



# NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Maurice "Mo" Green, Superintendent of Public Instruction

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**TO** LEA Superintendents  
Charter School Directors

**FROM** Michael Maher, Chief Accountability Officer *MM*  
Division of Accountability and Research

Curtis Sonneman, Acting Director *CS*  
Office of Accountability

## **2026–27 ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS' MODIFIED ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM OPTIONS**

This memo provides guidance regarding required participation decisions for the 2026–2027 school year in the Alternative Schools' Modified Accountability System. The attached form must be completed and filed with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), Office of Accountability and Testing by August 1, 2026. The State Board of Education policy ACCT-038 (16 NCAC 06G .0314) applies to all alternative schools, including charter schools approved to use the alternative accountability system (16 NCAC 06G .0519), Developmental Day Centers, and schools providing special education and related services in public separate settings to students with disabilities.

Alternative schools must be approved and recorded in the Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE) prior to the submission of a modified accountability system option.

The alternative accountability system supplements, but does not replace, School Performance Grades (SPG) as defined by G.S. §115C-83.15, nor does it substitute the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requirements. Therefore, alternative schools and other eligible schools participating in the modified system using Options B or C will also have a SPG calculated and used when there are sufficient data for federal identifications. The SPG is used to identify schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) or Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) as defined in the ESSA state plan. The designation of performance, as defined in ACCT-038 (16 NCAC 06G .0314), will be the designation displayed on the NC School Report Card and SPGs will not be used to determine low-performing school or low-performing district statuses.

### **Alternative School Modified Accountability System Option Determination**

Schools participating in the modified accountability system must submit an annual request. Schools may change the option selected from the prior year and are encouraged to review their previous selection. Local boards must approve the request

to participate in a modified accountability system at a board meeting prior to submission to the State Board of Education. Charter schools submitting a request to participate must be approved to use the modified system in accordance with State Board of Education Policy CHTR-020 (16 NCAC 06G .0518).

The current system allows eligible schools to participate in one of the following three options (Option A, Option B, or Option C):

**Option A: Participation in standard School Performance Grades**

Alternative schools participate in School Performance Grades as defined by G.S. §115C-83.15, **or**

**Option B: Participation in modified model defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0314**

Alternative schools are evaluated as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0314, attached below, **or**

**Option C: Proposal of an alternative model subject to State Board of Education approval**

Alternative schools propose modifications to the accountability system for approval by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education shall approve proposed modifications to the system if a preponderance of the evidence proves that the modifications comprise valid and reliable measures of the achievement and growth of the school's students.

Option C requests must include an attachment of the proposed modifications that outline the valid and reliable measures that will be used to track the achievement and growth of students. Requests to participate in Option C must be submitted annually to the State Board of Education for approval at its October meeting. Once approved, a letter will be sent to the public school unit with additional guidance regarding reporting outcomes from the proposed modified system. Proposals that do not include clear documentation of validity and reliability will not be recommended for approval.

Developmental Day Centers and schools providing special education and related services, as noted above, may select from Options B or C. The Office of Exceptional Children and the Office of Accountability will review the eligibility criteria of these schools and must approve use of the alternative accountability modified system.

Local boards of education must approve the selected option of each identified school under their jurisdiction and report this decision, using the form attached, to the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing by **August 1, 2026**.

**Alternative School Insufficient Data Options Under ESSA**

As required by the ESSA state plan, all schools participating in the Alternative Schools' Modified Accountability System must select one of the following two options for the LEA calculation of a SPG in the event the school does not have sufficient data to determine

a SPG using current year data:

- a. **Return Scores** - All data is returned to base (sending) schools within the local education agency (LEA). The alternative school, or other eligible school, is given the letter grade of the school where the highest percentage of students are sent back (this option does not apply to charter schools or schools for the deaf and blind); **or**
- b. **Three Years** - Use three (3) years of data to calculate the letter grade for the school.

Insufficient data option determinations must also be approved by the local or charter school board for each school under their jurisdiction. This decision must be reported to the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing by **August 1, 2026**. All alternative or other eligible schools, as specified in ACCT-038 (16 NCAC 06G .0314), must select an insufficient data option, even if the school anticipates having sufficient data available for SPG calculation.

Attached resources include (1) a description of the three options to participate in the Alternative Schools' Modified Accountability System and (2) the form public school units must use to report the options selected for their school(s). Please complete and submit the attached form with the appropriate signatures. Schools electing to participate in Option C must attach the school's proposed modifications including evidence that the modifications comprise valid and reliable measures.

All completed and signed forms with attachments must be emailed to Ozella Wiggins ([ozella.wiggins@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:ozella.wiggins@dpi.nc.gov)) in the NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing by August 1, 2026. **This deadline is cited in North Carolina Administrative Code (16 NCAC 06G .0314) and must be met.** If an eligible school fails to submit an option by the August 1 deadline, the school will default to Option A (SPG A-F) and the three years insufficient data option for reporting and accountability purposes. If you have questions or need further clarification regarding information contained within this memo, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator.

MM/CJS/odw

- c: Maurice "Mo" Green, State Superintendent  
Maria Pitre-Martin, Deputy State Superintendent  
Stacey Wilson-Norman, Chief Academic Officer, Division of Academics  
Carol Ann Hudgens, Senior Director, Office of Exceptional Children  
Ashley Logue, Director, Office of Charter Schools  
Kinge Mbella, Acting Director, Office of Testing  
Shannon Jordan, Section Chief, Testing Policy and Operations  
Regional Accountability Coordinators  
Public School Unit Test Coordinators

Attachment

# 2026–27 Alternative School’s Modified Accountability System Participation

Local boards of education are expected to choose the appropriate alternative school accountability model when a school(s) is participating in the *Alternative Schools’ Modified Accountability System*. If no option is selected, eligible schools will participate in the School Performance Grades (Option A) and will be placed in the 3-years insufficient data option.

**Public School Unit (PSU) Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PSU Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the school(s) and the options determined by the local board. Complete **each column** in the table below.

School Name	School Code	Alternative School Accountability	Insufficient Data Option
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years
		<input type="checkbox"/> Option A <input type="checkbox"/> Option B <input type="checkbox"/> Option C (additional information required)*	<input type="checkbox"/> Return Scores <input type="checkbox"/> Three Years

\* For schools selecting Option C, attach the school’s proposed modifications, including evidence of the validity and reliability of the measures proposed.

Sign and date below:

**PSU Superintendent/Director**

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

**PSU Test Coordinator**

\_\_\_\_\_

Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

This document must be emailed to Ozella Wiggins in the Office of Accountability and Testing at [ozella.wiggins@dpi.nc.gov](mailto:ozella.wiggins@dpi.nc.gov) no later than the required **August 1, 2026** deadline.

# 2026–27 Alternative School’s Modified Accountability System Participation

The local board of education shall determine the option that each alternative school in their jurisdiction will follow for participation in the Alternative Schools’ Modified Accountability System.

There are three ways to participate in the Alternative Schools’ Modified Accountability System:

**Option A.** Alternative schools can participate in School Performance Grades as defined by G.S. §115C-83.15, **or**

**Option B.** Alternative schools electing to participate in the system as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0314, **or**

**Option C.** The alternative school may propose modifications to the system for approval by the State Board of Education.

**Option A: Participation in the modified system, using School Performance Grades as defined by G.S. §115C-83.15.**

**Option B: Participation in the modified system, evaluated as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0314:**

- (1) Student Persistence (20%) - Student Persistence is defined as the percent of alternative students who remain enrolled in any North Carolina public school through the end of the school year.
- (2) School Achievement (20%)
  - (a) The School Achievement component uses the following indicators:
    - (1) End-of-Grade (EOG) Reading and Mathematics Assessments at Grades 3–8
    - (2) EOG Science Assessments at Grades 5 and 8
    - (3) End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments in Biology, NC Math 1, NC Math 3 and English II
    - (4) ACT®
    - (5) ACT WorkKeys
    - (6) 4-Year Graduation Rate
    - (7) 5-Year Graduation Rate
    - (8) Math Course Rigor
  - (b) Three (3) years of data will be used for calculating school achievement.
- (3) Growth (60%) - Growth will be calculated using EVAAS.

A change rating will be assigned to schools comparing their previous year to the current year.

- (1) Progressing – indicates a change in the overall score from the previous year by at least +3 points.
- (2) Maintaining – indicates a change in the overall score from the previous year by -2.9 to +2.9 points.
- (3) Declining – indicates a change in the overall score from the previous year by at least -3 points.

**Option C: Participation in the modified system, proposing modifications to the accountability system for approval by the State Board of Education.**

- (1) Proposed modifications must show a preponderance of evidence that proves the modifications comprise valid and reliable measures of achievement and growth of the school’s students.
  - a. Schools may elect to use their data to assign themselves a designation; however, designations cannot mirror those already used in school accountability reporting.
- (2) A request to participate in Option C, including a detailed description of the proposed modifications, including evidence of validity and reliability, must be submitted annually to the SBE for approval at its October meeting.
  - a. If approved, the school must submit a final report explaining how the modifications improved performance of the school’s students for public posting. Additional guidance about the reporting requirements will be provided after approval of the modified system.