charter School Directors

**FROM** David Stegall, Ed.D.   
Deputy Superintendent of Innovation

Tammy L. Howard, Ph.D.   
Director of Accountability Services

## READ TO ACHIEVE ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS

The Read to Achieve (RtA) legislation allows third-grade students an option to demonstrate reading proficiency through the administration of an alternative assessment of reading comprehension that has been approved by the State Board of Education (SBE). At its September 2020 meeting, the SBE approved alternative assessments local education agencies (LEAs) may elect to use for this purpose during the 2020–21 school year. The LEA is responsible for the costs of administering these assessments, including the decision to use appropriated state funds such as PRC 085. Results from an alternative assessment cannot be used by an LEA to determine proficiency for current third graders unless the alternative assessment is on the SBE-approved list. Charter schools may elect to use an SBE-approved alternative assessment **or** an alternative assessment of reading comprehension that is not on the SBE-approved list. Charter schools are responsible for the costs of administering these assessments, including the decision to use appropriated state funds such as PRC 016.

A chart of the 2020–21 SBE-approved alternative assessments and their achievement levels is attached to this memo. The chart will also be posted on the K–3 Literacy Read to Achieve website and on the Division of Accountability Services website. Proficiency for all of the SBE-approved alternative assessments is a Lexile<sup>®</sup> level of 725 or higher. By using the common Lexile level scale, the alternative assessments meet the standard reading proficiency at the end of third grade. On the End-of-Grade 3 Reading Test, the minimum sufficient achievement level for proficiency is 439. The 439 achievement level has a Lexile level of 725, which was determined by a Lexile linking study conducted by Metametrics<sup>®</sup>. The linking study provides a Lexile student/reader measure that aligns to a student's scale score. The Lexile level represents a student's ability to not only make inferential interpretations of the text, but to also answer critical analysis questions about the text.

Alternative assessments used to determine proficiency must be approved by the Superintendent or Charter School Director. LEA/charter school test coordinators must complete and submit the *Read to Achieve Alternative Assessment Notification Form* in NC Education's NCTest Admin by December 1, 2020. The form indicates the alternative assessment(s) that will be used with their

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current third-grade students. The notification form must be completed even if a LEA or charter school elects **not** to use an alternative assessment of reading comprehension.

The SBE reviews all alternative assessments annually to ensure their ongoing relevance, validity, and reliability. In order for the SBE to review an alternative assessment for approval in 2021–22, a linking study must be completed (at the expense of the LEA) through MetaMetrics to determine an achievement level that aligns with the Lexile level of 725. LEAs that would like to request alternative assessments for inclusion must submit their request to Jaime Kelley at [Jaime.Kelley@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Jaime.Kelley@dpi.nc.gov) by June 30, 2021. The request should include (1) the name of the alternative assessment, (2) the vendor's name and contact information for the requested alternative assessment, (3) the results of the linking study through MetaMetrics, and (4) the name of the district contact person who can answer questions and provide additional details concerning the request.

Please share this information locally. If you have questions or need further clarification regarding information contained within this memo, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator.

DS/TLH/jlk

- c: Mark Johnson, State Superintendent
- Beverly Emory, Deputy Superintendent of District Support
- Tara Galloway, Director, K–3 Literacy
- Sherry Thomas, Director, Exceptional Children
- Dave Machado, Director, Office of Charter Schools
- Shannon Jordan, Section Chief, Testing Policy and Operations
- Curtis Sonneman, Section Chief, Analysis and Reporting
- Maxey Moore, Section Chief, Test Development
- Jaime Kelley, Consultant, Testing Policy and Operations
- Regional Accountability Coordinators
- Public School Unit Test Coordinators

Attachment

**State Board of Education**  
**2020–21 Read to Achieve Local Alternative Assessments**

The following alternative assessments have been approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for use by local education agencies (LEAs). LEAs are responsible for the costs of administering these assessments, including the decision to use appropriated state funds such as PRC 085. Current third graders must use only the alternative assessments and achievement levels that were established by the SBE on September 3, 2020. Charter schools may elect to use an SBE-approved alternative assessment **or** an alternative assessment of reading comprehension that is not on the SBE-approved list. Charter schools are responsible for the costs of administering these assessments, including the decision to use appropriated state funds such as PRC 016. LEAs and charter schools must submit documentation to Accountability Services by December 1 of each school year indicating which alternative assessments will be used with students.

<b>Test Name</b>	<b>Lexile Level Provided</b>	<b>Recommended for 2020–21</b>	<b>2020–21 End-of-Grade 3 Achievement Level</b>
Northwest Evaluation System— <i>Measures of Academic Progress</i>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (207 Scale Score)
Scholastic Reading Inventory	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
STAR Reading	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (537 Scale Score)
Iowa Test of Basic Skills	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (Level 9 Test at 71 <sup>st</sup> Percentile)
i-Ready	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (537 Scale Score)
Imagine Learning— <i>Reading Level Assessment</i>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
Achieve3000	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
Certica Solutions— <i>CASE Benchmark Assessment</i> (previously known as Case 21 Assessment)	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher <sup>1</sup>
Edmentum— <i>Exact Path Individualize Learning Solution</i>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
Lexia Learning— <i>RAPID Assessment</i>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
Imagine Learning— <i>Galileo English Language Arts/Reading Assessment</i>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (Developmental Level Score of 856)
Acadience Reading	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (398 Composite Score) <sup>2</sup>
Amplify—mClass Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) <sup>3</sup>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher
FastBridge— <i>Formative Assessment System for Teachers</i>	No	Pending	Linking Study Needed <sup>4</sup>
Imagination Station— <i>Istation's Indicators of Progress (ISIP™) Reading</i> <sup>5</sup>	Yes	Yes	Lexile Level 725 or higher (258 Scale Score)

<sup>1</sup> CASE Benchmark Assessments consist of two sections. The second section consists of a set of items from MetaMetrics to assess student Lexile levels. Through correspondence tables provided by MetaMetrics, Lexile levels are provided for each student based upon performance on those specific MetaMetrics items.

<sup>2</sup> The composite score is comprised of scores from four subtests (i.e., Oral Reading Fluency [ORF] Words Correct, ORF Accuracy, ORF Retell, Maze).

<sup>3</sup> Acadience (formerly known as DIBELS Next) and Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) are included when using Amplify Education mCLASS Acadience Reading with TRC; students can meet the requirement of 725 Lexile using results from either Acadience or TRC.

<sup>4</sup> Public school units must ensure a linking study is completed to determine an achievement level equivalent to a 725 Lexile level or higher. The results must be provided to the SBE by 1/31/2021 for those assessments that currently do not have a Lexile level.

<sup>5</sup> The Metametrics linking study was conducted with ISIP ER/AR assessment and found either ISIP ER or ISIP AR can be used to measure reading comprehension.