



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

FROM Stacey Wilson-Norman, Chief Academic Officer
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TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATES

North Carolina's State Plan to meet the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on September 18, 2017. Although the USED will not approve the ESSA State Plan until early 2018, it is in effect for the 2017–18 school year. With that in mind, this memo provides information on ESSA-related changes and general accountability changes for the 2017–18 school year.

Testing and Accountability

- As a response to feedback on summer programs, the year-end date for uploading all test data is being extended to July 6 for the 2017–18 school year and beyond. This will allow additional days for summer programs, if needed. In subsequent years, if July 6 is a Saturday or a Sunday, the end-of-year date will be the last working day preceding the weekend.
- Students who took NC Math 1 in grade 8 during the 2016–17 school year will have their test scores banked to the high school for accountability purposes in 2017–18. The practice of sending middle school NC Math 1 EOC scores to the high school for accountability purposes will be eliminated following the 2017–18 school year. Additional information on the Advanced Mathematics Grade 8 Exception will be presented during a webinar scheduled for January 8, 2018. Information on registering for the webinar has been posted on TNN.

English Learners

- Beginning with the 2017–18 school year, the test scores for English Learners (ELs) who exit such status will be included in the EL subgroup for four-years after exiting the program.
- As stated in the ESSA Plan, beginning with the 2017–18 school year, North Carolina will require ELs to participate in all state end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) assessments in their first year in a U.S. school. However, in the first year, the test scores will only be used for participation and for the NC Report Card. The test scores will not be used for accountability. In Year 2, ELs' test scores from all EOGs and EOCs will be included in the growth analysis for the accountability model. Subsequently, in Year 3 and beyond, ELs' test scores for all EOGs and EOCs will be included in the proficiency achievement indicator of the accountability model.

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- At its December 7, 2017 meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) approved an amendment to SBE policy ACCT-021 that states EL students in their first year in a U.S. school will take required EOC tests, but the test scores will not be included as at least 20 percent of the student's final grade for the course. This policy applies to English language arts/reading assessments, as previously, and also to mathematics, science, social studies, and Career and Technical Education (CTE) state assessments.
- As required by ESSA Sec 1111 (b) (2) (G) (i), "Each State plan shall demonstrate that local educational agencies in the State will provide for an annual assessment of English proficiency of all English learners in the schools served by the State educational agency." English Learners (ELs) who are unable to access one or more domains due to a documented disability in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504, must have a Do Not Score indicator coded in the WIDA Assessment Management System (AMS) or on the back of the student test booklet for any domain that is not completed. Students are expected to participate in any domain in which the disability does not prevent participation. Students who have a documented disability preventing access to one or more domains will not count against a school's accountability calculations.

Field Tests for 2017–18

- As presented at the November SBE meeting, a modification of the field test design no longer requires a stand-alone field test administration for the EOG mathematics assessments at grades 3–8. By utilizing the existing field test slots on the operational assessments, the stand-alone field tests are unnecessary. As with all experimental items, which do not count toward or against a student's score, these items will be indistinguishable from the operational items and should not interfere with the student's test-taking experience.

This rescindment of field test participation applies only to the spring 2018 End-of-Grade Mathematics Field Tests at grades 3–8. The spring End-of-Course NC Math 1, End-of-Course NC Math 3, and the Alternate NC Math 1 Field Tests will proceed as originally presented to Superintendents and Charter School Directors by Drs. Maria Pitre-Martin and Tammy Howard in the August 4, 2017, memo *2017–18 Participation in Field Tests and Special Studies*. As noted in the memo, the Alternate NC Math 1 Field Test is a one-on-one teacher-facilitated online administration requiring a computer or tablet that meets all technical requirements.

Please share this information with principals of the schools selected for participation in the spring End-of-Grade Mathematics Grades 3–8 Field Tests so these field tests may be removed from their calendars.

- Please note, this field test design will require two separate EOG test booklets and two separate answer sheets: one for ELA/reading and one for mathematics. Though this will require additional handling and processing for the operational tests, there will be no field test materials to process and schools will not lose instructional days for field test administrations.

Cohort Graduation Rate

- Students who exit the following identification groups (ELs, Students with Disabilities, Foster, and Homeless) after entering 9th grade will be included in the subgroup for the disaggregated Cohort Graduation Rate reports during their anticipated graduation year.
- As part of reviewing ESSA for accountability and for the calculation of the cohort graduation rate, it has been affirmed that states may only remove a student from the graduation cohort denominator "if the student has transferred out, emigrated to another country, or transferred to a prison or a juvenile

facility, or is deceased" (Sec.8101.[20 U.S.C. 7801] Definitions). Please note, to be removed if transferring to another school, students must transfer to a school that awards high school diplomas. For all student removals from the cohort denominator, the appropriate documentation must be retained. Thus, beginning with the 2017–18 school year and beyond, a student who transfers to a school without sufficient credits to be determined "on track" to graduate within four years will no longer be removed from the cohort denominator for the school or district.

- Also noted in reviewing ESSA requirements is the allowance to include summer graduates in the previous school year's cohort graduation rate. In North Carolina, these graduates have typically been added to the subsequent year's cohort graduation rate. Beginning with the 2017–18 school year and beyond, students who graduate by July 15, 2018, will be included in the cohort graduation rate for that year. All students who graduate prior to June 30 must be submitted by June 30 in the Graduation Data Verification (GDV). Additional students who graduate by July 15 may be submitted in the additional process within GDV. Students who graduate after July 15 will be included in the subsequent year's GDV and be included in the appropriate cohort reporting the following year.
- Alternative schools that do not award diplomas must return all students to the sending school for inclusion in the sending school's cohort (denominator) in the anticipated graduation year. Alternative schools that award diplomas must retain all students for inclusion in the alternative school's cohort graduation rate.

Implementation of New Assessments

With the SBE's adoption of new content standards for mathematics and English language arts/reading, new operational assessments are being developed. The chart below provides the timeline for the implementation of these new assessments.

Assessment	Field Test Year	Initial Operational Year
Mathematics Grades 3–8 and High Schools: General and NCEXTENDI	2017–18	2018–19
English Language Arts/Reading Grades 3–8 and High Schools: General and NCEXTENDI	2018–19	2019–20

In the transition to new assessments, please note test scores will be delayed in the initial operational year to allow for standard setting. Information on the delay and the impact on the timeline for reporting will be provided in late summer 2018.

As always, thank you for your collaboration as we transition to ESSA. The feedback is most valuable, so please continue to share comments, suggestions, and questions. Also, your Regional Accountability Coordinator is always available for clarification and more information.

SWN:TLH

c: Mark Johnson, State Superintendent
 Maria Pitre-Martin, Deputy State Superintendent
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