

NORTH CAROLINA Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook

2026–27



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Table of Contents

A. Introduction	1
Purpose of the <i>North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook</i>	1
Fundamental State Testing Premises	1
School-Based Management and Accountability Program	2
The Annual Testing Program	2
Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures	3
Test Security	4
Test Administration Security Recommendations	4
Testing Code of Ethics	5
The Test Development Process	6
B. Resources	7
Accountability and Testing Website	7
Protocol for Communication	7
Contact Information	9
Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE)	9
Testing News Network (TNN)	10
Non-public Schools Testing Service	10
NC Education and NCTest	10
Test Administration Guides, Publications, Handbooks, and Administrative Documents	10
Assessment Briefs	11
Test Specification Information	11
Information about Test Questions	11
Released Test Questions	11
C. Roles and Responsibilities	13
Responsibilities of the NCDPI	13
Test Coordinator Credentials	13
Selection and Training of District Test Coordinators	14
Duties of District Test Coordinators	14
District Test Coordinators and Virtual Schools	17
Best Practices and Considerations for Principals and Directors When Selecting School Test Coordinators	17
Duties of Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential School Test Coordinators	18
Duties of School Test Coordinators within Districts	22
PSU Test Coordinator's Responsibilities for Ordering State Test Materials	26

Duties of School Counselors	27
Duties of Test Administrators.....	28
Duties of Proctors	30
D. Policies and Procedures for Statewide Tests That Are Not Provided by a Vendor.....	32
Digital Signatures	32
Annual Training Requirements	32
Training for Every Test	38
E. Non-Vendor Required State Tests	40
Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test	41
Read to Achieve Test	42
EOG Tests: Reading and Mathematics Grades 3–8 and Science Grades 5 and 8	44
EOC Tests: Biology, English II, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3	46
North Carolina Alternate Assessments.....	50
F. Required State Tests Provided by Vendors	51
WIDA Assessments.....	52
WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	52
WIDA Screener Online	52
WIDA Alternate Screener	52
WIDA Screener Paper	53
WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, WIDA ACCESS®, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS	53
ACT Assessments	55
PreACT.....	55
The ACT	55
ACT WorkKeys	56
G. National Assessment of Educational Progress	58
Participation and Sampling	58
NAEP Test Results.....	59
NAEP Assessment Schedule	60
NAEP Resources.....	60
H. Preparation for Test Administrations.....	61
Annual Testing Plans.....	61
School Testing Plans.....	61
Notifying Parents or Legal Guardians of Required State Tests	61
North Carolina Standardized Testing and Participation Requirements.....	63

Large Scale Administrations	63
Flexible Seating	64
Visitors	64
Monitoring Students during Test Administrations	64
Test Materials	64
Instruction Before Test Day	65
Upholding Test Security	65
Testing Sites	66
Virtual Schools and Remote Instruction	66
Suspended Students	66
Hospital and Homebound Testing	67
Testing in a North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center	69
Unexpected School Closings, Inclement Weather, or Student Dismissals and Testing Requirements	70
Testing Windows	71
English Learners' First Year in United States (US) Schools	71
Grade 8 Students Enrolled for Credit in NC Math 1	71
I. Online Testing	73
Online Test Format	73
Online Assessment Tutorials	73
Technical Specifications for NCTest	74
Acceptable Devices for Online Administrations	74
J. Reporting and Scoring	76
Requirement to Report Student Scores	76
Public Records Exemption	76
Confidentiality of Student Scores When Publicizing Test Results	76
Scoring	77
Invalid Test Scores	77
K. District Requirements for Ordering, Receiving, Destroying and Returning Test Materials	79
Before Ordering	79
Shipping and Receiving	79
Guides and Handbooks	80
Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box	80
Test Materials to Be Temporarily Stored Locally	80
Online Test Materials	81
Paper Test Materials to Be Returned to the TOPS Warehouse	81
Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse	82

Test Materials Stored at TOPS.....	83
Vendor Test Materials Return.....	83
L. Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential Schools' Requirements for	
Ordering, Receiving, Storing, Destroying, and Returning Test Materials	84
Before Ordering	84
Storing Materials.....	84
Shipping and Receiving.....	85
Guides and Handbooks	85
Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box.....	85
Online Test Materials.....	86
Paper Test Materials to Be Returned to the TOPS Warehouse.....	86
Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse	87
Test Materials Stored at TOPS.....	88
Vendor Test Materials Return.....	88
M. Testing Irregularities and Misadministrations	89
Testing Violations and Testing Irregularities	89
Entering OTISS Reports.....	89
Technical Issues.....	89
Irregularity Classifications.....	90
OTISS Investigation Documentation.....	94
Misadministrations.....	94
N. District and School Assessment Monitoring.....	96
Purpose	96
School Monitoring.....	96
District Monitoring.....	96
Review and Follow-Up.....	97
Monitoring Cohort Graduation Rates	97
O. Data Security.....	98
Third-Party Service Providers and Personally Identifiable Information	98
Handling and Transmitting Personally Identifiable Information	99
Viewing Secure State Tests and Obtaining Data for Research	100
Research Data Requests	101
Maintaining the Confidentiality and Security of Testing and Accountability	
Data	101
Security of Student Test Records and Data	102
P. Additional Information	104
Summer School Testing	104

Policies and Procedures for Students Receiving Services at a Visited School	104
Definition of Terms	105
Examples for Clarification	107
Community Residential Centers—Testing Policy	113
NC School Report Cards	115
State Testing Results	116
Appendix A: Directions for Accessing the Online Training Courses	117
Appendix B: Sample Parent or Legal Guardian Letter About Required State Testing (No Opt-Out State)	118
Appendix C: Parent's or Legal Guardian's Right to Know—Sample Letter	119
Appendix D: Confidentiality and Test Security Agreements	120
District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement.....	121
Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement.....	123
School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement.....	125
Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement	127
Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement.....	129
Appendix E: PSU Test Coordinator's Responsibilities Check-Off List.....	131
Appendix F: School Testing Plans.....	133
Appendix G: Sample Test Planning Document.....	136
Appendix H: Sample Training Sign-In Sheet.....	137
Appendix I: Sample Materials Check-Out/Check-In Sheet.....	138
Appendix J: Sample Testing Irregularity Parent or Legal Guardian Notification Form	139
Appendix K: Sample Self-Monitoring Report Form	140
Appendix L: Sample Record of Students Absent from Makeup Testing	142
Appendix M: Transcription Verification Tracking Form	143
Appendix N: Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification Form	144
Appendix O: TOPS Return Verification Form.....	145
Appendix P: OTISS Testing Irregularity Investigation Checklist.....	146
Appendix Q: Sample—Test Security Action Plan	148

Appendix R: Abbreviations Commonly Used in the Offices of Accountability and Testing	149
Appendix S: State Board of Education (SBE) Policies, North Carolina Administrative Codes, and Legislative Requirements.....	153
Appendix T: North Carolina Read to Achieve Promotional Pathways and Exemptions.....	155
Good Cause Exemptions.....	158
Appendix U: 2026–27 Courses for Credit Requiring the North Carolina End-of-Course Test.....	160
Appendix V: Process for Requesting Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies and/or Conditions	162
Appendix W: Process for Requesting Approval for a 10/20 Day Withdrawal.....	167
Appendix X: Flexible Testing Permission Request Process	168
Appendix Y: Monitoring Checklists	170
Appendix Z: Timing Information for Required Assessments 2026–2027	176
Appendix AA: <i>Testing Code of Ethics</i>	179

A. Introduction

Purpose of the *North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook*

The purpose of the *North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook* is to provide public school unit (PSU) test coordinators with a reference for implementing proper test administrations for the Annual Testing Program. This handbook provides information to ensure the integrity of the testing program is maintained, results generated from the program are valid, and subsequent reporting is accurate and appropriate.

Fundamental State Testing Premises

1. **Legal Compliance and Universal Participation:**
K–12 tests must follow federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) requirements, including annual English language arts, mathematics, science, and English language proficiency tests and maintain at least a 95% participation rate for accountability reporting.
2. **Accessibility, Inclusion, and Accommodations:**
All students, including those with disabilities and English learners, must be included in state testing with or without accommodations. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and the *Americans with Disabilities Act* protections ensure equal access for all students.
3. **Test Security and Ethical Administration:**
Districts and schools must implement test security procedures. These include staff training, secure materials handling, standardized administration, device restrictions, and prompt reporting of irregularities and prohibited actions.
4. **Technology Readiness and Secure Testing Environment:**
Online testing requires verified device specifications and proper configuration to prevent access to unauthorized resources.
5. **Data Privacy, Reporting Integrity, and Transparent Communication:**
The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (FERPA) governs confidentiality of student records and score data; districts must safeguard personally identifiable information (PII), report results ethically and provide families with clear information about assessment purposes.

School-Based Management and Accountability Program

According to [General Statute §115C-105.20](#), which addresses the school-based management and accountability program, “The General Assembly believes that all children can learn. It is the intent of the General Assembly that the mission of the public school community is to challenge with high expectations each child to learn, to achieve, and to fulfill his or her potential. With that mission as its guide, the State Board of Education shall develop a School-Based Management and Accountability Program. The primary goal of the Program shall be to improve student performance.”

The Annual Testing Program

The purposes of the Annual Testing Program, as described in [General Statute §115C-174.10](#), are as follows:

- i. “to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society;
- ii. to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and
- iii. to establish additional means for making the education system at the state, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results.”

A list of state-mandated tests is updated annually on the [NCDPI's Accountability and Testing website](#).

Components. [General Statute §115C-174.11\(c\)](#), Annual Testing Program, states the following:

“(c) Annual Testing Program.

- 1) The State Board of Education shall adopt the tests for grades three through 12 that are required by federal law or as a condition of a federal grant. These tests shall be designed to measure progress toward reading, communication skills, and mathematics for grades three through eight, and toward competencies for grades nine through 12. Students who do not pass the tests adopted for eighth grade shall be provided remedial instruction in the ninth grade.
- 2) If the State Board of Education finds that additional testing in grades three through 12 is desirable to allow comparisons with national indicators of student achievement, that testing shall be conducted with the smallest size sample of students necessary to assure valid comparisons with other states.”

Participation. As stated in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315 \(a\)](#), “All students enrolled in a public school unit (PSU) in grades 3 through 8 or in high school courses in which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is administered shall participate in the State Annual Testing Program. PSUs shall report to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) test results for:

- (1) beginning of grade 3 reading proficiency;
- (2) grades 3 through 8 end-of-grade (EOG) English language arts/reading and mathematics;
- (3) grades 5 and 8 EOG science;
- (4) grade 10 EOC English II;
- (5) grade 11 EOC assessments in NC Math 1, NC Math 3, and EOC Biology;
- (6) grade 11 ACT; and
- (7) grade 12 Career and Technical Education Concentrators and WorkKeys.”

Per State Board of Education (SBE) policy [ACCT-021\(1B\)](#), “For the accountability model, a school that does not assess at least 95 percent of its expected test population for the all students group and each subgroup of students will be deemed not to have met participation rate requirements.”

There are three ways students may participate in the Annual Testing Program:

1. participation in the standard state test administration (i.e., without testing accommodations),
2. participation in the standard state test with testing accommodations, or
3. participation in a North Carolina alternate assessment, with or without testing accommodations.

Test administrators who provide accommodations for students with disabilities must refer to the most recent applicable guides and handbooks and any published test administration supplements or updates.

Rules, Guidelines, and Procedures

Per [SBE policy TEST-009](#), “the information contained within the North Carolina Testing Program policy documents shall apply to all public school personnel who are responsible for the implementation of the North Carolina Testing Program. These documents include the test administrator’s manuals and guides for each test, test material processing guides, handbooks, [The Proctor’s Guide](#), the [North Carolina Testing Security: Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel publication](#), the [Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners publication](#), the North Carolina [Testing Students with](#)

[Disabilities Handbook](#), and any subsequent published supplements or updates and periodic training provided to each local education agency (LEA). The information shall set forth the rules and procedures required for a standard test administration and shall be provided to each LEA by the department through the LEA test coordinator. The LEA superintendent shall ensure that each school follows the established testing procedures by keeping building-level administrators informed of their responsibilities. Local boards of education shall cooperate with the State Board of Education in implementing the provisions of this policy.”

Test Security

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(b\)](#), the definition of “secure test” is “any test developed, adopted, or provided by the State Board of Education that has not been released under [G.S. § 115C-174.13](#).” SBE policy [TEST-004](#) specifies that “secure tests, including all test materials and test questions, are not to be reproduced in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of the test publisher. School personnel must not disclose the contents of secure tests. They must not discuss with each other, or with students, specific test questions or information contained within the tests or write about them on the internet or on social media sites. In addition, excerpts from the tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides. Access to the tests shall be limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need. Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use their access to those materials for personal gain.”

Secure or copyrighted state tests shall not be copied, reproduced, paraphrased, filed, or used directly in instructional activities or for professional development. Copying, reproducing, or paraphrasing test materials represents a breach of test security and is a violation of federal copyright laws, [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#), and SBE policy.

Any content discovered and suspected of containing test questions, answers, or information from secure tests (e.g., copies of documents, links, images) of which the origin is unknown, must be reported to the regional accountability office before use in a district or school. Individuals are not permitted to create or save electronic files of secure test questions, including answers, or save or post them through a vendor, Google Drive, email, social media, web posting, or any other method.

Test Administration Security Recommendations

To affirm testing protocols are followed with fidelity and to ensure reported test scores accurately reflect student achievement and support state and local accountability measures, the NCDPI continues to highly recommend the following test administration best practices:

- When possible, a teacher who is not exposed to the test subject content should be assigned to administer EOG and EOC tests.
- When the teacher of record is administering the test, a second person serving as a proctor should be present during the test session.
- If assigning a proctor to each test administration is not feasible, roving proctors should be used to monitor no more than three test sessions.

As a reminder, PSUs are expected to conduct internal monitoring during test administrations. Additional guidance about internal monitoring, including a [Sample Self-Monitoring Report Form](#), is available in this publication. PSUs, schools, and the Annual Testing Program are responsible for working together to maintain the integrity of state tests and test security to ensure the fidelity of student test scores.

Testing Code of Ethics

The *Testing Code of Ethics* ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#)) serves as foundational guidance for all testing practices within North Carolina. All staff members involved in testing are expected to thoroughly review and fully understand the *Testing Code of Ethics*. The document emphasizes the critical importance of maintaining test security at all times and outlines the professional standards expected of central office personnel, school administrators, test coordinators, teachers, test administrators, and proctors. It provides detailed expectations related to securing testing materials; administering assessments; and scoring, reporting, and interpreting test results.

The *Testing Code of Ethics* also includes information about possible sanctions if the NC Administrative Rule is compromised,

“(r) In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

- (1) withhold any monetary incentive awards;
- (2) file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
- (3) seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and
- (4) in accordance with the provisions of [16 NCAC 06C .0312](#), suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.”

A copy of the *Testing Code of Ethics* can be found in the appendix of this handbook and is also printed in the appendix section of all North Carolina test administration guides.

District and school test coordinators should direct any questions about *the Testing Code of Ethics* to their regional accountability office.

The Test Development Process

The test development process involves multiple checks and balances guided by testing experts and professionals. The test development process begins after new content standards are adopted by the North Carolina SBE. Various stakeholders serve advisory roles in the test development process. Stakeholders include:

- North Carolina educators and administrators,
- NCDPI-Office of Teaching and Learning Specialists,
- North Carolina State University-Technical Outreach for Public Schools (NCSU-TOPS) content specialists,
- NCSU-TOPS accessibility specialists,
- NCSU-TOPS production, editing, and copyright staff, and
- content-specific experts.

Prior to the test development process, the standards to be measured are defined during test specification meetings. North Carolina educators collaborate and develop recommendations for prioritization of standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for test design for each content area. Subsequently, test development staff from the NCDPI meet with various advisors to review the recommendations from the teacher panels and to adopt final weight distributions across the domains for each grade level.

Once test specifications are adopted, item writers and reviewers complete training on the new subject-specific content standards. The training also includes an overview of item writing, sensitivity, accessibility, and fairness guidelines. North Carolina educators start the item development process by creating new items with various advisors providing feedback on item quality throughout the eighteen-step test development process. The development process concludes with the NCDPI test measurement specialist evaluating the recommendations from all advisors and then finalizing and approving the item, reading selection, or test form.

Teachers interested in training to become an item writer or reviewer for the Annual Testing Program, should visit the [North Carolina Testing Program: Item Writing and Reviewing Opportunities Form](#) for more information.

Refer to the [Assessment Development Process document](#) for an in-depth explanation.

B. Resources

Accountability and Testing Website

The [Accountability and Testing website](#) is a public resource that provides information about state tests, policies and procedures for testing, and accountability results.

Protocol for Communication

To keep individuals well informed about topics related to test development, testing policies and procedures, accountability, and reporting, the Annual Testing Program supports two-way exchanges between communication levels that include ongoing dialogues at each level. Questions and information should be answered by appropriate staff at each level.

- **Offices of Accountability and Testing**
 - Communicates with the Regional Accountability Office and Superintendents.
- **Regional Accountability Office**
 - Communicates with the Offices of Accountability and Testing, Superintendents, and PSU Test Coordinators.
- **PSU Test Coordinators**
 - Communicate with the Regional Accountability Office, Superintendents, School Test Coordinators, Principals, and Directors.
- **School Test Coordinators, Principals, Directors or Designees**
 - Communicate with PSU Test Coordinators, Students, Parents and Legal Guardians, Teachers, Test Administrators and Proctors.

Refer to [Figure 1](#) for an illustrated communication flow chart for the Offices of Accountability and Testing.

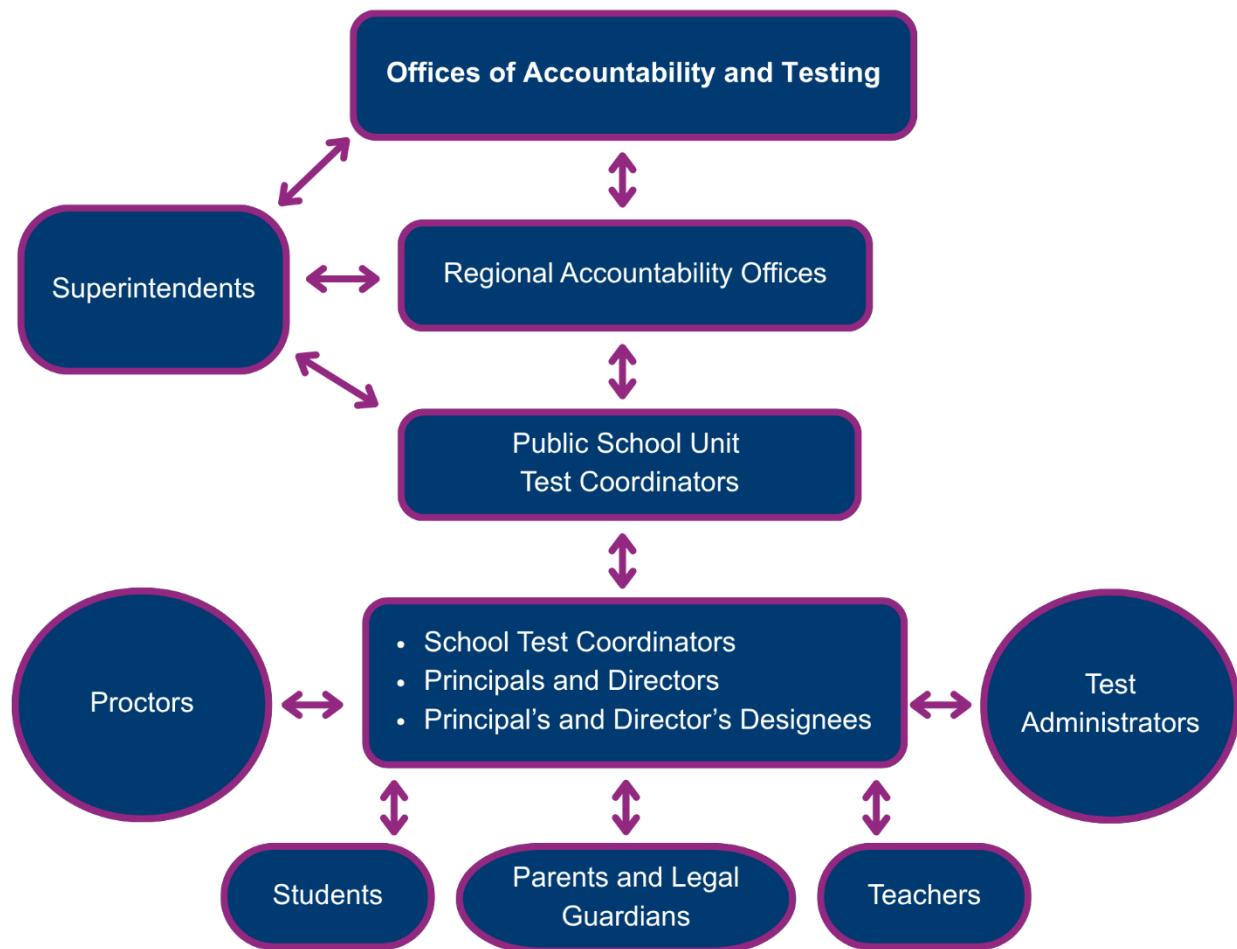


FIGURE 1. Communication protocol for North Carolina testing information.

Contact Information

Refer to the [NCDPI Contact Us webpage](#) for NCDPI's mailing address, physical address, and general phone numbers.

Offices of Accountability and Testing Directory

A directory of contact information for staff within the Offices of Accountability and Testing may be found on the [Accountability and Testing website](#). The directory includes the following:

- Directors' Offices,
- Psychometric and Test Design,
- Analysis and Reporting,
- Test Development,
- Testing Policy and Operations,
- Regional Accountability Coordinators (RACs) and Regional Computing Consultants (RCCs), and
- IT staff.

Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE)

[EDDIE](#) is the authoritative source for North Carolina public school codes and demographic information, and it is used by multiple systems, including [The Offices of Accountability and Testing](#), the [NC Student Information System \(NCSIS\)](#), and [School Report Cards](#). EDDIE is also used to meet federal reporting requirements. PSUs are responsible for ensuring that EDDIE is kept up to date throughout the year.

The test coordinator for districts and schools must be listed in EDDIE. District and school test coordinators are expected to collaborate with PSU EDDIE managers to ensure the correct test coordinator information is documented in EDDIE. Test coordinators should click on the PSU Reports tab on the left side of the page, and then from the drop-down list select the staff history link to check and ensure the person listed is correct. The line titled "Accountability" on the staff history page is where district test coordinators are listed, and the line titled "School Testing/Accountability Coord" is where test coordinators for schools within a district or charter, lab, regional, and residential schools are listed. If the test coordinator changes during the school year, PSUs must notify the RAC and ensure EDDIE is updated immediately to reflect the newly designated test coordinator for the district or school. To ensure continuity and consistency, it is best practice to keep the same person in the test coordinator role at the district and school level throughout the school year.

Testing News Network (TNN)

The [TNN](#) is a closed information and collaboration site where important testing information and updates are posted by the Offices of Accountability and Testing. Only PSU test coordinators are granted access to TNN through their regional accountability office. Test coordinators should check TNN News daily for testing information and updates. TNN's dual purpose is to: provide secure dissemination of information to local school system test coordinators, and index critical events, policies, reports, communications, process details, and software upgrades. School test coordinators within a district are not granted access to TNN; therefore, the PSU test coordinator is responsible for ensuring all timely and pertinent information is shared locally.

Non-public Schools Testing Service

The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services provides access to state test materials to nonpublic schools through the Nonpublic Schools Testing Service (NPSTS) program. All questions regarding nonpublic school testing should be directed to Brian Swiger at (919) 515-4624. For more information on the NPSTS, refer to the [Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services: Educational Services website](#).

NC Education and NCTest

NCTest and NCAdmin systems will not be available July 7–17, 2027 to allow the NC Education testing management platform to reset for the 2027–28 school year. During this time, it will not be possible to administer any online or paper state-designated tests (including NC Check-Ins 2.0) or to review reports.

If an NC Education or NCTest problem cannot be resolved locally, districts and schools should contact the help desk:

- Email: ncdesk@ncsu.edu
- Phone: (919) 515-1320
- Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)

Test Administration Guides, Publications, Handbooks, and Administrative Documents

As noted in NC State Board of Education policy, [TEST-009](#), “The information contained within the North Carolina Testing Program policy documents shall apply to all public school personnel who are responsible for the implementation of the North Carolina Testing Program.” Test administration guides, publications, handbooks, and administrative documents are available online within TNN under “Administrative

Documents” and are not considered secure test materials. These publications provide information about testing and accountability policies and procedures, directions for administering tests and ensuring test security. To maintain the standardization and integrity of test administrations across the state, these publications may not be altered in any way.

Assessment Briefs

[Assessment Briefs](#) are publications that contain information related to testing and accountability and may be helpful when explaining certain aspects of the Annual Testing Program to staff, students, parents, and legal guardians

Test Specification Information

[Test specification documents](#) are available for each state-mandated test administered by the Annual Testing Program. These documents provide technical information about the tests, such as types of questions, number of questions, delivery mode, assessed standards, and the weight distribution (percentage) of each assessed domain.

Information about Test Questions

North Carolina state tests contain a small portion of field test questions which do not count toward or against a student's score. These questions are indistinguishable from operational questions and should not interfere with students' test-taking experiences. The NCDPI does not share embedment information for field test questions with regional accountability offices, schools, parents, legal guardians, or students.

Released Test Questions

The Annual Testing Program provides released tests for most state-mandated tests. (Released tests aligned to previously adopted standards are no longer available.) Released test forms reflect the currently adopted content standards and can be accessed by typing “Released Tests” in the NCDPI website search bar.

To navigate the [Released Tests](#) webpage,

1. select a test type from the “Type of State Test” dropdown box,
2. select “Released Tests,” from the “Resource” dropdown box, and then
3. select “Apply.”

Released questions may also be accessed through the secure browser and NCTest apps for Chromebook and iPad. Released test questions for the NCEXTEND1 test can be accessed online via the [NCEXTEND1 Released Items website](#).

Released questions and assessments are copyrighted by the NCDPI and cannot be uploaded into third-party applications. These materials and the information contained within must not be used for personal or financial gain. North Carolina PSUs, school officials, and teachers may download and duplicate these materials for instructional and educational purposes only.

C. Roles and Responsibilities

All personnel involved in testing serve vital roles and are accountable for upholding the security of testing. The responsibilities outlined below align with the *Testing Code of Ethics* and reinforce adherence to all established testing policies and procedures.

Responsibilities of the NCDPI

The NCDPI shall:

- develop, revise, publish, and provide timely updates to PSUs on the policies and procedures required for standardized test administrations. These guidelines are provided through regional accountability offices.
- develop, procure, distribute, and bear the cost of the testing materials necessary for the administration of tests mandated by the North Carolina General Assembly and the SBE.
- score or have scored all tests in the Annual Testing Program and shall provide scoring and interpretative services to PSUs.

In the event there is a stand-alone field test, an internal committee of directors or their designee for the Offices of Teaching and Learning, Exceptional Children, Charter Schools, Federal Programs, Advanced Learning and Gifted Education, as well as the Superintendent's Principal Advisor and the Superintendent's Teacher Advisor, will review any submitted appeals from participation. The resulting recommendation(s) is presented to the SBE for approval or denial.

Test Coordinator Credentials

Test coordinators require access to the [NCTest Admin](#) platform to carry out their duties. A username and password are required for access.

New test coordinators create an account through the [NC Auth website](#), verify their email address, and set up two-factor authentication. The regional accountability staff will then assign the test coordinator to the appropriate organization and assign applicable user roles in NCTest Admin. NCTest Admin will enable the test coordinator's access to TNN News, administrative documents, the test materials ordering system, the secure shell, and to other test administration resources. For additional information about NCTest Admin, refer to the *NCTest Admin Guidance* posted on TNN > NC Education and NCTest Admin Guidance.

Selection and Training of District Test Coordinators

“The local superintendent in a local education agency (LEA) shall act as or appoint an LEA test coordinator to assist in the local administration, reporting, and interpretation of results of any ‘secure test,’ . . . administered in the Annual Testing Program” ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \[a\]](#)).

As outlined in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \(b\)](#), “LEA test coordinators shall attend required monthly test administration training sessions provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on subjects including proper test administration, test security, appropriate use of accommodations, scanning and scoring answer sheets, and preparation of test materials for scoring at a central site.”

Duties of District Test Coordinators

District test coordinators oversee school test coordinators within their district. After receiving test administration training from the NCDPI regional accountability office, per [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \[c\]](#), the district test coordinator trains local personnel who are responsible for all (vendor and non-vendor) test administration procedures. This training must include procedures for test administrations that require accommodations and must emphasize the need to follow the directions outlined by the test publisher. The district test coordinator is responsible for managing and monitoring all vendor and non-vendor state tests (the Beginning-of-Grade 3 [BOG3] Reading Test, EOG tests, EOC tests, the Read to Achieve [RtA] Test, WIDA Screeners [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, WIDA Alternate Screener], WIDA ACCESS®, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, ACT WorkKeys, College and Career Alternate Assessments [CCRAA], and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to school test coordinators during all state test administrations.

District test coordinators must perform or oversee the following procedures annually:

- Read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure all school test coordinators read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in accordance with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher.
- Ensure the security of test materials.
- Sign the required [District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) found in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.

- Attend training sessions conducted by the regional accountability office and test vendor(s), when applicable, on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
 - The district test coordinator listed in EDDIE is required to attend regional training dates. If a district test coordinator is unable to attend scheduled training, it is the responsibility of the test coordinator to delegate a substitute representative to attend the training. If this is not possible, the test coordinator will be required to attend training outside of the assigned region.
- Complete and submit to the regional office a PSU Annual Testing Plan.
- Oversee the planning and implementation of training for all school test coordinators, school test administrators, and proctors within the district.
 - Utilization of proctors is highly recommended, but it is a local decision to have proctors serve as additional monitors.
- Maintain accurate attendance records for all school test coordinator training sessions.
- Investigate all reports of testing irregularities and violations of ethical testing practices and immediately report them to the superintendent and the regional accountability office.
- Declare a test misadministration when appropriate. All misadministrations must be reported to the superintendent, principal or director, and the RAC.
- Use and follow all procedures in the *Online Testing Irregularity Submission System* (OTISS) to document and report all testing irregularities within five days of the occurrence.
- Ensure appropriate staff receive training to provide accommodations.
- Order enough copies of test materials (i.e., test administration guides, supplemental testing materials) to ensure successful testing within the school(s).
- Account to TOPS, the NCDPI, or the vendor for all test materials received.
 - Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are first received.
 - Report immediately to TOPS or the vendor (as applicable) any discrepancies in the number of materials received.
- Develop a system of checking out and checking in of test materials to ensure that at each level of distribution and collection all secure materials are tracked, returned, and accounted for.
- Ensure access to test materials is restricted to appropriate district staff.

- Ensure the district has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized district personnel when secure materials are stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff, office staff) must not have access to the storage facility.
- Serve as the point of contact to account for all testing data and data corrections.
- Provide information to principals, teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians at the beginning of each school year, (per [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(g\)](#)) advising them of the local and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, the information provided to parents or legal guardians must include whether the SBE or local board of education requires the test(s).
- Ensure that all school principals and directors read and sign annually the [Principal/Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the school test coordinator. The required *Principal/Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* can be found in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure that all school test coordinators read and sign annually the [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the district test coordinator. The required *School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure school test coordinators have a copy of the [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) for test administrators participating in training for the administration of North Carolina state-mandated tests and that they are aware all test administrators at their school must sign the form before administering a test. The required *Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure school test coordinators are in compliance with the test administration information included in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(a\)\(1\)\(2\)](#).
- Ensure each school has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored, and staff clearly understand test material handling and storage procedures. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel when secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff, office staff) must not have access to the storage facility.
- Ensure each school establishes procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with the *Testing Code of Ethics* and test publisher's guidelines.

- Ensure each school test coordinator:
 - develops and documents in writing a schoolwide testing plan for administering tests under secure conditions.
 - receives and stores testing materials in a secure manner.
 - implements a system of checking out and checking in test materials to ensure all materials are returned and accounted for.
 - implements a system (or process) to maintain accurate testing data.

District Test Coordinators and Virtual Schools

District test coordinators overseeing testing sites for virtual schools must ensure that if testing occurs at more than one location there is a trained school test coordinator at each location for the entire testing session(s) to ensure someone is available to answer all questions, maintain the school/site testing plan, relieve test administrators as needed, and properly manage testing irregularities and misadministrations.

The PSU test coordinator listed in EDDIE is responsible for training school staff as school test coordinators for additional testing locations. All duties of the school test coordinator role apply to these individuals, including the completion of the [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). All PSU testing policies and procedures, as designated in this handbook, apply to test sites utilizing a school test coordinator. Due to these requirements, the school test coordinator must not be responsible for administering or proctoring a test unless only one test session is occurring at the school. If the school test coordinator is not available during testing, the principal or director must assign an appropriate, trained, backup test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.

Best Practices and Considerations for Principals and Directors When Selecting School Test Coordinators

Per [16 NCAC 06D .0311\(h\)](#), “the principal or the principal’s designee shall serve as school test coordinator.” The principal, if not serving as the school test coordinator, should select a candidate who intends to remain in the position for the duration of one school year or longer. It is recommended that test coordinators are not classroom teachers. The principal should also consider whether the candidate can accomplish the following duties as part of their job responsibilities:

- Ability to respond to phone calls and emails in a timely manner.
- Maintain strong organization, communication, and computer skills.

- Capability to work with school administration to select and train a back-up school test coordinator in case of emergency.
- Capability to collaborate with other staff members (e.g., Exceptional Children [EC], Career and Technical Education [CTE], English Learner [EL]) in the school when creating the annual site testing plan.
- Availability to attend all meetings and trainings with the district test coordinator (applies to school test coordinators within a district only).
- Capability to manage and monitor all vendor and non-vendor state tests (e.g., the BOG3 Reading Test, EOG tests, EOC tests, the RtA test, WIDA Screeners [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, WIDA Alternate Screener], WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, ACT WorkKeys, College and CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1).
- Unencumbered availability on days the school is administering any state test.

Duties of Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential School Test Coordinators

The principal or director for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools shall either serve as or designate a school test coordinator. It is recommended that test coordinators are not classroom teachers. The test coordinator at these schools is responsible for managing and monitoring all vendor and non-vendor state tests (the BOG3 Reading Test, EOG tests, EOC tests, the RtA Test, WIDA Screeners [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, WIDA Alternate Screener], WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, ACT WorkKeys, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations. If testing occurs at more than one location there must be a trained school test coordinator at each location for the duration of the testing sessions to ensure someone is available to answer all questions, maintain the school/site testing plan, relieve test administrators as needed, and properly manage testing irregularities and misadministrations.

The PSU test coordinator listed in EDDIE is responsible for training school staff as school test coordinators for additional testing locations. All duties of the school test coordinator role apply to these individuals, including the completion of the [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). All PSU testing policies and procedures, as designated in this handbook, apply to test sites utilizing a school test coordinator. Due to these requirements, the school test coordinator must not be responsible for administering or proctoring a test. If only one test session occurs at the school, the school test coordinator may serve as the test administrator for this session. If the school test coordinator is not available during testing, the principal or director must

assign an appropriate, trained, backup test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.

Test coordinators at charter, lab, regional, and residential schools must perform or oversee the following procedures and responsibilities annually:

- Read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure the security of test materials and the integrity of the Annual Testing Program are maintained at all times.
- Ensure the school principal and/or director reviews and understands the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure all staff associated with state testing reviews and understands the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Read and sign the [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#), found in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook, and ensure submission to the regional accountability office.
- Ensure that the school principal or director reviews, understands, and signs annually the [Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) found in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook. A copy of this agreement must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the school test coordinator.
- Assist the school principal or director in understanding his or her duties and responsibilities related to the Annual Testing Program and the implementation of state tests.
- Ensure all test administrators attend or complete training before any test administration and sign the required *Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* at the end of every training session.
 - The [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook and must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the school test coordinator.
 - Copies of these agreements should be available during monitoring, as needed.
 - For vendor tests, required test training documentation or certification must be completed according to the vendor's policies (e.g., WIDA assessments).
- Establish procedures to ensure all test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) comply with the test publisher's guidelines.
- Adhere to state-mandated test administration windows.

- Attend training sessions conducted by the regional accountability office and/or test vendor(s) on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
 - If a test coordinator is unable to attend a scheduled training, it is the responsibility of the principal to designate a substitute representative from the public school unit to attend the training. If this is not possible, the test coordinator will attend training outside of the assigned region. Please note the public school unit test coordinator listed in EDDIE is required to attend one of the published monthly training dates. For charter, lab, regional, and residential schools, this role is titled "School Testing/Accountability Coord".
- Check TNN daily and disseminate information to principals and/or directors.
- Complete and submit an Annual Testing Plan to the regional accountability office.
- Ensure testing plans for each state-mandated test are developed and submitted annually to the regional accountability office.
 - If selected for an unannounced monitoring visit, the monitor will request a copy of the school testing plan from the front office staff upon entry to the school. It is expected that the plan will be provided and reviewed as part of the monitoring visit.
- At the beginning of each school year, collaborate with other school officials to provide information to teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians advising them of the state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether the state or the local school board requires the test(s).
- Coordinate with state representatives in the event of a monitoring visit to ensure testing policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.
- Select test administrators who meet the following criteria:
 - Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307\(a\)](#), "Only current or retired professional educators as defined in [G.S. §115C-270.1\(2\)](#) or teachers who
 1. are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
 2. have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in Rule .0308 of this Section shall administer secure tests."
 - To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested.

- Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.
- Ensure access to test materials is restricted to appropriate staff.
- Ensure the school has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored and staff clearly understand test material handling and storage procedures. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel when secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff, office staff) must not have access to the storage facility.
- Monitor to ensure plans for administering tests under secure conditions are implemented appropriately.
- Prepare the physical conditions for the testing rooms, including rooms to which students may be relocated for extended time purposes, to ensure:
 - Teachers have covered or removed bulletin boards and instructional displays that contain content being measured or test-taking strategies.
 - Teachers have covered or removed all reference materials on testing room walls, student desks, devices, or workstations.
- Oversee the planning and implementation of training for test administrators and proctors (if utilized).
 - Maintain accurate attendance records for all school staff training sessions and keep these records on file at the school.
- Ensure all appropriate staff receive training in procedures for providing approved accommodations for state-mandated tests to students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
 - Monitor to ensure all documented accommodations are provided to students, to what extent the accommodations are used by the students during the test administration, and that the information is documented in the *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing* form.
- Ensure all eligible students are tested.
- Ensure every student participating in online testing has completed the online assessment tutorial at least one time before the test administration.
- Order enough copies of test materials (e.g., guides, supplemental materials) to ensure successful testing will occur within the school(s).
- Account for all test materials received.

- Develop a system of checking out and checking in of test materials to ensure all secure materials are tracked, returned, and accounted for at each level of distribution and collection.
- Distribute test materials immediately before the test administration ([16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0311](#)) unless otherwise authorized by the NCDPI or the vendor.
- Account for all test materials before they are returned to the secure, locked storage facility.
 - Verify that the number of secure materials returned by the school matches the count taken when the school first received the materials.
- Maintain the confidentiality of individual student scores when reporting test results to the public and the media.
- Use and follow all procedures in the [OTISS](#) to document and report all testing irregularities or misadministrations within five days of the occurrence.
- Immediately report irregularities to the school director or principal and the regional accountability office. Ensure completed and signed irregularity investigation checklists, investigation summaries, and all pertinent investigation documentation is uploaded to the OTISS within five business days of the occurrence (or the date the incident was identified).
- Collaborate with the school director or principal and the regional accountability office for consensus before deciding whether to declare a misadministration.

Duties of School Test Coordinators within Districts

According to [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0308 \(d\)](#), “School test coordinators shall conduct training in the Annual Testing Program for any test administrators or proctors.” The school test coordinator is responsible for managing and monitoring all vendor and non-vendor state tests (the BOG3 Reading Test, EOG tests, EOC tests, the RtA Test, WIDA Screeners [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener, WIDA Alternate Screener], WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, ACT WorkKeys, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations; therefore, the school test coordinator should not be given the responsibility of proctoring or administering a test. If only one test session occurs at the school, the school test coordinator may serve as the test administrator for this session. If the school test coordinator will not be available during testing, the principal or director must assign an appropriate, trained, backup test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.

The school test coordinator within a district must perform the following annually:

- Read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Read and sign the [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the district test coordinator. The *School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- At the beginning of each school year, collaborate with other school officials to provide information to teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians advising them of the state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, how the results from the tests will be used, and whether the state or the local school board requires the test(s).
- Ensure the security of test materials and the integrity of the NCDPI Annual Testing Program are maintained at all times.
- Ensure all staff members associated with state testing read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Adhere to the state-mandated test administration testing windows.
- Attend training sessions conducted by the district test coordinator and test vendor(s) on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
- Develop test-specific plans for each test administration that, at a minimum, includes room assignments, test administrator names, standard and accommodated test sessions, accommodated test session types, and make-up testing information.
- Coordinate with district and state representatives in the event of a monitoring visit to ensure testing policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.
 - If selected for an unannounced monitoring visit, the monitor will request a copy of the school testing plan from the front office staff upon entry to the school. It is expected that the plan will be provided and reviewed as part of the monitoring visit.
- Inform personnel that anyone who learns of a breach of security, loss of test materials, failure to account for test materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures must immediately report that information to the principal or school test coordinator, who in turn will inform the district test coordinator.
- Monitor to ensure plans for administering tests under secure conditions are implemented appropriately.
- Prepare the physical conditions for the testing room, including rooms to which students may be relocated for extended time purposes.

- Ensure teachers have covered or removed bulletin boards and instructional displays that contain content being measured or test-taking strategies.
- Ensure teachers have covered or removed all reference materials on testing room walls and student desks, devices, or workstations.
- Plan and implement training for test administrators and proctors (if utilized).
 - Maintain accurate attendance records for all school staff test training sessions and keep these records on file at the school.
- Ensure all appropriate staff receive training to provide approved accommodations.
 - Ensure the need for test accommodations is documented.
 - Monitor to ensure all documented accommodations are provided to students and ensure *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms* are completed before testing, provided to test administrators during test sessions, and are complete when returned from test administrators.
- Ensure all test administrators attend training before administering any test that is part of the Annual Testing Program and sign a confidentiality and test security agreement at the end of every training session. These agreements must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the school test coordinator for the current school year and should be available during the test monitoring process. The required [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook. For vendor tests, required test training documentation or certification must be completed according to the vendor's policies (e.g., WIDA assessments).
- Establish procedures to ensure all test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) comply with the test publisher's guidelines.
- Select test administrators who meet the following criteria:
 - Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307\(a\)](#), "Only current or retired professional educators as defined in [G.S. §115C-270.1\(2\)](#) or teachers who
 1. are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
 2. have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in Rule .0308 of this Section shall administer secure tests."
 - To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested.

- Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.
- Ensure all eligible students are tested.
- Ensure every student participating in the online test(s) has completed the online assessment tutorial at least once before the test administration.
- Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are first received from the district test coordinator (or vendor, as appropriate). Report immediately to the district test coordinator (or vendor) any discrepancies in the count.
- Store test materials in a secure, locked facility. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel while secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff, office staff) must not have access to the facility.
- Ensure test materials are distributed immediately before the test administration unless otherwise authorized by the Annual Testing Program.
- Before and immediately after the test administration accurately count and verify with each test administrator the number of secure test materials, including student access codes and supplemental materials, received. Immediately report any discrepancies in the count to the district test coordinator or vendor.
- Return all test materials to the district test coordinator or vendor, as directed, immediately following the completion of the test administration.
- When returning test materials to the district test coordinator, count and verify that the number of secure test materials matches the count taken when the materials were first received.
- Maintain the confidentiality of individual student scores when reporting test results to the public and the media.
- Use and follow all procedures in the [OTISS](#) to document and report all testing irregularities within five days of the occurrence.
- Immediately report irregularities to the school principal and district test coordinator (or vendor, if appropriate).
 - Submit completed and signed irregularity investigation checklists, investigation summaries, and all pertinent investigation documentation to the district test coordinator within five business days of the occurrence (or the date the incident was identified).

- Consult with the school principal and the district test coordinator before deciding whether to declare a misadministration.

PSU Test Coordinator's Responsibilities for Ordering State Test Materials

The Annual Testing Program works closely with TOPS to manage the ordering and delivery of secure state test materials. State test materials (BOG3, RtA, EOG, EOC, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1) are ordered via NC Education in the North Carolina testing program ordering system maintained by TOPS on the TNN website. RAC approval is required before paper orders are shipped.

When ordering state test materials, PSU test coordinators shall:

- Provide accurate contact and shipping information within TNN and EDDIE so testing shipments are delivered to the correct address, and TOPS and NCDPI staff can contact the appropriate testing personnel, as necessary.
- Provide accurate test participation dates in the ordering system based on the PSU's testing calendar. Inclusion of participation dates ensures receipt of materials in a timely manner. Ordering pages are not available until the participation dates are entered and training has been completed.
- Prepare estimates of the quantities of materials necessary for each test. Estimates of guides and supplemental materials should be based on student membership.
- Paper test orders should be based on students documented accessibility needs.
- Carefully read the instructions, including any special instructions, on ordering pages before placing orders.
- Order the appropriate number of test materials in a timely manner.
- Ensure accommodation forms (i.e., *Braille*, *Large Print*, *One Test Item Per Page [OTIPP]*, *Large Print One Test Item Per Page*) are ordered at least thirty school days (forty school days for Braille) before the test administration date (or as soon as the ordering system becomes available, if fewer than thirty days before testing).
- Attend regional training each month to obtain important information about upcoming tests, such as testing windows, and student eligibility.
- Check TNN regularly for notices regarding test materials and disseminate information from TNN to principals and school test coordinators as appropriate.
- Ensure copies of any errata sheets or supplemental pages that are posted on TNN are provided to test administrators, as appropriate.

- Establish an alternate point of contact so that materials can be received without incident or breach of security on days when the test coordinator may be out of the office and unavailable to receive shipments.
- Inventory test materials upon arrival and inform TOPS immediately via email (group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu) or fax (919-515-4622) of any discrepancies in the shipment.
- Report nonreceipt of any materials to the regional office as soon as possible. The test coordinator must make every effort to ensure materials are ordered in time to meet the demands of the testing schedule.
- Follow the appropriate requirements in [Section K](#) (for districts) and [Section L](#) (for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools) of this handbook for the return of test materials, the secure destruction of test materials, and the secure storage of test materials.

Test coordinators receive notifications and training for state mandated tests that use ordering methods other than the TNN ordering system (e.g., WIDA, ACT).

Duties of School Counselors

Duties of school counselors are outlined in [G.S. §115C-316.1](#) as follows:

“(a) School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent (80%) of their work time providing direct services to students. Direct services shall consist of:

- (1) Delivering the school guidance curriculum through large group guidance, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent workshops.
- (2) Guiding individual student planning through individual or small group assistance and individual or small group advisement.
- (3) Providing responsive services through consultation with students, families, and staff; individual and small group counseling; crisis counseling; referrals; and peer facilitation.
- (4) Performing other student services listed in the Department of Public Instruction school counselor job description that has been approved by the State Board of Education.
- (5) Coordinating and providing training for students in peer-to-peer student support programs that address areas such as conflict resolution, general health and wellness, and mentoring. The Center for Safer Schools will support school counselors in the administration and delivery of peer-to-peer student support programs.

(b) School counselors shall not assist with the coordination or administration of standardized testing. (2013-360, s. 8.35(a); 2014-100, s. 8.33(a); 2023-78, s. 3(b); 2023-134, s. 7.27(e)).”

This law does not apply to charter schools, lab, regional, or residential schools.

Note, per [G.S. §115C-105.37\(a\)\(2\)](#), “Restart model [schools]... operate...with the same exemptions from statutes and rules as a charter school....”

Duties of Test Administrators

Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307\(a\)](#), “Only current or retired professional educators as defined in [G.S. §115C-270.1.2](#) or teachers who

- (1) are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
- (2) have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0308](#) of this Section shall administer secure tests.”

The North Carolina test administration guides outline test administrator’s responsibilities; however, primary responsibilities include:

- Preparing for and attending a test administrator training session(s) conducted by the school test coordinator before each test administration.
- When applicable, following the established procedures to facilitate the provision of accommodations during test administrations for students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
- Reading and signing the [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) (provided by the school test coordinator) at the end of every test administration training session. All signed confidentiality and test security agreements must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) with the school test coordinator.
- Thoroughly reading and studying the appropriate test administration guide before the test administration. Reviewing the student directions (script) and ensuring preparedness for the variations required by the testing conditions.
- Thoroughly reading and studying the *Testing Code of Ethics* before the test administration.
- Maintaining test security at all times.
- Ensuring each student tested has access to the appropriate test materials as specified in the test administration guide.
- Following procedures for the distribution and collection of any supplemental materials as specified in the test administration guide.

- Counting and recording the number of secure test materials, including student access codes and supplemental materials, before and after the test administration. Test administrators are expected to notify the school test coordinator or principal immediately of any discrepancies in the counts.
- Ensuring students' personal belongings are not accessed during testing.
- Ensuring all cell phones and electronic devices belonging to students, test administrators, and proctors are turned off and that no cell phones or other electronic devices are accessed at any time during test administration, including breaks.
- Ensuring usernames and passwords are never shared (e.g., test administrator credentials given to students or written on the board). NCTest user accounts are confidential.
- Maintaining the security of student access codes at all times.
- Confirming the student's name and the appropriate test name is correctly identified on the student's device.
- Administering the test to all eligible students.
- Ensuring the testing room assignment does not include a relative or ward.
- Conducting an unbiased administration of the test according to the policies, procedures, and directions in the test administration guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher.
- Reading directions to the students as they are written in the test administration guide.
- Monitoring the test administration by moving quietly and frequently throughout the room and scanning the students' work areas to ensure students follow the test directions, perform the required tasks, do not share responses, and those eligible have access to required accommodations.
- Avoiding actions or behaviors that involve modifying, changing, altering, or tampering with students' responses in test books or on device screens either during or after the test administration.
- Refraining from reading, taking pictures of, taking notes about, or electronically posting test questions from students' test books or screens on the internet or social media.
- Assisting students with emergencies (e.g., illness, necessary restroom breaks) during the test administration.
- Remaining in the room throughout the entire test administration unless there is an emergency. If an emergency arises and the test administrator must leave the room,

the school test coordinator must be notified to arrange for another trained test administrator to be present for the duration of testing.

- Prohibiting visitors from entering the classroom during the test administration, except when required for state or local monitoring of test administrations or under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations).
- Refraining from distracting behaviors (e.g., reading, conducting other personal or professional duties, talking or texting on cell phones, working on any other electronic device).
- Following the directions specified in the test administration guides for returning all used and unused testing materials and supplemental materials to the school test coordinator.
- Refraining from discussing specific questions from the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or asking students questions about the test. The only exception to this directive is when a staff member believes there has been a breach of test security which must immediately be reported to the principal or school test coordinator.
- Documenting and immediately reporting any testing irregularities to the school test coordinator, who will ensure the irregularities are submitted in the OTISS.

Duties of Proctors

As referenced in ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311 \[n\]](#)), “proctors serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test.”

All proctors must read, review and sign the [Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) form. This form must be reviewed each testing cycle (e.g., BOG3 reading test, fall EOC testing, spring EOC testing) and signed at the conclusion of proctor training. All signed confidentiality and test security agreements must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the school test coordinator and should be available during the monitoring process. The *Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.

For vendor-made assessments, test coordinators must ensure the proctor guidelines from the test publisher are followed.

When assigning proctors, the following best practices should be considered:

- Proctors should be school staff or responsible adult community volunteers (i.e., age eighteen or older and not enrolled as a student in the PSU).

- Proctors can be either (1) a one-on-one, full-time proctor (i.e., one proctor assisting one test administrator in a single testing room) or (2) a roving proctor (one proctor assisting up to three test administrators in three testing rooms).
- Proctors may assist in both standard and accommodated test sessions.
- A proctor should not be assigned to proctor in a room where his or her relative or ward is to be tested. Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the proctor's guardianship.
- Proctors should not be assigned to proctor with a test administrator who is a personal family member or a close acquaintance.
- Students should be informed before the day of the test administration that a proctor will be assisting the test administrator in monitoring their test administration.
- If the assigned proctor is also trained as a test administrator, the proctor cannot assist or participate in the duties and responsibilities of the assigned test administrator.
- At no time are proctors to be alone with secure test materials, including devices with tests open on the screen (e.g., start screen, pause screen, questions displayed).
- Proctors must not pick up test materials from or return test materials to the school test coordinator at the beginning or the end of testing. Every effort must be made to minimize unauthorized access to secure state tests before and after each test administration.

D. Policies and Procedures for Statewide Tests That Are Not Provided by a Vendor

This section of the handbook includes policy guidelines and procedures that apply to the administration of all state tests in the Annual Testing Program except those tests provided by a vendor. This information is not included in test administration guides. RACs and test coordinators are expected to ensure all appropriate staff are trained on this information before administering a test. School personnel must ensure the policy guidelines and procedures outlined in this section are implemented appropriately. All non-vendor tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on regularly scheduled school days or staff workdays.

Digital Signatures

Test coordinators are permitted to collect digital signatures on testing documents. Typed signatures and initials are not permitted.

Annual Training Requirements

PSU and school test coordinators must ensure testing staff are trained annually, as appropriate, on the resources that follow.

1. **The [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#).** Read and reviewed annually by all district and school personnel associated with test accommodation decisions and test administrations for students requiring accommodations.
2. **The [Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners](#) publication.** Read and reviewed annually by all district and school personnel associated with test accommodation decisions and test administrations for students identified as ELs requiring accommodations.
3. **The [Testing Code of Ethics](#).** Read and reviewed annually by all district and school testing personnel associated with testing.
4. **Policies and procedures courses.** The Offices of Accountability and Testing provides two online *Policies and Procedures Training Courses* that cover the policies and procedures included in this section of the handbook. One course includes policies and procedures related to online test administrations, and the other provides policies and procedures related to paper test administrations. School staff facilitating, overseeing, or administering either an online test, paper test, or both, are expected to complete the appropriate training course(s). It is suggested that district and school test coordinators complete the training course(s) at the beginning of the school year; however, districts and schools may

locally determine the timeframe for completion. It is recommended that test administrators complete the course as close to the test window as is possible. No one is permitted to administer tests required by the Annual Testing Program without a valid certificate of completion on file. Certificates are generated upon successful completion of each course.

- a. Course opening date 2026–27. The *Policies and Procedures Training Courses* will be available July 20, 2026. Directions for accessing the courses can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this handbook.
 - [Online Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course](#)
 - [Paper Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course](#)
 - b. Verification of training and course completion.
 - Regional accountability coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for PSU test coordinators to complete the course(s). RACs are expected to locally store course certificates of completion for the current school year (either via paper or electronically) for all PSU test coordinators in their region.
 - District test coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for school test coordinators to complete the course(s). District test coordinators are expected to locally store certificates of course completion (either via paper or electronically) by a deadline determined locally for the current school year.
 - School test coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for test administrators to complete the course(s). School test coordinators are expected to locally store certificates of course completion (either via paper or electronically) by a set deadline for the current school year. Note: Course certificates for test administrators who completed the course(s) the previous school year are valid through September 30, 2026.
5. **Test security training.** Annual training of district and school personnel on the *Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel* publication must occur before testing begins by using one of the three options provided below:
- a. [Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel publication](#),
 - b. [Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel video](#), or the

c. [Testing Security: Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel Training Course](#)

It is best practice to review this information in a group setting to allow an opportunity for questions.

6. **Proctor training.** The PSU test coordinator will conduct annual training with school test coordinators on [The Proctor's Guide](#) or [The Proctor's Guide Online Training Video](#) published by the Annual Testing Program. If proctors are utilized, they must attend a proctors' training session before proctoring a test administration and understand and agree to perform the duties described. School test coordinators are expected to conduct proctor's guide training at the school either on a day before testing or the morning of the test administration. Proctor duties are outlined in Section C: [Duties of Proctors](#).
- Training at the school must include:
 - viewing of [The Proctor's Guide Online Training Video](#),
 - reviewing the [Testing Code of Ethics](#),
 - providing an electronic or paper copy of [The Proctor's Guide](#), and
 - completing the [Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) form. This form must be completed each testing cycle (e.g., BOG3 reading test, fall EOC testing, spring EOC testing) and signed at the conclusion of proctor training. A copy of the signed confidentiality and test security agreement must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) at the school for each proctor serving in any test administration for the school year.
7. **Test administration training.** The Annual Testing Program utilizes the train-the-trainer model to facilitate test administration training. Test administration trainings may be delivered in-person or virtually but must be facilitated and delivered by the test coordinator. For tests created by the Annual Testing Program (e.g., EOG, EOC, RtA, CCRAA, NCEXTEND1), it is not permissible for testing staff to be trained via a locally created online course. However, test coordinators may supplement trainings with an electronic version of trainings and/or reminders. Training on test administration guides must occur prior to the test administration with all testing staff. A digital test administration guide may be used during training; however, each test administrator must have a printed copy of the appropriate test administration guide before and during training and during the test administration. The test administrator must thoroughly read and study the test administration guide before attending the training session so the school test coordinator can answer any questions the test administrator may have. All test

administrators must sign the [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) at the end of every test administration training session. All signed confidentiality and test security agreements must be kept on file (either electronically or in a paper format) at the school for the school year.

During test administration training, the following topics must be reviewed and discussed:

- a. **Local testing procedures.** During test administration training, test administrators must be informed of how to facilitate the following local testing policies and procedures:
 - Provide additional time for students needing more than the estimated time to complete the test.
 - Contact the school test coordinator during the test administration if needed.
 - Return students to the regular school schedule at the conclusion of testing.
 - Report a testing irregularity.
- b. **Test security.** The following test security procedures must be reviewed and discussed during test administrator training:
 - Duplicating secure or copyrighted test materials
 1. Secure and copyrighted tests must not be filed or used directly in instructional activities or posted on the internet or social media.
 2. No person may copy, reproduce, paraphrase or utilize the test materials in any manner for any reason without the prior written consent of the Annual Testing Program.
 - Classroom instruction and study guides
 1. Excerpts from secure tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides.
 2. Instructional materials (online or paper copies) that contain sample test questions (whether generated locally or obtained from another school system) must be shared with the principal and school system test coordinator before use.
 3. Teachers are not permitted to discuss any information in the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or to ask students about test questions.

- Testing environment. On days before testing, teachers are expected to announce to students which items cannot be accessed in the testing room.
 1. **Electronic devices.** Students are not allowed to use or have in their possession cell phones or any other electronic recording, listening, scanning, communication, or photographic devices at any time during testing, including breaks. Any student found or observed with a cell phone or electronic device during testing time must be dismissed from testing and a misadministration declared for that student.
 2. **Personal belongings.** Personal belongings are allowed in the testing room. However, students must not be permitted to access them at any time during testing, including breaks.
 3. **Testing aids.** Books, bookmarks, multiplication tables, notes, number lines, cameras, cell phones, personal learning devices, personal computers (if not used for testing), smart glasses, smart pens, smartwatches, or anything not approved by the Annual Testing Program are prohibited during the administration of any test.
 - a. Prior to testing, remove or cover all displays containing content that will be measured or test-taking strategies (e.g., bulletin boards, instructional displays, “Tips for Taking Tests,” thinking maps, word lists, word walls, definitions, writing formulas, multiplication tables, number lines, mathematical formulas, theorems and reference materials printed or attached to student desks or devices). Displaying information in any manner or form in the room during a test administration may result in a misadministration. Test administrators must contact the school test coordinator before the test administration if they have questions related to the testing environment.
 4. A “Testing—Do Not Disturb” sign is posted outside the testing room. Test administrators are encouraged to ensure windows in doors of rooms where testing will occur are uncovered for test security and monitoring purposes.
 5. A clock is visible for students to manage their work time during testing. A projected digital clock is permitted if it does

not make noise and has no alarms. The clock must display the time and cannot be a countdown timer.

6. Each student has enough space in which to work.
 7. To protect test security, students are not permitted to use physical writing or drawing tools to mark on their device screen (e.g., dry erase marker) during testing. Students may only use the online embedded writing or drawing tools available in NCTest to mark on their screen during testing.
 8. Seating must be arranged to discourage students from sharing responses.
 9. For online testing, ensure spare devices and power sources are available, if needed.
 10. The use of study carrels or privacy shields are permitted, but test administrators in rooms where these are used must take extra precautions to ensure students are not accessing electronic devices during the test administration. Study carrels or privacy shields may only under the following circumstances:
 - a. the students' assigned seats are multi-student desks (i.e., desks that seat two or more students), or
 - b. the student has the *Testing in a Separate Room* accommodation (i.e., in a one-on-one or small group setting).
 11. Students may remain in the testing room and read non-instructional reading materials (e.g., magazines) while the other students continue working to complete the test. Students are not permitted to use electronic devices while there are students still testing in the same room.
- Accounting for and storing test materials
 1. The test administrator must count and record the number of secure test materials and supplemental materials
 - a. when the materials are first received,
 - b. before the distribution of materials to students,
 - c. after the test administration, and
 - d. when the materials are returned to the school test coordinator.

2. The test administrator must immediately report any discrepancies in the count to the school test coordinator or principal.
 3. For online testing, devices that are open and display the students' start screens, test material, or are paused, are considered secure and must not be left unattended by the test administrator at any time.
- Access to secure tests and materials
 1. Access to secure tests must be limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need.
 2. For online testing, NC Education usernames and passwords must remain secure and must not be shared or compromised.
 3. The use of student access codes is required for all tests. Student access codes are considered secure test materials and must be counted with other secure materials before distribution and upon return.
 4. School personnel must not disclose the contents of secure tests, discuss with each other or with students any of the test questions or information contained within the tests, or write about them or post them on the internet or on social media. The only exception to this requirement is when a student or staff member is reporting a test security breach to the principal or school test coordinator.
 - Read aloud or signing/cueing test administrations
 - Test administrators who provide read aloud or signing/cueing accommodations have the added responsibility of maintaining confidentiality due to the level of access they are permitted for these types of accommodations. Test administrators given this level of access must not divulge the contents of the test, generally or specifically, to anyone or to copy or record test questions.

Training for Every Test

While most test administrators and proctors (if utilized) may have administered (or proctored) the same test or similar testing sessions previously, they must receive training for each testing cycle before administering or proctoring any secure state test.

If the assigned proctor is also trained as a test administrator, the proctor cannot assist or participate in the duties and responsibilities of the assigned test administrator. Separation of these duties ensures standardized test administrations occur across the state.

E. Non-Vendor Required State Tests

This section of the handbook includes a brief overview of the tests that are produced, copyrighted, and managed by the NCDPI's Offices of Accountability and Testing and are required as part of the Annual Testing Program. Additional information about each test can be found in the specific test administration guide. All non-vendor tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on scheduled school days or staff workdays.

- [Beginning-of-Grade 3 \(BOG3\) Reading Test](#)
- [Read to Achieve \(RtA\) Test](#)
- [End-of-Grade \(EOG\) Tests](#)
- [End-of-Course \(EOC\) Tests](#)
- [North Carolina Alternate Assessments](#)

Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test

Background

The BOG3 is aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) for grade 3 English language arts. It establishes a baseline measure of beginning third-grade students' reading comprehension and satisfies Read to Achieve legislation requirements for students who score achievement level 3 or higher on the test. Students who are not proficient on the end-of-grade test but were proficient on the BOG3 reading test count as proficient in the performance composite and school performance grades.

The BOG3 Reading Test is used for school accountability growth and student growth for teachers and administrators, and it serves as a teacher-growth tool for determining those teachers who are well-suited to teach at reading camps ([G.S.§115C-83.3\[4a\]](#)).

During the test students read literary and informational selections and then answer questions related to the selections. Knowledge of vocabulary is assessed indirectly through application and understanding of terms within the context of the selections and questions.

Eligible Students

All students in membership at grade 3 (according to the NCSIS) are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the BOG3 Reading Test. The only exceptions are:

- Students with disabilities who, according to their IEP documentation, participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment in accordance with state policies.
- Transfer students who were administered the BOG3 Reading Test at their former school.

Testing Windows

- Traditional schools: first fifteen days of the school year (days 1–15)
- Year-round schools: first fifteen days of the school year beginning July 18, 2026
 - For year-round schools opening before July 20, 2026: July 20th is day one of the fifteen-day BOG3 test administration window because NCTest does not open until July 20, 2026.
 - For year-round schools opening after July 20, 2025: the first day of school is considered the first day of the fifteen-day BOG3 test administration window.
- The BOG3 reading test must be completed online unless a paper format is necessary for students with a documented accessibility need.

Read to Achieve Test

Purposes of the Test

[General Statute §115C-83.7\(a\)](#) states that the SBE “shall require that a student be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for a third-grade student as demonstrated on a State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students.” Students may, however, be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause by demonstrating reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the SBE. The RtA Test is a valid and reliable standardized alternative assessment of reading comprehension that has been approved for good cause by the SBE.

Eligible Students

Students who have not satisfied the grade 3 reading proficiency requirements of the RtA law are eligible to take the RtA Test.

Students who have satisfied the requirements of the RtA law through one of the following options, or who have a good cause exemption, are not eligible to participate in the RtA Test.

- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the BOG3 Reading Test.
- The student achieved a 725 Lexile on the DIBELS 8 assessment during any benchmark period.
- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the first administration of the grade 3 EOG reading test.
- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the retest of the grade 3 EOG reading test.

Testing Window

There are three testing windows available for the administration of the RtA Test. Additional information about RtA testing windows can be found in the Read to Achieve Test Administration guide.

Testing Schedule

- The RtA Test must be administered in one day (except for administrations involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Multiple Testing Sessions*).

- Schools do not need to administer the test to all eligible students at the same time on the same day.
- The Annual Testing Program recommends schools schedule the RtA Test early in the school day; however, afternoon administrations are permitted. All students, including students with the *Scheduled Extended Time* accommodation, must be allowed to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.
- No RtA Test administration may exceed the maximum time allowed (except those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time*).

EOG Tests: Reading and Mathematics Grades 3–8 and Science Grades 5 and 8

The EOG reading, mathematics, and sciences tests are aligned to their respective NC Standard Courses of Study.

Purposes of the Tests

- The grades 3–8 EOG reading and mathematics tests measure students' proficiency on the NCSCOS for reading and mathematics.
- The grades 5 and 8 EOG science tests measure students' proficiency on the NCSCOS for science.
- Test results for EOG test scores are used for school and district accountability in the accountability model and for federal reporting purposes.

Eligible Students

Reading and mathematics. All students in membership at grades 3–8 (according to the NCSIS), including students who have been retained in grades 3–8, are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the EOG tests in reading and mathematics.

Science. All students in membership at grades 5 and 8 (according to the NCSIS), including students who have been retained in grades 5 and 8, are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the EOG science tests.

The only exceptions to these eligibility requirements are students with disabilities who, according to their IEP documentation, participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment.

Off-Level Testing

Off-level testing (e.g., administering the grade 4 EOG test to students not in membership as fourth-graders according to the NCSIS) is not permitted.

Testing Window

The EOG tests must be administered during the final ten days of the school year. When school systems adjust their school schedules due to adverse weather conditions or other emergencies, the testing schedule should be adjusted to still occur within the final ten days of the school year.

Testing Schedule

The following information applies to both online and paper administrations.

- **Testing combinations.** All EOG subject testing combinations must be approved by the RAC before they can be used for standard or makeup testing. Combinations of paper and online test administrations in the same room are not permitted.
- **Mixed mode.** Schools can administer the EOG tests to students in mixed mode formats. For example, if a student is administered the mathematics test in the paper format, the reading test can be administered in the online format.
- **Non-school day administrations.** Testing is only permitted on school days during instructional hours or staff workdays. Testing is not permitted after school, on holidays, or on weekends.
- **Consecutive school days.** Administrations of the EOG tests do not have to occur on consecutive school days.
- **Administering more than one EOG in one school day.** The EOG tests should be administered as early in the school day as the schedule permits. Schools may elect to administer either one or two EOGs in one school day (i.e., reading and science, or mathematics and science, or reading and mathematics); however, caution must be taken when scheduling testing to ensure that the maximum time allowed for these tests does not interfere with lunch or transportation schedules. All students must be permitted to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.
- **Testing within the window.** Schools do not have to test all students in the same grade starting on the same day or the same time, but all students must be tested within the state approved testing window.
- **Exceeding maximum time.** No EOG test administration (except for those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time*) may exceed the maximum time allowed.

EOC Tests: Biology, English II, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3

Purposes of the Tests

The EOC tests are used to measure students' knowledge of subject-related concepts as specified in the NCSOS for English II, NC Math 1, NC Math 3, and Biology.

Eligible Students

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309](#):

- public school students who are enrolled for credit in courses in which EOC tests are required shall take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course;
- public school students who are exempt from final exams by local board of education policy shall not be exempt from EOC tests;
- public school students shall take the appropriate EOC test the first time the student takes the course requiring the test;
- public school students shall take the appropriate EOC test at the end of the course regardless of the grade level in which the course is offered;
- public school students who are identified as failing a course for which an EOC test is required shall take the appropriate EOC test; and
- all eligible students shall participate in the administration of EOC tests (standard administrations with or without accommodations or an alternate assessment).

EOC Results Used as Twenty Percent of the Final Grade

[16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309\(c\)](#) states "PSUs shall adopt policies and use results from all EOCs as a minimum of 20 percent of the student's final grade for each respective course with the exception of:

1. students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) created under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 33 U.S.C. 1414, and regulations adopted pursuant to that Act, exclude their EOC results from their final grades;
2. English Learner (EL) students, as defined in 25 CFR 30.101, in their first year in a United States school; or
3. students enrolled in a course during the initial implementation year of the new EOC for that course where proficiency scores are not available due to standard setting."

Withdrawal from an EOC Course

Per [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309\(i\)](#), "PSU students may drop a course with an EOC within the first 10 days of enrollment in a semester block schedule or within the first 20 days of enrollment in a yearlong traditional schedule. Students who are enrolled for credit after the 10 or 20 days shall not drop a course with a required EOC and shall participate in the EOC administration at the completion of the course."

Exceptions to the 10/20 day rule are allowed when it is in the best interest of the student to be removed from a course requiring an EOC test. These cases should be evaluated individually, and consideration should be given to ensure the accountability of the school is not compromised. Some examples of acceptable individual student withdrawals after the first 10/20 days of enrollment include the following:

- Transfer student inappropriately placed in an EOC course. If a student transfers into a school and his or her records do not arrive until after the first 10/20 days to inform a proper placement decision, the school has the latitude to withdraw the student from the EOC course and place the student in the appropriate course.
- Student is withdrawn from a course to enroll in a higher-level course. Occasionally, a student may be better served to withdraw from an EOC course and enroll in a higher-level course. In such cases, the student takes the appropriate test for the higher-level course; the school remains accountable through the higher-level course. Students must not be withdrawn from an EOC course and enrolled in a higher-level course within the last six weeks of the course.
- There is a valid medical reason for removing a student from an EOC course. In rare cases, an individual student may be deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency or condition, such as an accident, that incapacitates the student for an extended period of time. In such instances, it may be in the student's best interest to be withdrawn from a course.

The principal of the school should review each case individually and decide in consultation with the PSU test coordinator, teacher, and parent or legal guardian whether withdrawal from the course is necessary. If it is determined the student should be withdrawn from the course (after the first 10/20 days), the school must submit documentation and request approval from the Director of the Office of Testing by submitting a 10/20 Day Withdrawal Request in NCTest Admin (see [Appendix W](#)). Schools should consult with the regional accountability office if there are questions about specific situations and student eligibility.

If the request is approved, the school must notify the parent or legal 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 NCSIS. The school must ensure the student no longer attends the previously scheduled class and attends the new class. All documents pertaining to course withdrawals after the first 10/20 days must be kept on file by the PSU.

If a request is denied, the student's original course code will be included in the school's accountability results. Students who are removed from a course with a corresponding EOC requirement after the 10th day of the semester, or the 20th day of a year-long course, without the Office of Testing's approval, will count against participation rates as not tested.

Requests should be submitted as soon as the school is aware of the need, rather than waiting until the end of the semester or end of the year when reviewing school data.

Testing Window

Test administrators must administer the EOC test during the last five days (semester courses) or the last ten days (yearlong schedule) of the instructional period. When school systems adjust their school schedules due to adverse weather conditions or other emergencies, the testing schedule should be adjusted to still occur within the final five days (semester) or last ten days (yearlong) of the school year.

PSUs should prioritize scheduling the online administrations of the EOC tests in the following order: English II, NC Math 1, Biology, and NC Math 3 to ensure timely return of test scores.

Testing Schedule

The following information applies to both online and paper administrations.

- **Morning and afternoon administrations.** The EOC tests should be administered as early in the school day as possible; however, afternoon administrations are permissible. When scheduling two tests in one day, caution must be taken to ensure that the maximum time allowed for these tests does not interfere with lunch or transportation schedules. All students must be permitted to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.
- **Non-school day administrations.** Testing is only permitted on school days during instructional hours or staff workdays. Testing is not permitted after school, on holidays, or on weekends.

- **Combining courses.** Different EOC subject tests cannot be administered in the same room. Online and paper EOC tests cannot be administered in the same room. All EOC subject tests and formats must test separately.

North Carolina Alternate Assessments

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315\(c\)](#), all students with disabilities are required to participate in the statewide testing program by taking either the standard state-mandated tests with or without accommodations or by participating in North Carolina alternate assessments with or without accommodations. To participate in alternate assessments, students must meet specific eligibility criteria established by the Annual Testing Program, and the decision to participate in the alternate assessments must be documented in the students' current IEPs.

For additional information about the North Carolina alternate assessments refer to the [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#).

F. Required State Tests Provided by Vendors

This section of the handbook includes a brief overview of the tests that are required as part of the Annual Testing Program and provided to schools by external vendors. Vendor tests included as part of the Annual Testing Program may be subject to different training requirements for testing staff than state tests. Additional test administration information, testing policies, test security, and training requirements for vendor tests are specified in vendor test administration manuals and resources. School test coordinators should consult the vendor's test administration publications for specific guidance on permitted training practices. In situations where test administrators only administer vendor tests, they are not required to complete the Policies and Procedures Training Courses (online and/or paper) provided by the Annual Testing Program.

All tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on school days. The exception to this requirement applies to the WIDA Screener because schools may elect to screen newcomers and kindergarten students up to 30 days before the school year begins.

District and school test coordinators must manage and monitor all state vendor tests (WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener Online, WIDA Alternate Screener, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, WIDA ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, and ACT WorkKeys) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations. School test coordinators must not be given the responsibility of administering or proctoring a test.

The required state tests provided by vendors include the following:

- [WIDA Assessments](#)
 - [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#)
 - [WIDA Screener Online](#)
 - [WIDA Alternate Screener](#)
 - [WIDA Screener Paper](#)
 - [WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten and WIDA ACCESS®](#)
 - [WIDA Alternate ACCESS](#)
- [ACT Assessments](#)
 - [PreACT](#)
 - [The ACT](#)
 - [ACT WorkKeys](#)

WIDA Assessments

Participation in the Annual Testing Program

Per SBE policy [TEST-011\(II\) \(A\)](#), “Students identified as ELs shall participate in the statewide testing program using either the standard test administration, the standard test administration with accommodations, or the alternate assessment.” The SBE shall adopt “tests for grades three through 12 that are required by federal law or as a condition of a federal grant. These tests shall be designed to measure progress toward reading, communication skills, and mathematics for grades three through eight, and toward competencies for grades nine through 12.”([G.S. § 115C-174.11\[c\]\[1\]](#)).

Identification of English Learners

Per SBE policy [TEST-011](#), “To be identified as English Learners (ELs), students indicating more than one language on the standardized, statewide Home Language Survey (HLS) must have their language background and previous identification as an EL investigated by Public School Unit (PSU) staff with English language acquisition experience. If the student’s background or previous identification indicates limited English proficiency, the state-adopted screener must be administered within 30 days of enrollment. Thereafter, all students identified as ELs must be annually assessed using the state-adopted English language proficiency assessment.”

Purposes of the WIDA Screeners

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is the state-adopted English language proficiency identification assessment given to potential EL students in kindergarten and in the first semester of grade 1. This screener is only available in paper format.

WIDA Screener Online

The WIDA Screener Online is the state-adopted English language proficiency identification assessment given to potential EL students in grade 1 (second semester) through grade 12.

WIDA Alternate Screener

The WIDA Alternate Screener is the state-adopted English language proficiency identification assessment given to potential EL students who are identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities and are instructed on the extended content standards in kindergarten through grade 12.

Screener Administration Window

The administration of the state-adopted screener is required within thirty calendar days of enrollment. PSUs and schools also have the option to initially assess language-minority students up to thirty calendar days before the start of school.

WIDA Screener Paper

The WIDA Screener is available in paper format; however, the paper format is permissible only to individual students with disabilities who have documented accommodations in their IEPs or Section 504 Plans that dictate a paper format is necessary for accessibility. Test materials must be requested through and approved by the RAC.

Purposes of the WIDA ACCESS Tests

WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, WIDA ACCESS®, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS

- The WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten and WIDA ACCESS are state-adopted English language proficiency assessments administered annually to kindergarten through twelfth-grade students who have been identified as ELs.
- The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the alternate assessment for WIDA ACCESS. The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is for students in grades K–12 who are identified as ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevents meaningful participation on the WIDA ACCESS. Additional information on the WIDA Alternate ACCESS can be found on the [WIDA website](#) or located in the [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#) or the [Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners](#) publication.

Test Design

All students identified as ELs are administered four domain tests (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) annually, during the state-designated testing window.

ACCESS Testing Window

Annual testing must occur during the state-designated testing window, which can be found on the [2026–27 North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#).

Paper tests. Online administration is required for WIDA ACCESS testing; however, the paper format is permissible for individual students with disabilities who have documented accommodations in their IEPs or Section 504 Plans that dictate a paper format is necessary for accessibility.

Note: WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten is a paper-based assessment.

Test Administrator Training

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener (online and paper), WIDA Alternate Screener, WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten, WIDA ACCESS, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS training courses are not provided by the Annual Testing Program; they are provided by the vendor in the WIDA Secure Portal. Each training course has specific certification requirements. Test administrators must obtain certification annually for each assessment. Certification includes the completion of the specific training course, all associated modules, and any quizzes. For example, if a test administrator will test (1) EL students who are kindergartners, (2) online test takers in grades 1–12, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS test takers in grades K–12, the test administrator must be fully certified for the following:

- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten
- WIDA ACCESS (Online)
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS

School test coordinators are responsible for ensuring test administrators are certified for each assessment and mode administered prior to the opening of the annual test window. Refer to the [*North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments*](#) for training specifics for each assessment.

ACT Assessments

All North Carolina tenth-graders take the PreACT, eleventh-graders take The ACT, and students identified as Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators take the ACT WorkKeys assessment.

PreACT

- The PreACT is administered annually to all eligible tenth-graders via paper or online format. Test format is a local decision.
- The PreACT is a state required test per [G.S. § 115C-174.22](#).
- The PreACT simulates The ACT testing experience. It includes four subtests, English reading, math, and science, but is shorter in length than The ACT.
- The multiple-choice test is designed to provide both current achievement scores and projected ACT test scores aligned to the same 1–36 ACT score scale. The PreACT composite score reflects the average of the English, mathematics, and reading (EMR) subtests. Students in North Carolina also take the science subtest. Students will receive standalone scores for all subjects, to include the science subtest and a STEM score (science and math combined).
- Detailed reports help to identify students' specific strengths and weaknesses. Additional reporting includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) and career readiness.
- The PreACT assessment is designed to help parents or legal guardians and educators identify areas where students may need additional academic support or remediation during the tenth-grade year.
- The PreACT can help initiate conversations between parents or legal guardians and schools regarding dual enrollment decisions, identifying curriculum gaps, implementing interventions on behalf of students, and choosing AP classes.
- **Test dates.** PreACT testing must occur during the state-designated testing window, which can be found on the [2026–27 North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#).

The ACT

- The ACT is a required state assessment for all eligible eleventh-graders per [G.S. § 115C-174.11\(4\)](#). (Retained eleventh-graders who do not have a score from their first year in eleventh grade are expected to test during the state-sponsored administration of The ACT during their second year in eleventh grade.)
- The ACT is a curriculum- and standards-based assessment that evaluates students' college and career readiness in English, mathematics, reading, and science.

- Each section of The ACT is multiple-choice and is scored on a 1–36 point scale. The ACT college-reportable, composite score reflects the average of the English, mathematics, and reading (EMR) subtests. Students in North Carolina also take the science subtest for The ACT. Students will receive standalone scores for all subjects, to include the science subtest and a STEM score (science and math combined).
- The ACT may be used for college admissions, placement, and scholarships. It is accepted by most colleges and universities in the United States.
- The ACT provides a path to increase student access to postsecondary and workforce opportunities.
- Additional reporting includes an estimate of the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate that students are likely to obtain based on their ACT composite score.
- **Test dates.** ACT testing must occur during the state-designated testing window. The three paper test dates and three online and accommodated test windows are found on the [2026–27 North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#).
 - Schools are expected to offer both an initial and makeup test date.
 - It is recommended that test date one and window one are used for the initial test date(s) and test dates two and three and test windows two and three are reserved for makeup test dates.
 - No additional test dates will be available, and schools should plan accordingly.
- Results from the statewide administration of The ACT are available on the [NCDPI School Accountability and Reporting website](#) under “ACT Reports”.

ACT WorkKeys

The WorkKeys assessments are required for all eligible CTE concentrators per [G.S. § 115C-174.25](#).

- The three WorkKeys assessments, Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents, are the basis of the WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (WorkKeys NCRC).
- The Applied Math test measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques for situations that occur in today's workplace.
- The Graphic Literacy test measures the skills needed to locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics. Workplace graphics come in a variety of formats, but all communicate a level of information. From charts to graphs,

diagrams to floor plans, identifying what information is being presented and understanding how to use it are critical to success.

- The Workplace Documents test measures the skills people use when they read and use written text such as memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations on the job. The assessment is defined through a combination of the text complexity level of a reading passage and the skill elicited by the item.
- Students who achieve qualifying scores on the Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents assessments can earn a WorkKeys NCRC at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels of readiness. The nationally recognized certificate provides employers with information on the skill levels of potential employees and aids with employment, promotion, and training decisions.
- **Test Dates.** ACT WorkKeys standard and accommodated testing windows can be found on the [2026–27 North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#).
- Online administrations are required for all WorkKeys testing, unless a paper format is necessary for students with a documented need for accessibility purposes. Paper test materials must be ordered through ACT during the appropriate test material ordering window.
- Results from the statewide administrations of WorkKeys are available on the [NCDPI School Accountability and Reporting website](#) under “ACT Reports”.

G. National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. The NAEP has two types of assessments, main and long-term trend. Main assessments are conducted in a range of subjects with fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-graders across the country. Assessments are given most frequently in mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Other subjects, such as the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. History, are assessed periodically.

Long-term trend (LTT) assessments measure student performance in reading and mathematics, using some questions repeatedly to ensure comparability across the years. The LTT assessments allow the performance of today's students to be compared with those from more than forty years ago and inform the development of new assessment instruments that reflect current educational content and assessment methodology. The LTT assessments are administered every four years.

Since NAEP assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test questions across the nation, NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and select urban districts. The assessments stay the same from year to year, with only carefully documented changes. This uniformity permits the NAEP to provide a clear picture of student academic progress over time.

Participation and Sampling

In accordance with the ESSA, NAEP administrations in reading and mathematics (which began in 2003) are required at grades 4 and 8 every other year in all states. In North Carolina, [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(i\)](#) requires all selected schools to participate in the NAEP; however, at the student level, participation in the NAEP is voluntary. ESSA allows either students, parents, or legal guardians to refuse to participate.

For each main NAEP administration, a sample of students is drawn from both public and nonpublic schools at grades 4, 8, and 12. (ESSA requires reading and mathematics assessments at grade 12 on a nationally representative basis at a minimum of every four years.) For each LTT assessment, a sample of students at ages 9, 13, and 17 is drawn from both public and nonpublic schools. All sampling for the NAEP assessments is conducted at the national level. The sample of schools and students is chosen in a two-stage sampling process. First, the sample of schools is selected by probability sampling methods. Then, within the participating schools, random samples of students are chosen.

To ensure the integrity of the NAEP, every effort must be made to include selected students in the test administrations. The NCDPI recommends IEP teams and Section 504 committees use the accommodation(s) listed in the District and State Assessment section of the respective plans during the administration of the NAEP. Although the NAEP is a required assessment for schools, students' scores are not included in the school's accountability results. Using the documented accommodations listed in the District and State-Assessment section of the IEPs and Section 504 Plans will provide increased access for students with disabilities.

NAEP accommodation procedures. The IEP team or Section 504 committee refers to the accommodations listed in the District Assessment section of the plan and determines if those accommodations are appropriate and allowable according to the NAEP guidelines. To determine the allowable accommodations according to the test publisher (i.e., the National Center for Education Statistics), contact the school test coordinator for the most recent list of approved accommodations designated by the NAEP.

If the team or committee determines, after consulting with the school test coordinator, that a student cannot access the NAEP, a student may be excluded from participating in the administration of the NAEP. Before excluding a student based on an accommodation need, the school test coordinator is to send an email to the North Carolina NAEP State Coordinator, Dr. Andrea Faulkner, at Andrea.Faulkner@dpi.nc.gov. The email should include the school's name, the school test coordinator's contact information, and a summary of the student's accommodation needs. Confidential student-identifying information should not be included in the email. The NAEP State Coordinator will review the email and respond with a follow-up email or phone call to discuss the student's accommodation needs.

The NCDPI is committed to including as many students as possible in the NAEP. The NAEP results for North Carolina should represent the entire student population. The IEP team and the Section 504 committee should consider ways to offer accommodations for students to enable participation in NAEP, and every effort should be made to identify an accommodation that will facilitate students' participation. The NAEP publicly reports highlight results at the state level. Student and school reports are never shared publicly.

NAEP Test Results

The NAEP test results include data on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for populations of students (e.g., all fourth-graders) and groups within those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). The NAEP does not provide scores for individual students or schools, although states can report NAEP results for selected, large urban districts. NAEP results are based on

representative samples of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the main assessments or samples of students at ages 9, 13, and 17 years for the LLT assessments. These grades and ages were selected because they represent critical junctures in academic achievement.

NAEP Assessment Schedule

All Trial Urban District Assessments (TUDA), main, and state assessments take place from mid-January through March. All LLT assessments take place from October through May. Results for NAEP assessments are reported in [The Nation's Report Card](#). Results are published for math, reading, science, and writing assessments six months to a year after the assessment is complete.

NAEP Resources

Additional information about NAEP is available on the following websites:

- [Read about The Nation's Report Card](#)
- [Read about NAEP Information for Public Schools](#)
- [Read about North Carolina's performance on NAEP assessments](#)<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/state-tests/national-assessment-educational-progress-naep>

H. Preparation for Test Administrations

Annual Testing Plans

All PSUs must ensure an annual testing plan is developed before the beginning of the school year. The annual testing plan must include, but is not limited to, procedures for test administrator and proctor training, test security, preparation of the testing environment, secure test administrations, test administration monitoring, receipt, distribution, and return of secure test materials, provisions for English Learner students and students with disabilities, and sample documents that are used as supports for the testing plan. PSUs must submit an electronic copy of the annual testing plan to the regional accountability office.

School Testing Plans

For each test administration schools must ensure a physical copy of the school testing plan is available in the front office. The school testing plan should specify test day administration details that include, but are not limited to: test date, test name, grade level, test start time, testing locations, test administrator and/or proctor assignments, number of students testing and whether the test session includes students with accommodations. See Appendix F of this handbook for [School Testing Plans](#) documents.

Notifying Parents or Legal Guardians of Required State Tests

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(g\)](#), "LEAs shall, at the beginning of each school year, provide information to students and parents or legal guardians advising them of the districtwide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year. In addition, LEAs shall advise students and parents or guardians of the dates the tests will be administered and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents shall include whether the State Board of Education or the local board of education requires the test(s)."

On days before testing, the school should inform the students and parents or legal guardians about the purpose of the test and that students:

- are scheduled to take a test(s) that will gauge their knowledge and mastery of skills as specified in the state-adopted content standards.
- should attempt each question on the test.
- should not bring books, bookmarks, multiplication tables, notes, number lines, cameras, cell phones, personal learning devices, cell phones, personal computers

(if not used for testing), smart glasses, smart pens, smartwatches, or anything not approved by the Annual Testing Program into the test administration.

- should bring a novel or other reading material (e.g. magazines) that is not a textbook or contains instructional content to read after they complete the test administration.
- are not permitted to use electronic devices while there are students still testing in the same room.

North Carolina Standardized Testing and Participation Requirements

North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required testing unless there are extenuating circumstances related to a serious health condition(s). [N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#) requires all students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) participate in the Annual Testing Program. All students in North Carolina (including students with disabilities and students identified as ELs) are required to participate in the Annual Testing Program per state and federal requirements.

The federal [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) requires state education agencies implement a set of high-quality academic tests that includes, at a minimum, annual tests in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. Mathematics and reading or language arts tests must be administered in grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12. Science tests must be administered at least once during grades 3 through 5, grades 6 through 9, and grades 10 through 12. Furthermore, as amended by 1005 of Public Law 114–95, ESSA requires state tests to “be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State.” ESSA requires all states to “provide for the participation in such assessments of all students.” These federal requirements do not allow students to be excluded from statewide tests. Rather, they define the legal requirement that all students in the tested grades must be tested.

Parents or legal guardians who request that their students are not tested, or refuse to allow their students to test, must be informed of the state’s testing requirements and all possible academic outcomes. If eligible students are present in the classroom on the test day (including make-up test days), the school must administer tests to all eligible students in membership. If a student attends a test session but chooses not to start the online test, or if a student starts a test but does not answer any test questions, he or she will be assigned the lowest possible score. Schools do not have the option to remove a student’s test from scoring. The student’s grade for the course and overall grade point average calculation may be negatively affected by receiving the lowest possible score.

[Appendix B](#) provides a sample letter that PSUs may use to address parents’ or legal guardians’ concerns regarding testing mandates.

Large Scale Administrations

The Annual Testing Program strongly discourages large-scale administrations (e.g., those that occur in a library or cafeteria) that include large groups (multiple classes) of students. If testing is to take place in a facility other than a classroom, special effort may

be required to establish and maintain a standardized testing environment and maintain security of the tests.

Flexible Seating

Some teachers use flexible seating options in their classrooms such as standing desks, stability and yoga balls, sitting on the floor, sitting on a couch, or sitting on a floor mat at a table.

If students use flexible seating options in the classroom on a regular basis, and PSU test coordinators would like to use these rooms for testing, permission must be granted from the RAC. If approved, students must be positioned appropriately for testing so that they are unable to see each others' tests.

Visitors

Visitors are not allowed in any room designated for testing during the test administration except when required for state or local monitoring of test administrations or under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations).

Monitoring Students during Test Administrations

A primary responsibility of the test administrator is to monitor the test administration. Each student must complete the test without assistance for the scores to reflect the student's ability. Additional information about how test administrators should monitor students during testing can be found in the [*Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel publication*](#) and test administration guides.

Test Materials

Paper format for documented needs. All students with a documented need for a paper test will mark their answers in the test book. Refer to the appropriate test administration guide for additional information about the transcription process.

Distribution of test materials. To administer tests in a fair and equitable manner, test administrators must only distribute test materials as directed by the test administration script, as specified by an approved accommodation, or designated feature during the test administration. Only supplemental materials specified in the appropriate test administration guide (or published supplements or updates) may be used during the test administration.

All test materials must be distributed to test administrators immediately before each test administration. Test administrators are expected to maintain test security while all test materials are in their care.

Instruction Before Test Day

During the school year teachers should provide instruction that meets or exceeds the state-adopted content standards to give students an opportunity to learn the objectives measured by the tests.

Before the designated test administration date, and according to the *Testing Code of Ethics*, teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by “(1) helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content, (2) teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions, (3) helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests, and (4) using resource materials, such as test questions from test item banks and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.”

Before the day of the test, teachers should explain to students that the test administrator (and proctor, if utilized) will move quietly and frequently throughout the room to scan the students' work areas to ensure students are following the test directions and only using approved electronic devices.

Upholding Test Security

Teachers are not permitted to discuss specific questions from the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or to ask students questions about the test. If students approach a teacher to ask about a test question(s), teachers should remind them that they are not permitted to share any of the test questions or information contained within the test or to write about them on the internet or on social media. Teachers must not use test questions or information from students as the basis for additional instruction or review. Instead, teachers should provide instruction and review on the state-adopted content standards. Excerpts from the tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides. Teachers are expected to uphold the *Testing Code of Ethics* and report any and all suspected test security incidents that may jeopardize security of test forms.

While monitoring online and paper test administrations, test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) are not to read test questions from students' tests, take photographs and/or notes about anything they see on the test, or otherwise create a record of information contained within the tests. Principals or directors and school test coordinators must ensure test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) are aware of what they can and cannot do to assist students during the test administration.

The only exception to these directives is when a staff member believes there has been a breach of test security, which must immediately be reported to the principal or school test coordinator.

Testing Sites

All state testing must occur within a brick-and-mortar building. No state tests may be administered remotely or in an outside setting.

Test coordinators overseeing testing sites for virtual schools must ensure that all testing sites have a trained school test coordinator available for the duration of the testing sessions. The school test coordinator is required at each site to answer all questions, maintain the site testing plan, relieve test administrators as needed, and properly manage testing irregularities and misadministrations.

The PSU test coordinator listed in EDDIE is responsible for training school test coordinators for testing sites. All testing policies and procedures, as designated in this handbook, apply to test sites. The school test coordinator may not administer or proctor for a test unless only one test session is occurring. If the school test coordinator is not available during testing, the principal or director must assign an appropriate, trained, backup test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.

Virtual Schools and Remote Instruction

Any school providing virtual or remote instruction to students (whether the school operates virtually full-time or operates a hybrid model of in-person and remote instruction) must adhere to all testing policies, procedures, and requirements as documented in public school laws of North Carolina in General Statutes, the N.C. Admin. Codes, SBE policies, and all Office of Testing test administration guides and handbooks. Students attending a virtual school must report to a brick-and-mortar building (as designated by the school) to participate in required state test administrations. State test administrations may not be conducted virtually.

Suspended Students

Short-term suspension. According to [G.S. § 115C-390.5](#), “the principal shall have authority to impose short-term suspension on a student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct authorizing short-term suspension. . . . A student subject to short-term suspension shall be provided the following:

- the opportunity to take textbooks home for the duration of the suspension;
- upon request, the right to receive all missed assignments and, to the extent practicable, the materials distributed to students in connection with the assignment; and

- the opportunity to take any quarterly, semester, or grading period examinations missed during the suspension period.”

Students with short-term suspensions are required to take the appropriate state-mandated test(s). The school must arrange to test these students in a location (e.g., central office) that is mutually agreeable to the school and the parents or legal guardians. The school test coordinator must ensure test security is maintained and all procedures contained in the test administration guide are followed throughout the test administration(s).

Long-term suspension. According to [G.S. § 115C-390.7](#), “a principal may recommend to the superintendent the long-term suspension of any student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct that authorizes long-term suspension. Only the superintendent has the authority to long-term suspend a student.”

The PSU decides if it will provide students with long-term suspensions with the opportunity to take the appropriate state-mandated test(s); however, a long-term suspended student who is still enrolled in the school and is not tested will count against school participation rates.

If the opportunity is provided, the school must arrange to test these students in a location (e.g., central office) that is mutually agreeable to the school and the parents or legal guardians. The school test coordinator must ensure test security is maintained and all procedures contained in the test administration guide(s) are followed throughout the test administration(s). If a long-term suspended student is still enrolled in the school and is tested, the test results will be official and will be included in the student’s record and in accountability results.

Hospital and Homebound Testing

PSUs must ensure that students who receive hospital and homebound services participate in all state-required test administrations. Medical exception requests may be submitted, if appropriate. (All medical exceptions must be approved annually by the Annual Testing Program.) For accountability purposes, the test results of a hospital or homebound student will be included in the accountability results at the student’s base school.

Testing that occurs in the hospital or in a homebound setting is subject to the same policies, procedures, and test security as in-school test administrations.

It is recommended that two trained school staff members are present on-site for the test administration. It is a local decision as to which staff members are assigned to off-site test administrations.

For vendor tests, additional procedures and measures of test security may be required. Schools should consult the vendor for specific guidance.

Scheduling. Hospital and homebound testing must occur during the state-designated testing windows.

Training. Staff members administering a test to a hospitalized or homebound student must be included in the school's test administrator training, must review the test administration guide before the test administration, and have a signed confidentiality and test security agreement on file for the current school year. The PSU test coordinator should be contacted if there are any questions regarding the test administration.

Before test day. The test administrator or the school test coordinator must ensure the parent or guardian is aware of the following testing policies and procedures as they relate to test security and the testing environment:

- For the protection of both the student and the teacher, the presence of a responsible adult is required on-site (not in the testing room).
- If a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult is not present on-site, then the test administrator must terminate the testing session.
- The parent, guardian, or responsible adult must stay on-site for the entirety of the test session.
- All pets, except for service animals, should be confined before the arrival of school staff.
- Home security system cameras must not record the test session.

On test day.

- During the test, only the test administrator, the proctor (if utilized), and the student being assessed are permitted in the testing room.
- Under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations, medical treatment breaks) the parent, guardian, or responsible adult may enter the testing room.
- If a test administration must be paused because of a bathroom break or emergency, the test administrator must follow the procedures in the test administration guide for taking a break. Test materials must always remain secure.
- Electronic devices, cell phones, and recording, listening, scanning, or photographic devices are prohibited in the testing room.

- The testing room should be quiet, without outside interruptions, and have appropriate supplies (e.g., table, chair).
- An effort should be made to eliminate any distractions during the test administration (e.g., doorbells, televisions, music, telephones, outside noises, siblings, pets).

There may be unique circumstances that dictate the need for testing to occur outside the hospital or home setting. Test administration location decisions should be made on an individual basis. The location, such as a library conference room or a school office, should be mutually agreed upon by the school and the parent or legal guardian. The hospital or homebound teacher or the test administrator is not required to transport the student for testing purposes.

Materials. The test administrator must check out test materials from the school test coordinator the morning of the test, administer the test on the designated test date, and return the materials to the test coordinator at the end of testing each day. Test materials must not be checked out overnight. All materials must be accounted for each day.

On the day of a test administration, the test administrator must notify the school test coordinator immediately of any change in the student's status or in the home or hospital conditions that may necessitate rescheduling or cancelling the test administration.

Testing in a North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center

PSUs must establish policies and procedures for providing services to public school students who are temporarily confined in a North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center (NCJDC). Students are often still listed in base school enrollment when served by a NCJDC and then move into the school enrollment of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention after adjudication. PSUs must ensure that students who are housed in NCJDCs participate in appropriate state-required tests. Medical exception requests may be submitted when necessary. For accountability purposes, the test results for a student in an NCJDC must be included in the accountability results at the base school. Testing in a NCJDC is subject to the same policy and procedures as school-based test administrations.

Scheduling. Testing must occur during the state-designated testing windows.

Training. Staff members administering a test in a NCJDC must be included in the school's test administrator training and must review the test administration guide before the test administration. The PSU test coordinator is to be contacted if there are any questions regarding the test administration. It is recommended that two trained school staff members are present on-site for the test administration. It is a local decision as to which staff members are assigned to the NCJDC test administration.

Test day. During the test, only the test administrator, the proctor (if utilized), or an additional trained school staff member, and the student being assessed are permitted in the testing room. Under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations, medical treatment breaks) another adult may enter the testing room.

If a test administration must be paused because of a bathroom break or emergency, the test administrator must follow the procedures in the test administration guide for taking a break. Test materials must remain secure at all times.

The testing room should be quiet, without outside interruptions, and have appropriate supplies (e.g., table, chair). An effort should be made to eliminate any possible distractions during the test administration.

Materials. The test administrator must check out test materials from the school test coordinator the morning of the test, administer the test on the designated test date, and return the materials to the test coordinator at the end of testing each day. Test materials must not be checked out overnight. All materials must be accounted for each day.

On the day of a test administration, the test administrator must notify the school test coordinator immediately of any change in the student's status that may necessitate rescheduling or cancelling the test administration.

Unexpected School Closings, Inclement Weather, or Student Dismissals and Testing Requirements

It is important that PSUs schedule test administrations as early as possible during permitted windows to account for unexpected school closings. Testing windows, in most cases, cannot be extended due to unexpected school closings.

Unexpected school closures and student dismissals are determined locally. The NCDPI recognizes the health and safety of the school community comes first. In the event a PSU is unable to administer state tests according to designated testing windows because of unexpected school closings, inclement weather, or student dismissals, the PSU should adhere to the following procedures:

1. The PSU test coordinator is expected to notify the RAC of the school closing, impending weather condition, or student dismissal.
2. Testing should be rescheduled as soon as possible after the school returns to a normal schedule.

Testing Windows

Per [G.S. § 115C-174.12\(a\)\(4\)](#), “all annual assessments of student achievement adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-174.11\(c\)\(1\) and \(3\)](#). . . shall be administered within the final ten instructional days of the school year for yearlong courses and within the final five instructional days of the semester for semester courses. Exceptions shall be permitted to accommodate a student’s individualized education program and section 504 (29 U.S.C § 794) plans and for the administration of final exams for courses with national or international curricula required to be held at designated times.”

Schools are expected to complete testing early in the window and reserve the final days for makeup testing. All state-mandated tests have a designated test date or testing window. Testing dates and windows are outlined in the [North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#). Failing to administer secure tests on the designated test date(s) or window results in a testing irregularity.

English Learners’ First Year in United States (US) Schools

State Board policy [ACCT-021 \(1\)\(D\)\(1\)](#), states that “Students identified as English Learners (ELs) shall participate in the statewide testing program using either the standard test administration or the standard test administration with accommodations.

1. Effective 2017–18 and beyond, ELs must participate in state assessments beginning with their first year in a U.S. school; however,
 - a. For the first year, the requirement is for participation and for reporting (e.g., NC School Report Card), not the accountability model.
 - b. For year two, EL test scores will be included in the growth analysis for the accountability model.
 - c. For year three and beyond, EL test scores will be included in growth and the achievement indicator of the accountability model.”

Grade 8 Students Enrolled for Credit in NC Math 1

State Board policy [ACCT-021 \(1\)\(A\)](#) states, “all eligible students in membership at grade 8 enrolled for credit in NC Math 1 shall take the EOC assessment at the completion of the course. Schools shall not assess these students on the grade 8 mathematics EOG assessment. These students will take the NC Math 3 EOC assessment for federal accountability in high school.” Students in membership at grade 8 who have an NC Math 1 EOC score (e.g., granted credit from an earlier grade level) should only be assessed

on the test matching current course enrollment (e.g., NC Math 3). These students do not take the grade 8 mathematics EOG.

I. Online Testing

Online Test Format

All test questions are formatted specifically for online testing and presented on the screen one test question at a time. The following tools are available to students when testing online:

- navigation buttons (i.e., first, back, pause, next, and review)
- reset,
- flag,
- strike,
- highlight, change highlight color, unhighlight, clear highlight,
- notepad,
- electronic pen,
- online calculator (applicable mathematics tests)
- periodic table (for grade 8 science EOG), and
- a scroll bar (depending on the length of the question)

Students can also increase the display by clicking “ctrl,” “shift,” and “+” keys at the same time. Students have an opportunity to practice using these tools when completing the online tutorial.

The [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#) includes information about online tools available through the *North Carolina Accessibility Framework*, as well as accommodations available to students with disabilities.

Online Assessment Tutorials

An online assessment tutorial is available for North Carolina-developed online tests through the NCTest Chromebook app, NCTest Secure Browser, NCTest iPad app, or by accessing the [North Carolina Testing Applications home page](#).

The following rules apply for students' participation and completion of the online assessment tutorials.

- Schools must ensure every student participating in an online state test has completed the online assessment tutorial at least once per school year before the test administration.

- Students can complete the tutorial either before test day or on the same day as the test administration.
- Students can complete the tutorial either in-school or remotely.
- **Third-grade students.** There are two online assessment tutorial requirements for third-grade students. Students in grade three must complete the BOG3 Reading Tutorial prior to administration. These students must also complete the Grades 3–12 tutorial prior to the EOG test administration.

Technical Specifications for NCTest

To ensure a standard and secure test administration, schools must meet specific technical requirements. The technical specifications for NCTest, which is used to deliver online tests, are found on the [Testing News Network](#). Before all online test administrations, schools must review these technical requirements and make any necessary adjustments before administering tests. Schools that administer an online test but do not meet the technical requirements are at risk of providing students with questions that cannot be manipulated (e.g., technology-enhanced questions), are without associated artwork (e.g., tables, graphs, symbols), and do not fit properly on the screen. Chromebooks must be managed by the PSU and upgraded to use the Progressive Web Application (PWA).

Acceptable Devices for Online Administrations

All devices used for online testing, whether school-issued or student-owned, must have a pointing device included. This may be a touch screen, touchpad, external mouse, or other pointing device with which the student is familiar. It is a local decision to permit the use of a student-owned pointing device such as a hard-wired or Bluetooth mouse. Schools must ensure that external pointing devices are compatible with the device utilized for testing. Pointing devices with recording capability are prohibited.

School-issued devices. When accessing an online test, the Annual Testing Program recommends that students use devices that are school-issued with NCTest already loaded by the school.

Student-owned devices. The NCDPI requires use of a PWA for NCTest on Chromebooks. The PWA requires Chromebook devices to be managed by the PSU; non-managed Chromebooks cannot be used for testing.

When using student-owned devices, parents, legal guardians, and students should collaborate with the school test coordinator for instructions on how to download NCTest to their personal devices. Directions for downloading NCTest to student-owned devices can be located on the [NCTest Installation Instructions webpage](#). This link may be shared

with parents, legal guardians, and students. Technical support will not be provided by TOPS or the NCDPI when allowing students to use their own devices. Also, schools must not share the TOPS Help Desk phone number or email address with students, parents, or legal guardians.

Headphones. Wired and wireless headphones (e.g., Bluetooth earbuds) are permitted during testing for students utilizing test read aloud. However, students are prohibited from connecting a Bluetooth device to an unapproved electronic device (e.g., cell phone) during testing. Test administrators and proctors must closely monitor students using wireless headphones.

Request to use an alternate device. Prior written permission from the NCDPI's Office of Testing is required to use any device that does not meet the required device guidelines. Authorized device guidelines can be found on the [Testing News Network](#).

Online Testing Contingency Plan

If the NCTest platform is interrupted, whether due to a statewide outage or a local issue, the NCDPI will address statewide issues and provide support for local issues as appropriate. For all interruptions, schools are encouraged to keep students in the testing setting and maintain a secure environment for up to 30 minutes; however, PSUs may also set a reasonable, locally determined wait time based on their specific circumstances.

After the thirty-minute mark, or the locally determined wait time, schools may elect to do one of the following:

1. Pause testing for the remainder of the day and resume testing the next school day, or
2. Declare a misadministration and administer the test at a later date.

While students are waiting to resume testing, reasonable efforts should be made to ensure a secure environment. No one should discuss information found on the test or access electronic devices, including test administrators or proctors. However, at no time should students be denied access to the restroom or to food and drink. Also, when there is a test platform outage, schools must ensure as part of the testing plan that students have adequate opportunity to eat lunch and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.

J. Reporting and Scoring

Requirement to Report Student Scores

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(h\)](#) "LEAs shall report scores resulting from the administration of State-mandated tests from the Annual Testing Program to students and parents or guardians no later than 30 days after the test is administered and along with available score interpretation information within 30 days from receipt of the scores and interpretive documentation from the NCDPI."

See [Appendix C](#) of this handbook for a sample letter schools may use to share this information with parents or legal guardians.

Public Records Exemption

Per [General Statute § 115C-174.13\(b\)](#), "Any written material containing identifiable scores of individual students on any test taken pursuant to the provisions of this Article is not a public record within the meaning of G.S. 132-1 and shall not be made public by any person, except as permitted under the provisions of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g](#)."

Confidentiality of Student Scores When Publicizing Test Results

PSUs are advised to maintain confidentiality of student test scores. It is expected that student anonymity is protected when publicizing or reporting test results to the public. Districts and schools should not violate confidentiality rights under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

As stated in the [Testing Code of Ethics](#), "Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. PSU personnel shall not publicize test scores or any written material containing personally identifiable information from the student's educational records except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. . . . In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

1. withhold any monetary incentive awards;
 2. file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
 3. seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation;
- and

4. in accordance with the provisions of [16 N.C. Admin. Code 6C .0312](#), suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.”

Scoring

Online Tests

Except for tests with constructed responses (CR), online tests are scored during an overnight process and are available to PSUs in the online scoring and reporting system by 9:00 a.m. the following day.

Scoring online tests with CR questions. The testing window for online tests with CR questions ends earlier than the window for tests without CR questions because scoring for these tests takes additional time. Scoring online tests with CR questions begins the first business day after the test record is received. Scores are returned to the NCDPI within approximately six business days. An additional day is required for the NCDPI to process the files. Therefore, PSU test coordinators should allow approximately seven business days to receive scored online test records.

Student responses are scored in the order they are received; however, schools may receive scores for tests with CRs across multiple days for a group of students that tested on the same day.

Paper Tests

Scoring paper tests with CR questions. Schools administering paper tests with CR questions must click on the Transcribe Online SIQ in NCTest for the student. The school then follows the directions in the test administration guide for transcribing the student's responses from the paper test into the online testing system.

The testing window for paper tests with CR questions ends earlier than the window for tests without CR questions because scoring for these tests takes additional time. Scoring tests with CR questions begins the first business day after the test record is received. Scores are returned to the NCDPI within approximately six business days. An additional day is required for the NCDPI to process the files. Therefore, PSU test coordinators should allow approximately seven business days to receive scored online test records.

Invalid Test Scores

In the event specified test administration policies and procedures are not accurately applied to all testing events, per [16 NC Admin Code 06D .0307](#), the PSU superintendent or test coordinator may determine the need for retesting. If the NCDPI determines improper processes or procedures invalidates test results, the PSU is expected to

remedy the error, to include retesting of students. The Office of Testing may declare the test scores invalid. If test scores are invalid, the results must not be included in a student's permanent record or be used for accountability purposes.

K. District Requirements for Ordering, Receiving, Destroying and Returning Test Materials

District test coordinators should refer to this section of the handbook and the TOPS Return Kit for ordering, receipt, storage, return, and destruction of test materials requirements. The TOPS Return Kit accompanies all secure paper material orders and includes packing and shipping procedures for materials produced by the Annual Testing Program.

Before Ordering

PSU test coordinators should check to be sure the school contact information is correct on the NC Education ordering page. The United Parcel Service (UPS) will send an email notification to the email address listed for the test coordinator upon shipment of an order. If the test coordinator does not receive the package on the day indicated in the notification, the test coordinator must contact the TOPS warehouse at (919-515-4623). All UPS shipments from TOPS are next-day delivery. The test coordinator must be aware of the delivery date for the school to ensure there is not a security risk, and that the delivery occurs in a secure area.

Grade 8 periodic tables for online testing will not be shipped; however, they are available online for local download at: [Accountability and Testing > State Tests > End-of-Grade \(EOG\) > Resources > Released Forms and Supplemental Materials](#). Districts or schools are expected to print grade 8 periodic tables locally as needed for online testing. Periodic tables will be shipped with grade 8 science EOG paper tests.

Shipping and Receiving

Orders are typically shipped from TOPS three weeks before the first test date. The test coordinator must:

- conduct an inventory immediately upon receipt of all test materials to ensure that the packing list(s) matches exactly what is included in the box(es) of materials.
- note quantities received in the appropriate column on the packing list.
- sign all packing lists and maintain them for record keeping purposes, and
- if any discrepancy in the quantity is noted, send the packing list to TOPS by fax at 919-515-4622, or email at group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu. (The label is located at the bottom of the packing list.)

- save all boxes for the return of materials.
- save the original packing list(s) to use for the return of test materials to TOPS.

Guides and Handbooks

Guides (i.e., administration, assessment) and handbooks are not considered secure and do not have to be returned or destroyed.

As a reminder, the following guides should be retained for future administrations:

- 2025–26 EOC guides for use in 2026 summer and fall flexible testing.
- Spring Read to Achieve guides for use in summer and fall 2027.
- NCEXTEND1 guides throughout the year for grades 3–8, 10, and 11 administrations.
- CCRAA guides used for fall grade 10 testing for use with spring grade 11 testing.
- 2026–27 EOC guides for use in 2027 spring, summer, and fall flexible testing.

Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box

Schools planning to administer the portfolio during the 2026–27 school year should keep the portfolio boxes and implementation guides currently housed at the school.

Schools with a Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio (Edition 2) box that will not use the portfolio in 2026–27 must follow the Annual Testing Program's designated procedures for securely destroying or recycling the contents of the portfolio box.

Schools that did not administer the portfolio in 2025–26 but would like to administer it in 2026–27, will need to order a portfolio box through the TNN ordering system.

Test Materials to Be Temporarily Stored Locally

Test materials in the numbered list below are considered secure and must be stored by the district in a locked facility with controlled access until locally destroyed. After the required storage time expires, the district must destroy these materials using one of the approved methods: (1) shredding, (2) secure recycling, (3) observed landfill burial by two or more designated school personnel, or (4) incineration.

- Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio box
 - Store and continue to use the Edition 2 box of the Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio. (This is the most recent version available of the instructional and test materials.) The implementation guide (Edition 2.1) should be kept with the box.
- Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio passage copies

- Destroy locally after use.
- Unused EOG science grade 8 periodic tables
 - Store (Stock ID 24856) and use during the next test administration.
- Unused EOC Biology, English II, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3 test books
 - Store unused test materials from fall for use in spring, summer, and fall flexible testing.
- Read to Achieve Test
 - Store unused test materials from spring for use during reading camps and fall administrations.
- Unused EOG, EOC, and CCRAA graph paper
 - Store and use during next test administration.
- NCEXTEND1 test card kits, selection booklets, and test ticket forms
 - Destroy locally after testing.

Online Test Materials

Access codes and all visibly used (i.e., marked on in some way or not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables should either be returned to the district for secure destruction or be securely destroyed at the school site. Districts allowing schools to destroy these materials at the school site must ensure the school completes the [Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification form](#). Completed forms must be stored locally with the district test coordinator.

Paper Test Materials to Be Returned to the TOPS Warehouse

After the transcription of students' responses into the online system, the following test materials must be returned to the TOPS warehouse within five school days of the end of the testing window for non-vendor, state-mandated tests:

- Original responses recorded in a test book (i.e., BOG3, RtA, EOG, EOC, CCRAA) to include:
 - *Student Marks Answers in Test Book*
 - *Large Print Edition*
 - *One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Braille Edition*
 - *Braille Writer/Slate and Stylus* responses

- *Dictation to a Scribe* responses (e.g., typed, handwritten)
- *Electronic Braille Notetaker* responses
- All visibly used (i.e., marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables must be included inside the test book used by the student when returned to TOPS.
- A completed [Transcription Verification Tracking Form](#) (see Appendix M) must be included with the associated paper test books. Schools are permitted to make copies locally as needed.
- All used paper test books must have the transcription label completed on the front of the test book.

Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse

Test administrators, school test coordinators, and district test coordinators should use the following steps to pack and return test materials to the TOPS warehouse.

1. Test administrators return all materials (i.e., test books, test administration guides) to the school test coordinator.
2. School test coordinators ensure that scratch paper, graph paper, and periodic tables (for grade 8 science EOG) are inserted into each student's test book and then returns all materials to the district test coordinator.
3. District test coordinators package and return the secure materials as follows (top to bottom):
 - a. Place used test book(s) for a grade and subject or course together in a vinyl bag.
 - i. Place all visibly used (i.e., marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables inside the student's test book.
 - b. If applicable, place test materials with print errors in the box with a copy of the completed print error report form that has been entered into OTISS as the cover sheet.
 - c. Place any misadministration test books that are not to be scored in a separate, labeled vinyl bag.
4. The district test coordinator will send the secure test materials to TOPS.
 - a. Place vinyl bags and test materials in boxes using the provided authorized return service (ARS) labels.

- b. If more than one box is used for test materials, then each box should be clearly marked with "BOX <#> of <Total # of boxes>."
- c. Fax or email a scanned PDF of the [TOPS Return Verification Form](#) (see Appendix O of this handbook) to TOPS, and email or "cc" the regional accountability office staff. This form provides an area to denote the tracking number(s) for the district and TOPS to ensure test security and prompt follow-up should materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

All secure test materials must be stored in a secure, locked facility when not in use.

Recording tracking information. The PSU test coordinator must adhere to the following procedures when recording tracking information.

- Record information clearly on the UPS authorized return service label.
- Complete the TOPS Return Verification Form.
- Maintain a record of the following:
 - UPS tracking numbers,
 - number of boxes in the shipment,
 - packing lists involved, and
 - date shipped.

Test Materials Stored at TOPS

TOPS will store the following in a secure facility for twelve months following the test date:

- original student responses (e.g., responses recorded in test books, assistive technology devices, and/or dictation to scribes),
- paper test books in which eligible students marked their answers in the test book (i.e., *Braille Editions*, *Large Print Editions*, *One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Editions*, standard print edition), and
- students' original responses or original scribe recordings of students' responses, if not recorded directly into the online testing system or a paper test book (e.g., scribe records responses on a separate sheet of paper and transcribes into NCTest after the testing session).

Vendor Test Materials Return

Districts should consult vendor-specific documentation for guidance on test material return.

L. Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential Schools' Requirements for Ordering, Receiving, Storing, Destroying, and Returning Test Materials

Charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators should refer to this section of the handbook and the TOPS Return Kit for requirements about the ordering, receipt, storage, destruction, and return of the Annual Testing Program's secure test materials. The TOPS Return Kit accompanies all secure paper materials orders and includes packaging and shipping procedures for materials produced by the Annual Testing Program.

Charter, lab, regional, and residential schools are allowed to securely destroy NCEXTEND1 materials by one of the approved methods: (1) shredding, (2) secure recycling, (3) observed landfill burial by two or more designated school personnel, or (4) incineration. Schools must complete the [Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification form](#) and submit it to the RAC.

Before Ordering

School test coordinators should check to be sure the school contact information is correct on the NC Education ordering page. UPS will send an email notification to the email address listed for the test coordinator upon shipment of an order. If the test coordinator does not receive the package on the day indicated in the notification, the test coordinator must contact the TOPS warehouse at (919-515-4623). All UPS shipments from TOPS are next-day delivery. The test coordinator must be aware of the delivery date for the school to ensure there is not a security risk, and that the delivery occurs in a secure area.

Note: Grade 8 periodic tables for online testing will not be shipped; however, they are available online for local download at: [Accountability and Testing > State Tests > End-of-Grade \(EOG\) > Resources > Released Forms and Supplemental Materials](#). Schools are expected to print grade 8 periodic tables locally as needed for online testing. Periodic tables will be shipped with grade 8 science EOG paper tests.

Storing Materials

Upon receipt, schools must store all test materials in a secure, locked facility with controlled access limited to one or two authorized school personnel only (e.g., test coordinator, principal). Secure test materials should only be stored at the school for a brief period before and after the test administration.

Shipping and Receiving

Orders are typically shipped from TOPS ten days before the first test date. On the day the materials arrive at the school, the test coordinator must:

- conduct an inventory immediately upon receipt of all test materials to ensure that the packing list(s) match exactly what is included in the box(es) of materials.
- note quantities received in the appropriate column on the packing list.
- sign all packing lists and fax (919-515-4622) or email (group-topdocs@ncsu.edu) TOPS the packing list verifying the accuracy of or discrepancy in the quantities received. This must be completed on the same day that the materials arrive in the building. The label will be located on the bottom of the packing list.
- save all boxes for the return of materials.
- save the original packing list(s) to use for the return of test materials to TOPS.

Guides and Handbooks

Guides (i.e., administration, assessment) and handbooks are not secure materials and do not have to be returned or securely destroyed. As a reminder, the following guides should be retained for future administrations:

- 2025–26 EOC guides for use during 2026 summer and fall flexible testing.
- Spring RtA guides for use in summer and fall 2027.
- NCEXTEND1 guides throughout the year for grades 3–8, 10, and grade 11 administrations.
- CCRAA guides used for fall grade 10 testing for use with spring grade 11 testing.
- 2026–27 EOC guides for use in 2027 spring, summer, and fall flexible testing.

Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box

Schools planning to administer the portfolio during the 2026–27 school year should keep the portfolio boxes and implementation guide currently housed at the school.

Schools with a Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio (Edition 2) box that will not use the portfolio in 2026–27 must follow the Annual Testing Program's designated procedures for returning the contents of the portfolio box.

Schools that did not administer the portfolio in 2025–26 but want to administer it in 2026–27, will need to order a portfolio box through the TNN ordering system.

Online Test Materials

Access codes and all visibly used (i.e., marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables should be securely destroyed at the school site. The school must destroy these materials using one of the approved methods: (1) shredding, (2) secure recycling, (3) observed landfill burial by two or more designated school personnel, or (4) incineration. Schools must complete the [Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification form](#) and submit it to the regional accountability office.

Paper Test Materials to Be Returned to the TOPS Warehouse

After the transcription of students' responses into the online system, the following test materials must be returned to the TOPS warehouse within two school days of the end of the testing window for non-vendor state-mandated tests:

- Original responses recorded in a test book (i.e., BOG3, RtA, EOG, EOC, CCRAA) to include:
 - *Student Marks Answers in Test Book*
 - *Large Print Edition*
 - *One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Braille Edition*
 - *Braille Writer/Slate and Stylus* responses
 - *Dictation to a Scribe* responses (e.g., typed, handwritten)
 - *Electronic Braille* Notetaker responses
- All visibly used (i.e., marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables must be included inside the test book used by the student when returned to TOPS.
- A completed [Transcription Verification Tracking Form](#) (see Appendix M) must be included with the associated paper test books. Schools are permitted to make copies locally as needed.
- All used paper test books must have the transcription label completed on the front of the test book.
- All unused paper test books.

Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse

1. Test administrators should return all materials (i.e., test books, test administration guides) to the school test coordinator.
2. The school test coordinator will package and return the secure materials as follows (top to bottom):
 - a. Place used test book(s) for a grade and subject or course together in a vinyl bag.
 - i. Place all visibly used (i.e., has been marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables (for grade 8 science EOG) inside the student's test book.
 - ii. If applicable, place test materials with print errors in the box with a copy of the completed print error report form that was entered into OTISS as the cover sheet.
 - b. Place any misadministration test books that are not to be scored in a separate, labeled vinyl bag.
 - c. Place unused test materials sorted by grade and content in the box.
3. The school test coordinator will send the secure test materials to TOPS.
 - a. Place vinyl bags and test materials in boxes using the provided authorized return service (ARS) labels.
 - b. If more than one box is used for test materials, then each box should be clearly marked with "BOX <#> of <Total # of boxes>."
 - c. Fax or email the [TOPS Return Verification Form](#) (see Appendix O of this handbook) to TOPS, and email or "cc" the regional accountability office staff. This form provides an area to denote the tracking number(s) for the school and TOPS to ensure test security and prompt follow-up should materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

Note: All secure test materials must be stored in a secure, locked facility when not in use.

Recording tracking information. The school test coordinator must adhere to the following procedures for recording tracking information.

- Record information clearly on the UPS authorized return service label.
- Complete the TOPS Return Verification Form.
- Maintain a record of the following:

- UPS tracking numbers,
- number of boxes in the shipment,
- packing lists involved, and
- date shipped.

Test Materials Stored at TOPS

TOPS will store the following in a secure facility for twelve months following the test date:

- original student responses (e.g., responses recorded in test books, assistive technology devices, and/or dictation to scribes),
- paper test books in which eligible students marked their answers in the test book (i.e., *Braille Editions*, *Large Print Editions*, *One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Editions*, standard print edition), and
- students' original responses or original scribe recordings of students' responses, if not recorded directly into the online testing system or a paper test book (e.g., scribe records responses on a separate sheet of paper and transcribes into NCTest after the testing session).

Vendor Test Materials Return

Charter, lab, regional, and residential schools should consult vendor-specific documentation for guidance on test material return.

M. Testing Irregularities and Misadministrations

Testing Violations and Testing Irregularities

Test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) must report any alleged testing violation or testing irregularity to the school principal or director or school test coordinator on the day of the occurrence. The principal, director, or school test coordinator must contact the district test coordinator (charter, lab, and regional schools contact their regional accountability office) immediately with any allegation of a testing violation. The school test coordinator must then conduct a thorough investigation and complete the Report of Testing Irregularity provided through the [OTISS](#).

Entering OTISS Reports

The NCTest Admin Guide (posted on TNN > NC Education and NCTest Admin Guidance) provides step-by-step directions on entering an OTISS report.

Schools must document and report all misadministrations and irregularities in OTISS within five days of the occurrence. All test irregularities and misadministrations must be reported separately with the exception of school or room technical problems, which can be reported with the inclusion of a student list attached. All level two irregularities submitted in OTISS must include the required investigation documentation.

Technical Issues

When a student(s) is not able to successfully complete the test due to online test connectivity and/or technical problems, schools must report these problems in the [OTISS](#) on the day of the occurrence by entering the following:

- test name (subject and grade level),
- code available at the top left side of the screen (The series of letters, numbers, and symbols represents the student ID and form number.),
- description of the incident,
- number of students involved,
- names of all students involved,
- error message(s) (document the words verbatim),
- specific question number(s), if applicable,
- secure platform being used (e.g., NCTest Chromebook app, NCTest Secure Browser, or NCTest iPad app),
- steps taken locally to resolve the issue,

- Help Desk ticket number (If the Help Desk does not provide a ticket number, the caller should request one),
- advice or solution offered by the Help Desk, and
- whether the issue was resolved or not resolved.

Irregularity Classifications

The following list of testing irregularities with corresponding levels and examples are provided as a reference to PSUs. The examples provided are not all-inclusive.

- Staff Failed to Follow Directions, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Failed to administer the online tutorial
 - Started online test for student
 - Administered incorrect test
 - Provided incorrect materials or did not provide materials
 - Failed to follow test schedule procedures
 - Provided additional time beyond the designated time specified in the test administration guide.
 - Failed to follow administration instructions
 - Test scheduling prevented student's test completion
- Eligibility Issues, Level 1 or 2
 - Examples:
 - Eligible student not tested
 - Ineligible student tested
- Defective Paper Test Materials, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Wrong cover
 - Pages out of order
 - Duplicate pages
 - Blank or missing pages
 - Missing questions
 - Questions without answer choices
 - Printing error— letters or words unreadable

- Online Administration Issues, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Test connectivity or technical problems
 - Items not displaying properly
 - Unexpected exit in NCTest

If the same technical problem that prohibits completion of the test is reported for multiple students for the same test administration on the same day, only one OTISS report needs to be submitted. A list of all affected students should be attached to the OTISS report.

- Disruptions to the Testing Environment, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Fire alarm or bomb threat
 - Emergency evacuations
 - Power outage
 - External noise
 - Student disruption
 - Unauthorized visitor
- Accommodation Issues, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Not provided or not provided appropriately
 - Provided but not approved or documented
 - Test read aloud or signed/cued on reading test
 - Student refused accommodation
- Student Cheated, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Student copied answers
 - Student used a resource (e.g., cheat sheet) to access test information
 - Student used calculator during inactive portion of a math test
- Student Personal Issues, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Student was ill or injured
 - Student was anxious
 - Student had a problem with medication or personal item(s) (e.g., glasses)

- Student had family or personal circumstance
 - Student fell asleep
 - Student left early for an appointment
- Student Refusal to Test, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Student did not mark answers
- Student Did Not Follow Directions, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - Student worked on wrong section of test
 - Student started the test before permitted to do so
- Electronic Device Violation, Level 1 or 2
 - Examples:
 - Student possessed prohibited electronic device during test administration but did not access (Level 1)
 - Student possessed and accessed a prohibited electronic device during the test administration for non-testing purposes (Level 1)
 - Student possessed and accessed a prohibited electronic device during the test administration for testing purposes (e.g. search for answers, access an artificial intelligence [AI] site), (Level 2)
 - Staff accessed a prohibited electronic device during the test administration (Level 1 or Level 2)
- Secure Test Materials Divulged, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Test items used for instruction or in resource materials such as study guides
 - Reproduced test item(s)
 - Copies of test made available to others
 - Improper use of test materials
 - Staff or student copied, transmitted, or discussed test questions or information (e.g., social media, text message, video, picture)
 - Student or staff uploaded secure test materials to a third-party site
 - Staff (district or school) used secure and/or copyrighted test materials for professional development or instructional purposes
 - Allowed those without a legitimate need to have access to the test
 - Allowed students to review secure test materials

- Monitoring Issues, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Staff inadequately supervised test session
 - Proctor or students left alone with test materials
 - Staff or student(s) removed secure materials from test site
 - Test items not transcribed in secure, group setting
- Missing Test Materials, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Materials lost and not found
 - Materials unaccounted for and then found
- Test Materials Distribution/Collection/Storage, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Test materials not stored in secure, locked facility
 - Failed to delete secure electronic files saved or cached on network appliances or computers
 - Failed to maintain security of NC Education username and/or password
 - Failed to maintain security of student access codes
 - Materials not counted at all levels of distribution
 - Failed to return initial test materials distributed
- Encouraging Students to be Absent, Level 2
- Modifying Test Directions, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Staff read test directions from wrong test administration guide
 - Did not read script or all “SAY” statements in script
 - Paraphrased, omitted, revised, interpreted, explained, or rewrote the script, directions, or test items, including answer choices
- Staff Read or Altered Responses, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Tampered with student responses
 - Read test items (not including *Read Aloud* accommodation)
- Improper Assistance or Instruction, Level 2
 - Examples:
 - Failed to remove or cover inappropriate displays

- Provided improper assistance
- Test Not Administered during Testing Window, Level 2
- Unauthorized Readministration, Level 1
 - Examples:
 - The ACT, PreACT, ACT WorkKeys (ACT denied retest)
- Other, Level 1 or 2 (RAC approval required)

If the same technical problem that prohibits completion of the test is reported for multiple students for the same test administration on the same day, only one OTISS report needs to be submitted. A list of all students affected should be attached to the OTISS report.

OTISS Investigation Documentation

When PSUs or schools submit a level two infraction, an investigation checklist, summary report(s), and other pertinent documentation are required unless otherwise determined by the regional accountability office.

The [OTISS Testing Irregularity Investigation Checklist](#) must be used by the PSU or school test coordinator when collecting information and investigating a testing violation. The checklist provides the necessary steps and guidance for filing irregularities and completing investigations. The [Sample–Test Security Action Plan](#) may be used to address areas of concern in testing and to outline procedures for establishing corrective actions.

Misadministrations

PSUs must monitor test administration procedures. According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307 \(e\)\(f\)](#), “LEAs shall monitor test administration procedures. If a school employee discovers any violation of the rules in this Subchapter, he or she shall notify the principal, charter school director, or school test coordinator who shall notify the superintendent or the LEA test coordinator. If the superintendent or the LEA test coordinator determines that the violation affected the validity of the test for its intended purpose, he or she shall have the authority to order the affected students to be retested.

If NCDPI determines that the failure to administer a test in accordance with the rules in this Subchapter produced a result which is invalid for measuring student achievement, then NCDPI may remedy the error or order the LEA to remedy the error, including requiring retesting students.”

When a testing irregularity occurs, or when a testing irregularity is under investigation that may result in a misadministration and possible retesting, it is best practice not to

share the first test score with the student, parent(s), or legal guardian(s) until the decision to retest is final. When a retest occurs, the second test score must stand for accountability purposes.

For online tests, after a misadministration is declared and indicated in NC Education, a different form of the test will be loaded for the student, if available. For paper tests, when a misadministration is declared, the affected student(s) must be provided with another opportunity to take the test. The PSU test coordinator will specify how misadministrations are to be handled at the school and will schedule dates and times for readministering the tests in each school so that all misadministration retests are completed within the state-designated testing windows.

Only scores resulting from valid test administrations should be included in students' permanent record or used for accountability purposes. All misadministrations must be documented and reported using the appropriate procedures outlined in the OTISS. If a retest is permitted, the readministration date must be entered in the OTISS.

N. District and School Assessment Monitoring

Purpose

The Office of Testing conducts unannounced district and school assessment monitoring during standard and accommodated test administrations. The purposes of monitoring are to ensure all testing is conducted in a manner that is fair, consistent, and equitable for all students, including students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.

Districts and schools selected for monitoring are identified by random stratified electronic sampling, prior monitoring visit outcomes, and supportive monitoring measures. This method ensures site visits are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

School Monitoring

School monitoring visits will include observation of either a full or partial assessment day and may include:

- observation of testing policies and procedures applied by the school test coordinator, test administrators, and proctors (when utilized), (e.g., online test logins, test administration monitoring, appropriate storage of electronic devices),
- monitoring the school's testing environment,
- review of the use of approved accommodations, and
- the reporting of testing irregularities (if applicable).

District Monitoring

District monitoring visits will include, but are not limited to, review of:

- the *PSU Annual Testing Plan*,
- school training materials and attendance documentation,
- the district school monitoring plan, and
- test material security practices.

Monitoring of charter, lab, residential, and regional schools will include both school and district responsibilities.

When necessary, virtual interviews may be scheduled with select school staff after a monitoring visit.

Review and Follow-Up

A [checklist](#) will be completed by the monitor to document the visit (i.e., district or school), and the school system will receive a letter of review accompanied by a copy of the checklist within thirty school days of the visit. Charter, lab, residential, and regional schools will receive both a PSU and school checklist. If necessary, the monitor will indicate in the letter if concerns were noted during the in-person visit, as well as expectations for remedying the concerns. In some situations, when concerns are noted, the feedback will include plans to monitor the site again. Copies of the monitoring checklists utilized during monitoring visits are included in the appendix section of this handbook.

Monitoring Cohort Graduation Rates

The Offices of Accountability and Testing use a formalized state monitoring plan to verify the withdrawal of students reported in the PSU's prior school year's cohort graduation rate. Teams of state-level and regional staff members conduct the monitoring. Team members are tasked with conducting monitoring by requesting written evidence or documentation to verify the withdrawals of students from the cohort. For additional details and information regarding the monitoring process, access the [Cohort Graduation Rate Manual](#) that is located on the School Accountability and Reporting section of the NCDPI website.

O. Data Security

Third-Party Service Providers and Personally Identifiable Information

Protecting student data and privacy has always been a cornerstone for the NCDPI in their role to support and serve the PSUs of North Carolina. In May of 2023, the NCDPI embarked on another major step in this effort continuing to improve the protection of student data with the Third-Party Data Integration to better support requirements of [Article 29 of NC General Statute 115C](#). This initiative focused on ensuring appropriate technical and business controls are in place between each PSU and the service provider partners that provide software and services to them. Specifically, it aimed to strengthen security and privacy protections around student data, align with the NC Department of Information Technology's data security standards, and designed to help PSUs evaluate providers security readiness before allowing data integration.

The [NCDPI Third-Party Data Integration](#) process outlines specific data security and privacy requirements for external providers when integrating with applicable PSU and NCDPI systems. Details can be found at: [Home > About DPI > Technology Services > Third Party Data Integration](#). The [Data Confidentiality and Security Agreement \(DCSA\) for Online Service Providers and Public School Units](#) specifically outlines requirements in sections 2. Student Records and Information and 3. Compliance with Applicable Laws, Policies, and Procedures.

In doing so, the third-party can be designated a "school official" as defined by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). According to the FERPA, "a 'school official' includes a teacher, school principal, president, chancellor, board member, trustee, registrar, counselor, admissions officer, attorney, accountant, human resources professional, information systems specialist, and support or clerical personnel." The person or entity must be under the PSU's direct control regarding the use and maintenance of education records and must use the data only for authorized purposes. PSUs are required to annually provide a list or description of designated school officials who may access records without prior consent in their annual FERPA notification.

Whether a third-party provider, such as Google Workspace for Education or Microsoft 365, is designated as a school official as defined by the FERPA, is at the discretion of the PSU. The legal relationship with third-party service providers is by and between the PSU and the third-party service providers. PSUs are encouraged to consult with their legal counsel and leadership when determining which third party meets legal and local requirements. Such requirements must include evidence/assurance that the third-party vendor is protecting student data.

The PSU is responsible for the security of students' personally identifiable information (PII) by implementing and maintaining reasonable security procedures and practices appropriate to the nature of the covered information and protecting that covered information from unauthorized access, destruction, use, modification, or disclosure.

In addition to the [NCDPI Third-Party Data Integration](#) process that outlines specific data security and privacy requirements for external providers when integrating with applicable PSU and NCDPI systems, NCDPI provides additional cybersecurity services and resources as part of the larger [NCDPI K-12 Cybersecurity Program](#).

Handling and Transmitting Personally Identifiable Information

PSUs and the NCDPI staff frequently need to share information from individual student records to resolve data issues and answer program area questions. Employees of PSUs, the NCDPI, or other education institutions are legally and ethically obliged to safeguard the confidentiality of any private information they access while performing official duties. Confidential information regarding students and staff should always be transmitted securely.

The [FERPA \(20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#) is a federal law that applies to all educational agencies and institutions (e.g., schools) that receive funding under any program administered by the US Department of Education. Among several purposes, FERPA was enacted to protect the privacy of students' educational records.

Transported data and other electronic transporting devices containing NCDPI data should be encrypted. This requires the recipient of the data to have corresponding decryption capabilities.

To protect the confidentiality of individuals from those who are not authorized to have access to individual-level data, PII should be encrypted during transmission using the:

- **Secure FTP** server on SFTP or FTPS protocols, as this is the preferred method and most widely accepted standard for transmitting encrypted data.

If the third party wants to install a plugin or create a direct connection to NCSIS, it must follow the process outlined on the NCDPI website: [Third-Party Data Integration Process](#).

Fax machines and printers used to send and receive secure data must be located in secure areas.

Secure test questions, answer choices, or portions of secure test questions and answer choices must not be sent via email. PSUs should follow their board of education policy for secure data transmissions.

PSUs should not use private or personal accounts to store students' PII. For example, an organizationally owned Google Workspace account would be acceptable if approved by the local data storage policy; however, a personally owned Google account should not be used.

Furthermore, it is recommended that PSUs use the Data Leak Protection feature of Google Workspace or Microsoft 365 to protect data, even though FERPA compliance does not require Data Leak Protection.

For additional information, see the publication *Best Practices Guide: PII and Email* at [NCDPI > Data & Reports > Data Reporting and Program Monitoring > Data Management Resources](#).

Viewing Secure State Tests and Obtaining Data for Research

[General Statute § 115C-174.13 \(a\)](#) states that “until the State Board of Education designates that a test is released, any test developed, adopted, or provided by the State Board of Education, as provided in this Article, is not a public record within the meaning of [G.S. §132-1](#). The State Board of Education may develop rules to allow inspection of a test prior to release, but shall require that individuals inspecting the test meet the same standards for confidentiality required for employees of local boards of education in test administration. As used in this section, the term ‘test’ includes both the test and related test materials.”

Secure test materials include, but are not limited to, blueprints, test layout forms, operational and field test questions or answers, test questions or answers, and test books. Secure test materials may be in either electronic or paper format. North Carolina test materials are costly to generate; every precaution must be taken to ensure all test materials remain secure at all times.

The normal course of the test development process includes educator and stakeholder involvement in the following processes: test specifications, test development, question writing, and reviews; experimental form and section, bias, and operational form reviews; range finding; standard setting; and alignment studies. During these processes, educators and stakeholders are asked to view secure test materials but are bound by a signed test security agreement.

In special circumstances, exceptions can be made for parents or legal guardians who would like the opportunity to view secure test materials. Requests to view secure materials must be sent to Kinge Mbella, Director of Testing, at kinge.mbella@dpi.nc.gov.

The email should include:

- the specific name of the test requested to view,
- the reason(s) for the request, and
- explanation of how the information will be used after the review.

For parents and legal guardians granted permission to view secure test materials, the review must occur at the NCDPI in Raleigh under secure conditions with NCDPI staff present throughout the viewing period. Parents and legal guardians may not view secure test materials at the district or school sites nor duplicate, scan, copy, photograph, or otherwise create a record of the information they view.

Parents and legal guardians granted permission to view secure test materials will not be able to view the same test form that was administered to their child, but it will be a parallel and equivalent form of the test. Parents and legal guardians will not be able to view their student's completed test.

Before viewing secure test materials, each parent and legal guardian is required to read and sign a test security agreement form. One copy of the form will be retained by the NCDPI; each parent and guardian will receive a copy. Parents and legal guardians who refuse to sign the test security agreement form may not view secure test materials.

Research Data Requests

Private companies, higher education staff, and graduate students may request school data for research purposes. Test coordinators and other school officials must never release test data beyond what is publicly available on the NCDPI website. Researchers should be referred to the reports and data posted at the [Data & Reports link](#) on the NCDPI website.

Information regarding the NCDPI research data request process is available at [Research Partnerships: Data Requests & Letters of Support](#) on the NCDPI website.

If more data is requested than is publicly available, the individual should contact the [NC Education Research Data Center](#) or the NCDPI, at research@dpi.nc.gov.

Maintaining the Confidentiality and Security of Testing and Accountability Data

PSUs or schools must not release secure data to the public. PSU test coordinators are responsible for handling confidential North Carolina testing and accountability data. Extreme caution and care must be taken to maintain the confidentiality and security of this data. Access and use of these data must comply with the [FERPA](#) as well as NC general statutes that pertain to the use of educational data. Violations may result in the

withdrawal of U.S. Department of Education funds and constitute misdemeanors under North Carolina law.

Confidential data must be transferred using secure methods (e.g., Secure File Transfer Protocol or receipted parcel delivery services, such as the U.S. Postal Service, United Parcel Service [UPS], Federal Express). When placing confidential data on portable devices (e.g., laptops, external drives), the portable device must be protected by encryption or password protection.

In certain limited situations, confidential student, school, or district data may be used in presentations related to school or district improvement. However, this is permissible only when presented to personnel in the school or district who have access to the confidential data of students for purposes of improving instruction. Even in such situations, caution must be taken to ensure the data remain secure at all times.

Free and reduced meal data and direct certified data for the identification of economically disadvantaged students (EDS) must never be released to anyone. The EDS data are property of the NCDPI and School Nutrition Services. The Offices of Accountability and Testing have access to the data through a Memorandum of Understanding. Test coordinators are bound by the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding and FERPA to preserve the confidentiality of this data. Releasing this data to anyone in any manner allowing the identification of the EDS status of an individual student is a violation of federal law.

Security of Student Test Records and Data

The [FERPA \(20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#) protects the privacy of student education records. Test records are part of student education records that contain sensitive information. Access to these records must be restricted to individuals with a legitimate need to access them. These data are not for personal use and should not be distributed in such a way that can identify individual student scores. When producing summaries of student performance, any group with fewer than ten individuals must not be reported because to ensure the students who make up that group can't be identified. Instead, the report should show a "*" or "N/A" (or other symbol) with an appropriate explanation.

In any group where the percentage of individuals is greater than ninety-five percent or less than five percent, the values may not be displayed because of FERPA privacy regulations. In these cases, the results will be shown as >95% or <5%. This ensures that student information remains anonymous. The policy further ensures compliance with the interpretation of FERPA that small cell sizes must be removed from statistics

made public or offered to outside organizations or persons to avoid the disclosure of personally identifiable data.

Individual student records must not be sent via email because this is not a secure means of transferring information.

P. Additional Information

Summer School Testing

Summer school students taking EOC tests. Summer school provides students with the opportunity to participate in a high school course in one of two ways:

- **Course for credit.** Students receiving instruction in courses that require the administration of the EOC test and having obtained a proficient score previously on the EOC test may use the proficient score as at least twenty percent of their final grade, or they may elect to take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course. Students who have not obtained a proficient score on the EOC test before 2026–27 must take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course.
- **Credit recovery.** Per SBE policy [CCRE-001](#), students receiving instruction in credit recovery courses may be administered the appropriate EOC test no later than thirty days after completion of the course.

Summer school test scores. Summer school test scores are returned to the base school the student attended in the spring for inclusion in the accountability results for the subsequent accountability year.

Example: Student A attended school at School X in the spring of 2025–26. This student then attended summer school at School Y in July of 2026. The student's resulting EOC score will be attributed to School X in the 2026–27 school year.

Policies and Procedures for Students Receiving Services at a Visited School

Per [G.S. § 115C-366\(a\)](#), "All students under the age 21 years who are domiciled in a school administrative unit and who have not been removed from school for cause, or who have not obtained a high school diploma, are entitled to all the privileges and advantages of the public schools to which they are assigned by the local boards of education." Per [G.S. § 115C-107.1\(a\)\(2\)](#), "any child with a disability who is receiving special education and related services and has not graduated from high school with a regular diploma is eligible to continue to receive a free, appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which that child reaches the age of 22." The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) participation regulation [34 CFR 300.116\(e\)](#) specifies that in determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, "each public agency must ensure that a child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum." To exercise this responsibility for

determining the least restrictive environment, the teams' decision-making process would need to begin within the context of an age-appropriate classroom.

It is the responsibility of the district to assign a base school for each child of school age residing within the district who qualifies under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school. A school administrative unit may decide that it is in the student's best interest to receive services at another school or from a service provider that is not part of the school system. These courses or services may be educational or special needs, such as those for children with disabilities or for ELs. In these instances, the base school still assumes responsibility for the student's education.

With the permission of the local school administrative unit, a school has the right to allow a non-North Carolina public school student to attend. In doing so, the school accepts responsibility for the student's education.

It is important that districts and schools understand the policies and procedures for including all students attending a school (whether in membership, cross-enrolled, or visiting) in the Annual Testing Program.

- Students who are cross-enrolled or are visiting a school are required to participate in the state's testing program, if eligible.
- Eligibility is determined by the Annual Testing Program and includes grade-level and course enrollment. Eligibility requirements are based on enrollment in the NCSIS.
- The policies and procedures for reporting test results apply when students are receiving services at a visited school.
- If there is a base school, test results go back to the base school and are included in the accountability results of the base school.
- If there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the accountability results of the visited school.

Definition of Terms

1. **Average daily membership (ADM).** Average daily membership is the number of students in membership who receive an elementary, middle, or secondary education at public expense. To be included in ADM, a student must have a class schedule that is at least one-half of the school's instructional day. Students who have a schedule less than one-half of an instructional day must be assigned as visiting students and are not included in ADM.
2. **Base school.** The base school is the school in which the student is reported for ADM (i.e., in membership). A district cannot serve as a base school. Each local

board of education is authorized and directed to provide for the assignment to a public school (i.e., base school) of each child residing within the district who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school.

3. **Cross-enrolled school.** A cross-enrolled school is a school other than the student's base school that provides a course(s) or educational services to the student that are not available at the student's base school.
4. **Cross-enrolled student.** A cross-enrolled student is in membership at the base school but is taking a course(s) or receiving educational services at another school.
5. **Visited school.** The visited school is the school in which the student takes a course(s) or receives educational services. The student is not reported in ADM (i.e., membership) at the visited school. A district cannot serve as a visited school.
6. **Visiting student.** A visiting student is not in ADM at a base school but is taking a course(s) or receiving educational services at a visited school.
7. **Community residential centers, developmental day centers, or contracted service providers.** Districts and schools "furnishing special education and related services to children with disabilities may contract with private special education facilities or service providers to furnish any of these services that the public providers are unable to furnish" (pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-111.2](#)).
8. **Clustered exceptional children (EC) students (term for accountability purposes).** Clustered exceptional children students are students with disabilities (with current IEPs) who may be grouped in a school other than their school attendance area. EC students must be administered all required state tests. The test results of these students may be electronically moved to an attendance area school determined by the district whereby test results will be included in the accountability results of that school.

Cross-enrolled students within the same districts. A cross-enrolled student's test results are included in the accountability results at the base school. There are several contexts in which students may be cross-enrolled (i.e., attending two different schools). For accountability purposes, the base school and visited school should adhere to the following procedures regarding cross-enrolled students:

- The base school should have a master schedule for the cross-enrolled student. The master schedule for the cross-enrolled student should
 - include all classes and courses taken at the base school and include each class and course taken at the visited school, and

- use appropriate state course codes.
- The base school is responsible for ensuring the cross-enrolled student is administered all required state tests.

Visiting students. A visiting student's test results are included in the accountability results at the visited school. There are several contexts in which a student may be a visiting student (i.e., attending a school without a base school). For accountability purposes, the visited school should adhere to the following procedures for students who are visiting but do not have a base school:

- The NCSIS should record the student as visiting and not in ADM.
- The visited school should have a master schedule for the student. The master schedule for the student should
 - include all courses taken at the visited school, and
 - use appropriate state course codes.
- The visited school is responsible for ensuring eligible students are administered required state tests.
 - If the visited school administers a state test to the student, the student's test results (e.g., EOC, EOG) remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.

Examples for Clarification

The following are examples and guidelines regarding requirements to test cross-enrolled and visiting students:

1. **Foreign exchange students.** The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to foreign exchange students. The student is enrolled in a visited school as a visitor and not counted in ADM. Test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.
2. **Department of Defense school, private school, or home-schooled students.** The district agrees to allow a Department of Defense school, a private school, or a home-schooled student to take a class(es) or course(s) at the visited school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests for the class or course the student is enrolled in are administered to the visiting student. Because there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.
3. **Nondomiciliary students attending a North Carolina school pursuant to an agreement with a district or school.** In some instances, pursuant to an

agreement with the district or school, students may be admitted to a North Carolina school in which they are not domiciliary. For example, a student's family may live in Virginia and one of the parents teaches in North Carolina. The student (pursuant to an agreement with the district or school) attends the school in which the parent teaches. The student is not reported in ADM but is eligible to take state tests in the class(es) or course(s) the student is taking through the school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the visited school. Note: The student is eligible for a North Carolina high school diploma.

4. **Nondomiciliary students meeting specific requirements.** A student who is not domiciliary of a local school administrative unit may attend, without payment of tuition, the public schools of that school administrative unit if the student resides with an adult domiciliary of that unit as a result of the death, serious illness, or incarceration of a parent or legal guardian; the abandonment by a parent or legal guardian; the inability of the parent or legal guardian to provide adequate care and supervision because of a physical or mental condition; or the loss or uninhabitability of the student's home as a result of a natural disaster. The student must not be under a term of suspension or expulsion, and affidavits must be completed by the adult with whom the student resides and the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian ([G.S. § 115C-366](#)). If a student meets the requirements of [G.S. § 115C-366](#), the student is in ADM. Therefore, this is the student's base school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school.
5. **Nondomiciliary students attending a NC school as due to the parents' or legal guardians' active military deployment.** Pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-366 \(1\)\(g\)](#), a student who is a nondomiciliary of North Carolina as a result of the parents' or legal guardians' active military deployment may attend, without payment of tuition, the public schools within a district or a specific school if the student meets the following requirements: (1) the student resides with an adult who is a domiciliary of that district or school, (2) the period of deployment is thirty days or longer, and (3) the school is provided evidence of the deployment along with the affidavits required under subdivision (3) of subsection (a3) of this Statute. If a student meets the requirements of [G.S. § 115C-366](#), the student is in ADM at a base school within the district or school. Therefore, the district or school is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

6. **Special education services.** Districts and schools furnishing special education and related services to children with disabilities may contract with community residential centers, developmental day centers, or contracted service providers to furnish services that the public providers are unable to furnish (pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-111.2](#)). [Title VIII, General Provisions, Part A-Definitions, Sec.8101\(1\)\(D\)](#) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states:

“(D) CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. If a local educational agency makes a tuition payment to a private school or to a public school of another local educational agency for a child with a disability, as defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Secretary shall, for the purpose of this Act, consider the child to be in attendance at a school of the agency making the payment.”

The child is not considered to be in attendance at a school of the agency receiving the payment. All agencies not associated with local school administrative units, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the Division of Juvenile Justice must meet standards that apply to state and local educational agencies and secure the rights the students would have if served by the state or local educational agency.

- a. Community residential centers. Pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-366 \(a1\)](#), “children living in and cared for and supported by an institution established, operated, or incorporated for the purpose of rearing and caring for children who do not live with their parents are considered legal residents of the local school administrative unit [district] in which the institution is located. These children are eligible for admission to the public schools of the local school administrative unit as provided in this section.” For additional information that outlines in more detail the steps community residential centers are to follow, see the [Community Residential Centers—Testing Policy subsection](#) in Section P of this handbook.

Example: A student residing in County A goes to live at a residential center in County B. As soon as the student becomes the ward of the residential center in County B, the student is no longer in membership in County A. County B must select a school within County B and enroll the student as a visitor. County B is responsible for the educational services of the student. All required state tests must be administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school.

- b. Developmental day centers. Special education and related services are provided to eligible children with disabilities who are placed in accredited developmental day centers by local school administrative units.

Example 1: If the district cannot provide services for a student, the district may place the student in a developmental day center. In this case, the student is enrolled at a base school in the district; the developmental day center becomes an extension of the school. The district is responsible for testing the student on all required state tests. The test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

Example 2: If a district has made a free and appropriate public education available in the district, and the parents of a child elect to place the child in a developmental day center for educational services, the district is not responsible for the cost of education, nor is the student required to be tested.

- c. Contracted service providers. Local school administrative units may contract with service providers to furnish services that public providers are unable to furnish.

Example: A student in County A needs an educational service that is only available in County B. County A contracts with County B for the service. ADM for the student remains in County A. County A is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school in County A.

- d. Parentally placed private or home school students. Parentally placed private or home school students who receive services through a service plan are not required to be tested.

Example: Districts and schools are required to ensure equitable participation for students with disabilities. In cases where a parentally placed student in a home school attends a public school through a service plan, such as speech therapy, the student may be enrolled as a visitor. The student is not eligible for participation in the Annual Testing Program unless the student also enrolls in a content area course. In this case, refer to letter "e." below.

- e. Parent or legal guardian contracts with the PSU for a course. If the parent or legal guardian contracts with the local school administrative unit for a course, then the student needs to be tested. The school administrative

unit is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the visiting student. Because there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.

- f. North Carolina publicly places a student in a private facility. In a situation in which North Carolina publicly places a student in a private facility during the school year, the district and base school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered.
 - i. The district and base school are responsible for notifying the private facility of the required tests, policies, and procedures, and for arranging the test administration date and location. If the private facility will administer the state test(s), the district and base school must ensure all security policies and procedures are maintained.
 - ii. For accountability purposes, the test results of such a student must be included in the accountability results at the base school.
7. **Clustered EC students.** Clustered EC students—a term used for accountability purposes—are students with disabilities (with current IEPs) who may be grouped in a school other than their school attendance area. Clustered EC students must be administered all required state tests. It is a district's decision as to where test results from EC students' scores will count for accountability purposes. If students are appropriately cross enrolled in NCSIS to a school within a district for instructional purposes, the students will have their scores sent to the base school as defined in NCSIS. If a student is not scheduled in this manner, districts may complete the ACCHOME process to have the student's accountability measures attributed to the appropriate school.
8. **Hospital or homebound students.** Educational services for hospital or homebound students are typically provided at a home or hospital by school or district personnel. If a student is confined at home or in a hospital, is unable to attend the base school, and is receiving homebound instruction from the base school or district, the student is considered hospital or homebound. Once PSU personnel have made contact (i.e., a face-to-face meeting) with the student to provide instruction, the student should be counted present for the span of time during which regularly scheduled hospital, or homebound instructional services are delivered. (Supporting documentation should be maintained at the school.) The base school is responsible for ensuring that all required state tests are administered. Medical exceptions can be submitted, if appropriate, and must include the current hospital or homebound documentation with current service dates noted. For accountability purposes, the test results of a hospital or

homebound student must be included in the accountability results at the base school.

9. **North Carolina Virtual Public School.** The North Carolina Virtual Public School is not responsible for administering state tests. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
10. **Learn and earn early college high schools.** Learn and earn early college high schools provide students with the opportunity to complete high school with a high school diploma and an associate degree or two years of transferable credit at no cost to the student. To participate in learn and earn, students must meet the course prerequisites set by the participating college or university. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school. The graduation data is reported for the school where the student is included in ADM.
11. **Community college courses.** A public school student taking a community college course must be enrolled with the appropriate state course code designated for community college courses. Community college officials have the responsibility for verifying eligibility and acceptance of the articulated course or courses on a student's high school transcript. For credit to be awarded in any individual course, all criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges must be met. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
12. **Teacher-in-treatment programs.** Teacher-in-treatment programs are located at centers across the state, but the centers are not affiliated with a district or school. Students who are participating in a teacher-in-treatment program should remain in membership in their base school. Days of participation at the center should be posted as absences. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
13. **North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJ).** DJJ facilities are responsible for administering applicable state tests. Scores are not included in accountability results.
14. **Extended day program.** For students who attend an extended school day program and are in membership at a base school, the base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.

15. **Vocational and career centers.** Students can take special vocational courses as well as academic courses at vocational and career centers. The student must be enrolled in the course at the base school. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
16. **Schools housed in the same building.** There are several instances where two schools, each having different school codes, are housed in the same building (e.g., a S.T.E.M. school and a traditional school). For example, School A has school code XXX and School B has school code YYY. If a student is enrolled in School A and walks down the hall to take a class in School B, the student should be cross enrolled at School B. School A assumes responsibility for the education of the student and must ensure the student is administered all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at School A, which is the base school.

Community Residential Centers—Testing Policy

Per [G.S. § 115C-366 \(a1\)](#), “Children living in and cared for and supported by an institution established, operated, or incorporated for the purpose of rearing and caring for children who do not live with their parents are considered legal residents of the local school administrative unit in which the institution is located. These children are eligible for admission to the public schools of the local school administrative unit as provided in this section.” All required state tests must be administered to these students. Test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

The steps local school administrative units should follow for testing students at community residential centers are as follows:

1. Assign students at community residential centers to a base school.
 - a. Assign the students in grades 3–12 who are served by a community residential center to a base school that includes their grade configuration. Grades 3–12 cannot use school code 292 or any other school code under 300. Students must be assigned to a school in the district. The district can determine which base school the scores will go to.
 - b. Only students at grades PK, K, 1, 2, and 12 or 13 (for students with disabilities who have completed the twelfth grade but have not graduated from high school and continue to receive a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of twenty-two) can use school code 292 as their base school number.

2. The district is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the students. Test results are included in the accountability results at the assigned base school.
3. The district test coordinator is responsible for ensuring all testing policies and procedures are implemented at the community residential centers and test security is maintained at all times.
4. Districts have two options available for assigning test administrators at community residential centers:
 - a. Designated staff who are employed by the district and have received training in the appropriate test administration(s) can administer the required tests to the students residing at the community residential centers.
 - b. Community residential staff members who provide instruction to the student(s) residing in the center may attend test administrator training provided by the district accountability staff and administer the required test(s) to their students. The following procedures apply for this option:
 - Community residential staff must attend face-to-face test administration training (including training on the guidelines for the use of accommodations) conducted by the district before the administration of any state-required test(s).
 - A test security agreement by and between the district and community residential center and its employee(s) must be signed at the time of training and kept on file at the district. The agreement is to ensure compliance with all state policies and procedures pertaining to the administration of secure state tests, test administrator training, irregularities reporting, materials handling, and test security. (The district assumes responsibility for test security.)
 - For online tests and NCEXTEND1, the district will need to collaborate with each community residential center test administrator to create an NC Education account. District test coordinators must ensure that these accounts have proper roles and permissions. On days before testing, district test coordinators must click on the district tab on the enrollment screen and add students to the appropriate course. District test coordinators must ensure all pre- and post-test activities are completed for online tests as described in the appropriate test administration guides

- (e.g., scheduling test windows, ensuring proper entry of SIQs, meeting all technology requirements).
- For students with a documented need to record answers in a manner other than directly entering them into the online testing system (e.g., paper test administration, audiotape recording, assistive technology device, braille writer/braille paper), test administrators or other designated school personnel must transcribe the student's recorded answers into the online testing system. The students' responses are included in the school's accountability results. If the responses are not transcribed into the online testing system, the student will not receive a score. Transcription and verification must occur under secure conditions in a group setting (i.e., three or more designated school personnel). Note: For steps to follow when transcribing students' responses, refer to the appropriate test administration guide.
 - In some instances in which the district has a current, signed security agreement between the community residential center and the district ensuring the security of all student data, the community residential center employees who are trained as test administrators may be provided access to the Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS). The district assumes responsibility for test security. For community residential center employees who are trained as test administrators but have not been given access to ECATS, the district test coordinators must plan to provide community center teachers with the necessary student accommodation information for testing purposes.

NC School Report Cards

The [North Carolina School Report Cards](#) provide information about K–12 public schools, local school systems, and the state.

Each report card includes a school or district profile and information about student performance, safe schools, access to technology, and teacher quality. By reviewing report card data, parents and others can learn more about school progress and resources.

State Testing Results

Reports of student performance for the EOG, EOC, and NCEXTEND1 tests are published annually in the [Green Book](#).

Disaggregated state, district, and school performance data are available via the [NCDPI Accountability Dashboards](#).

Accountability data sets and reports are available at [Accountability Data Sets and Reports](#) on the NCDPI website.

The North Carolina SAT report and Advanced Placement (AP) results are available at [The North Carolina SAT and AP Results](#) on the NCDPI website.

Results from The ACT and ACT WorkKeys administrations are available at [ACT Reports](#) on the NCDPI website.

Appendix A: Directions for Accessing the Online Training Courses

Directions for accessing the courses:

1. Access the online training courses via [NC Education](#)
2. Log in to NC Education with your username and password.
3. In the navigation box, click the word Courses.
4. Select the appropriate course name. Test administrators giving both online and paper tests must enroll and complete both courses.
 - a. *Online Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course*
 - b. *Paper Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course*
 - c. *Testing Security: Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel Training Course*
5. Click Enroll me.
6. Click Enter in the middle of the page to begin the course.
 - a. Enable “pop-ups” to access the course.
 - b. The course will open in a separate window.
 - c. The course tracks progress in the event the participant needs to log out and finish later. To save course progress, the participant must click the Exit Course button in the top right corner of the screen. If this button is not clicked, course progress will not be saved.
7. The last page of each course displays a fillable certificate of completion. The participant must type in his or her name and the date of completion. There are instructions on the bottom of the screen to assist participants with saving and printing a copy of the certificate of completion.
8. After obtaining the certificate of completion, a hand-waving icon will appear on the screen, and the browser may be closed.

Appendix B: Sample Parent or Legal Guardian Letter About Required State Testing (No Opt-Out State)

School letterhead

Date

Dear (Parent or Legal Guardian) _____,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to express your concerns regarding the testing mandates of the Annual Testing Program.

Having received your request for a waiver, _____ (insert district or school) understands your concerns. However, our school system is obligated to abide by state and federal laws which require that all public school students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) in grades 3 through 8 and high school courses requiring an end-of-course test, must participate in the Annual Testing Program.

North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required state testing. The only exceptions granted are for a limited number of students who have extenuating circumstances related to a significant medical emergency or condition and are unable to participate in a specific test administration. Additionally, homeschooled students are required to be assessed annually on a nationally normed standardized test.

[16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309](#) requires schools within a district and charter, lab, regional, and residential schools to “use results from all EOCs as a minimum of 20 percent of the student’s final grade for each respective course.” As such, a student’s grade for these courses and overall grade-point-average calculation may be negatively impacted by not taking the required end-of-course state tests.

Please know that _____ (insert district or school) is trying to be responsive to parents’ and legal guardians’ concerns, yet we must adhere to state and federal laws that address the educational needs of all children.

Sincerely,

Appendix C: Parent's or Legal Guardian's Right to Know— Sample Letter

School letterhead

Date

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian _____,

This letter is to inform you that your student will take districtwide and state-mandated tests this school year as reflected on the attached test calendar, which is also posted online at _____.

Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307](#)—Test Administration in Public Schools, “(g) LEAs shall, at the beginning of each school year, provide information to students and parents or guardians advising them of the districtwide and State-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year. In addition, LEAs shall advise students and parents or guardians of the dates the tests will be administered and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents shall include whether the State Board of Education or the local board of education requires the test(s). (h) LEAs shall report scores resulting from the administration of State-mandated tests from the Annual Testing Program to students and parents or guardians no later than 30 days after the test is administered and along with available score interpretation information within 30 days from receipt of the scores and interpretive documentation from the NCDPI.”

[16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#) requires all public school students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) in grades 3 through 8 and high school courses requiring an end-of-course assessment, to participate in the Annual Testing Program. North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required state testing. The only exceptions granted are for a limited number of students who meet certain eligibility requirements or have extenuating circumstances related to a significant medical emergency or condition and are unable to participate in a specific test administration.

[16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309](#) requires schools to “use results from all EOCs as a minimum of 20 percent of the student’s final grade for each respective course”. As such, a student’s grade for these courses and overall grade-point-average calculation may be negatively impacted by not taking the required end-of-course state tests.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Test calendar

Appendix D: Confidentiality and Test Security Agreements

- [District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)

Confidentiality and Test Security Agreements **cannot** be altered. Districts and schools must use exact replicas of the documents included in this handbook.

District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the district test coordinator, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential and I will maintain the confidentiality of this data.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I have read and will follow state policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested fairly.
6. I am responsible for ensuring all school test coordinators are identified and trained prior to any test administration.
7. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that I am responsible for ensuring a procedure is in place within the PSU that accounts for and maintains security of all test materials at all times while they are in my PSU's possession.
8. to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
9. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material with anyone.
10. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the test coordinator's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the principal or director, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential and I will maintain the confidentiality of this data.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I have read and will follow state policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested fairly.
6. I am responsible for ensuring all appropriate school personnel are identified and trained prior to all test administrations.
7. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that these test materials must remain secure at all times.
8. I am responsible for ensuring a procedure is in place at my school to assure that all test materials are accounted for and secure at all times while they are in the school's possession.
9. I will ensure electronic devices, with the exception of those used for testing, are not accessed by test administrators or proctors during testing, that students do not have electronic devices in their possession during testing, that if a student is found in possession of a cell phone during testing a misadministration will be declared, and that all electronic device irregularities and misadministrations are reported in OTISS.
10. to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
11. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material with anyone.

12. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the principal's or director's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the school test coordinator, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential and I must maintain confidentiality of this information.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I have read and will follow state policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested fairly.
6. I am responsible for ensuring all necessary school personnel are identified and trained prior to any test administration.
7. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that these test materials must remain secure and accounted for at all times.
8. to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
9. I will enforce the school plan in place to ensure electronic devices, with the exception of those used for testing, are not accessed by test administrators or proctors during testing, that students do not have electronic devices in their possession during testing, that if a student is found in possession of a cell phone during testing a misadministration will be declared, and that all electronic device irregularities and misadministrations are reported in OTISS.
10. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material with anyone.
11. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the test coordinator's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

School Name: _____ Test Name: _____

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the test administrator, I understand that:

1. I cannot be assigned to test sessions where my relatives or wards are testing and where the proctor is a personal family member or close acquaintance.
2. I must administer the test listed above according to all state and local regulations and policies as printed in the test administration guide and other information provided in the training session(s) conducted by the school test coordinator.
3. I must comply with federal and state laws to maintain the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
4. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the test administrator's obligations described therein.
5. I must maintain test security at all times while test materials are in my possession.
6. to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test score. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
7. I will not modify, change, alter, or tamper with student responses during or after the test administration.
8. I will conduct an unbiased administration of the test according to the policies, procedures, and directions (as written) in the test administration guide.
9. I understand that I cannot access any electronic device (i.e., cell phone, smart watch, smart glasses) during testing, including breaks.
10. I will enforce the school plan in place to ensure electronic devices, with the exception of those used for testing, are not accessed by me or proctors during testing, that students do not have electronic devices in their possession during testing, that if a student is found in possession of a cell phone during testing a misadministration will be declared, and that all electronic device irregularities and misadministrations are reported in OTISS.
11. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material with anyone.
12. I must remain in the room and actively engaged in student monitoring throughout the entire test administration.

13. I must immediately report students with unapproved electronic devices in their possession or on their person during the test administration, even if they completed testing, to the school test coordinator.
14. in order to ensure test security, I will not discuss specific questions from the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or ask students questions about the test. The only exception to this directive is when I believe there has been a breach of test security which must immediately be reported to the principal or school test coordinator.
15. I will report testing irregularities to the school test coordinator on the day of the occurrence.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the proctor, I understand that:

1. I cannot be assigned to test sessions where my relatives or wards are testing and where the test administrator is a personal family member or close acquaintance.
2. I cannot distribute or collect test materials, read directions, assist students on the test, or review student information or responses.
3. I must ensure all cell phones (i.e., cell phones belonging to students, test administrators, and proctors) are turned off, and they or any other electronic devices are not accessed at any time during the test administration, including breaks. (Students testing online may use approved electronic devices.)
4. to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test or testing process. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
5. I will assist in actively monitoring the testing environment and minimize distractions and interruptions in the testing environment.
6. I will assist school personnel in ensuring appropriate test administration procedures are followed.
7. I will assist test administrators with students who have emergencies or need restroom breaks.
8. I will assist school personnel in ensuring accommodations are provided appropriately.
9. I will monitor the distribution of materials as specified by the script in the test administration guide. (Exceptions include approved supplemental materials or designated features such as highlighters, colored pencils, color acetate overlays, and students who receive a sample copy of the English II constructed response space or mathematics grid.)
10. I will maintain student confidentiality and must not disclose any personally identifiable information (PII) about individual students. (Student information is protected by federal privacy laws.)
11. I will report all testing irregularities or testing violations to the school test coordinator or principal on the day of occurrence.
12. I have reviewed and understand the *Testing Code of Ethics* (found in the back of *The Proctor's Guide*) before proctoring a test administration.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: PSU Test Coordinator's Responsibilities Check-Off List

Completion of this checklist is not required, but highly recommended.

PSU Name: _____

PSU Test Coordinator's Name: _____

School Year: _____

Annual Requirements

- ☐ Review the *Testing Code of Ethics*. Enter Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **For Districts.** Create and implement a plan for district monitoring of test administrations in schools. Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **For charter, lab, regional, and residential schools.** Create and implement a plan for monitoring test administrations within the school. Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **For Districts.** Ensure a process is in place and appropriately shared with school test coordinators for reporting test irregularities or misadministrations. Enter Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **For charter, lab, regional, and residential schools.** Ensure a process is in place for reporting test irregularities or misadministrations to the regional accountability coordinator. Enter Date Completed: _____
- ☐ Per [16 NC Admin Code 06D .0307](#), provide required testing information to teachers, parents or legal guardians, and students about the tests that will be administered during the school year, dates of testing, purpose of each test, and student requirements. Enter Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **Districts only.** Review and sign the [District Test Coordinator-Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). This form must be completed annually and kept on file with the regional accountability coordinator. Enter Date Completed: _____
- ☐ **For charter, lab, regional and residential schools only.** Review and sign the [School Test Coordinator-Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). This form must be completed annually and kept on file with the regional accountability coordinator. Enter Date Completed: _____

- ☐ Ensure all principals or directors review and sign the [Principal/Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). This form must be completed annually by the principal or director and kept on file with the school test coordinator.

Enter Date Completed: _____

- ☐ **For Districts.** Ensure all school test coordinators review and sign the [School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#).

This form must be completed annually by the school test coordinator and kept on file with the district test coordinator. Enter Date Completed: _____

- ☐ **For charter, lab, regional or residential schools.** Ensure all test administrators and proctors (if utilized) review and sign the applicable confidentiality and test security agreement. Enter Date Completed: _____

- ☐ Ensure all secure test materials at each school have been securely destroyed and the [Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification Form](#) has been submitted to the district test coordinator (schools within a district) or regional accountability coordinator (charter, lab, regional, or residential schools) at the completion of all test administrations. Enter Date Completed: _____

Appendix F: School Testing Plans

All school test coordinators within a district are required to submit a testing plan to the district test coordinator that outlines the procedures for administering the following state-mandated tests within the school.

Charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators are required to submit a testing plan to the regional accountability coordinator that clearly outlines the procedures for administering the following state-mandated tests within the school.

State-Mandated Tests

- Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading test,
- Read to Achieve test,
- PreACT,
- College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessments at grade 10 and grade 11,
- ACT WorkKeys,
- The ACT,
- WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten and WIDA ACCESS,
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS,
- End-of-Course tests,
- End-of-Grade tests, and
- NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments.

Test plans must be submitted no later than seven instructional days prior to the first day of testing and must, at a minimum*, include the following information:

School Name: _____

School Test Coordinator Name: _____

School Year: _____

Before Testing

- Procedures the school will use to verify that all students have completed the required online tutorial: _____
- The plan to ensure the school test coordinator will be available for the entire duration of the testing period: _____
- Identification of the individual responsible for:

- disabling devices capable of producing noise (e.g., bells, loudspeakers) throughout the building on testing days: _____
- providing a copy of the test plan to the front office: _____
- verifying all bulletin boards, instructional displays, notes on devices, and reference materials in classrooms where testing will take place have been covered or removed. _____
- ensuring additional testing devices are charged and available during testing: _____
- Details regarding the use of proctors, including whether they will be utilized and, if so, whether they will serve in stationary or roving roles: _____
- Assignment of test administrators, including clarification of whether they will be the teachers of record: _____
- Scheduled dates for staff training and make-up training: _____
- Designated location for storing completed test training sign-in sheets and signed confidentiality and test security agreement forms: _____
- Policies regarding the allowance of food and/or water in testing rooms: _____
- A contingency plan to be implemented in the event of an internet failure, whether local or statewide: _____

During Testing

- The method test administrators will use to contact the school test coordinator during testing, if needed: _____
- Procedures for the secure storage of all electronic devices that will not be used for testing, including both student and staff devices, in each testing room: _____
- Procedures the test administrator will use if a student refuses a documented accommodation or is not provided a documented accommodation during testing: _____
- Identification of the staff member(s) who will monitor testing rooms during testing to ensure:
 - The test administrator's username and password are not posted anywhere in the testing room, to include on electronic devices or student desks: _____

- Test administrators and proctors (if used) are actively monitoring the students during testing: _____

After Testing

- Procedures staff will use to report all testing irregularities or misadministrations to the school test coordinator: _____
- Explanation of how and where test transcription will take place:

- Procedures for ensuring that any test-related information saved or cached on any network appliance or computer is immediately purged or deleted after the test administration is complete:

- Procedures for identifying and notifying students about make-up testing opportunities:

*Test coordinators may modify this template by adding requirements or adjusting the format; however, all information requested in this document must still be collected.

Appendix G: Sample Test Planning Document

School Name:

Test Coordinator's Name:

Backup Test Coordinator's Name:

Test Name:

Date of Test Administrations:

Test Name and Grade Level	Test Date	Test Start Time	Room # or Location	Name of Test Administrator	Name of Proctor (note roving or stationary)	# of Students	Accommodations Note student(s) with accommodations using the accommodations codes , providing details if necessary.

Additional information school test coordinators could provide as part of the school test plan:

1. A map of the school facility.
2. Room location or number for pick-up and return of test materials.
3. Procedures for transcribing students' test responses.

Appendix H: Sample Training Sign-In Sheet

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Facilitator(s) Name: _____

Test Name: _____

Name (print)	Signature	Test Administrator (TA) or Proctor (P)	Received Test Administration Guide (initial)	Received Accommodations Training (initial)

Appendix I: Sample Materials Check-Out/Check-In Sheet

Please note the number of materials received for each item:

Materials	Number at Sign-Out (Completed by test administrator before test administration)	Number at Sign In (Completed by checker after test administration)
Test books		
Student Access Codes		
Review of Accommodation Forms		

Circle any of the following items received.

Blank paper Writing Utensils Do Not Disturb sign

Graph paper Periodic Tables

Signature of test administrator (teacher) at checkout: _____

Signature of person checking in materials after the test (Checker): _____

Students absent from this test session:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Complete after the Testing Session:

I, _____, affirm that I adhered to the following rules and procedures during the students' test administration.

1. I read and complied with all the procedures in the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
2. I maintained test security at all times.
3. I administered the tests according to the directions in the test administration guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher.
4. I administered the test to all eligible students.
5. I reported all testing irregularities to the school test coordinator.
6. I provided a positive test-taking environment.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Proctor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix J: Sample Testing Irregularity Parent or Legal Guardian Notification Form

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Test and Subject: _____ Student ID: _____

Teacher: _____ Test Date: _____

School Test Coordinator (STC): _____

STC Phone Number: _____

The following testing irregularity occurred during testing today, which resulted in the cancellation of your student's test score.

Your student's test score from today will not be shared with you; however, your student has the opportunity, with parent or legal guardian permission, to retake the test. Please choose from the options below to determine next steps for your student.

☐ I would like my child to retake the test.

☐ I do not want my child to retake the test, and I am waiving the rights of my child to retest in the future.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Note to staff: This document should be scanned and attached to the OTISS report.

Appendix K: Sample Self-Monitoring Report Form

Date:_____ School:_____ Test:_____

Monitor's Name:_____ Monitor's Signature:_____

Check all boxes that are observed; include explanations for any areas not observed.

Observation Criteria	Observed	Not Observed Explanation
School testing plan located in the main office.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Test materials are stored in a secure, locked room and distributed in accordance with the testing plan.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Devices are set up appropriately before testing and correct login procedures are followed.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Personal cell phones and electronic devices are turned off and appropriately stored during testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
School test coordinator walks around and monitors testing sessions.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Documentation exists confirming students took the online tutorial before the test administration.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Windows in doors are exposed and "Testing–Do Not Disturb" sign is posted outside each testing room.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Test administrator and proctor (if utilized) do not leave the students unattended at any time during the testing session and move throughout the room during testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
All rooms designated for testing are quiet, orderly, comfortable, with adequate seating.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Observation Criteria	Observed	Not Observed Explanation
Directions are read to the students exactly as they are written in the test administration guide.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Bulletin boards, instructional displays, and reference materials related to testing content or test-taking strategies are covered or removed.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
All reference materials on student desks, devices, or work stations are removed.	☐ Yes ☐ No	
Students are provided with the appropriate test materials.	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Accommodations. Choose three students at random who are receiving accommodations on the test and complete the chart below.

Student Name	Type of plan (IEP, Section 504 Plan, EL Plan, transitory impairment)	Accommodations documented on the <i>Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Form</i>	Accommodations observed in test session

Test Session

- ☐ This test was conducted in accordance with the accepted practices of standardized testing.
- ☐ This test had some irregularities and/or findings as listed below.

Appendix L: Sample Record of Students Absent from Makeup Testing

The STC lists all students absent from makeup testing on this form. If all students were tested, write NO ABSENCES.

Last Name	First Name	Student ID Number	Grade	Subject	Classroom Teacher	Reason Student Did Not Test

My signature below indicates that I understand it is the responsibility of the principal and school test coordinator to ensure that ALL eligible students are tested.

School Test Coordinator's Signature/Date _____

Principal's/Director's Signature/Date _____

Appendix M: Transcription Verification Tracking Form

School Name: _____

School Code: _____

School Test Coordinator: _____

Student Name (Last/First)	Student ID Number	Test Name	Grade or Course	Name of Transcriber	Name of Verifier	Name of Observer	Date of Transcription

Appendix N: Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification Form

School Name: _____ School Number: _____

The signatures below indicate that all secure student test materials have been collected by the school test coordinator and securely destroyed using one of the following methods: shredding, secure recycling, observed landfill burial (i.e., by two or more designated school personnel), or incineration.

School Test Coordinator (Print Name) _____

School Test Coordinator (Signature) _____

Date _____

School Principal (Print Name) _____

School Principal (Signature) _____

Date: _____

School test coordinators within a district must return this form to the district test coordinator no later than three school days following the completion of all test sessions. Charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators must return this form to the RAC no later than three school days following the completion of all test sessions.

Appendix O: TOPS Return Verification Form

Instructions. The return verification form must be faxed or emailed to TOPS and your RAC immediately after the test materials have been shipped. Test materials must be picked up and scanned by UPS driver or dropped off and scanned at UPS Store. This provides a tracking number(s) for you and TOPS and will also help assure test security and prompt follow-up should your test materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

Fax to: 919-515-4622 or Email to: group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu

Circle your RAC and send CC email.

Region 1: Brent Caldwell brent.caldwell@dpi.nc.gov	Region 2: John Worley John.worley@dpi.nc.gov	Region 3: Stacey Greene stacey.greene@dpi.nc.gov
Region 4: Justin Bruyer Justin.bruyer@dpi.nc.gov	Region 5: Melinda Fullwood Melinda.fullwood@dpi.nc.gov	Region 6: Anthony Hinson Anthony.hinson@dpi.nc.gov

Complete all fields below.

Test Name:	
PSU Name	
PSU #	
TC Name	
Phone #	
FAX #	
Date Shipped	
UPS Tracking Label(s)	Affix label.

Appendix P: OTISS Testing Irregularity Investigation Checklist

This form and all accompanying documentation must be submitted electronically.

OTISS ID #:	District:
Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC) Name:	School Name:
Date RAC Contacted:	Date of Occurrence:

Step	Instructions. Complete the steps below within five days of when the irregularity is identified.	Completion Date	Additional Information
1	OTISS Report Test Coordinator (TC) submits testing irregularity report in OTISS on the same day the irregularity occurs or is identified.		
2	Collection of Evidence (e.g., test books, computers, cheat sheets, classroom displays)		List Evidence Collected:
3	Statements and Interviews Obtain written and signed statements from all parties involved. Conduct interviews with everyone (including students, if necessary) involved in the incident. The interviews should include questions of a non-objective nature, and each interview should be conducted by two staff members.		List Name(s)/Role(s) of Person(s) Involved:
4	Summary of Any Disciplinary Action Taken TC should collaborate with leadership to prepare a written statement of any disciplinary action taken in association with the incident.		

Step	Instructions. Complete the steps below within five days of when the irregularity is identified.	Completion Date	Additional Information
5	Action Plan TC should submit a written action plan that identifies strategies that will prevent a reoccurrence of the incident.		
6	Upload All Evidence in OTISS All items in the following list must be included as electronic attachments: Summary of the incident Questions and answers collected during interviews Summary of any disciplinary action taken at the school or district level Action plan identifying strategies that will prevent a reoccurrence of the incident Completed/signed OTISS Investigation Checklist		

Principal's or Director's Printed Name and Signature	Date
Public School Unit Test Coordinator's Printed Name and Signature	Date
Superintendent's Printed Name and Signature	Date

Appendix Q: Sample–Test Security Action Plan

Test Security Action Plan

School Site:

Plan Written By:

1. Identification of problem areas and corrective actions

- a. Purpose:
- b. Summary of Action Steps and Target Dates: Goal(s):

2. Definition of roles and responsibilities

- a. Name of Principal or Principal's Designee _____
 - i. Description of responsibilities:
- b. Responsibilities assigned:
 - i. Name:
 - ii. Responsibilities

3. Evaluation criteria

- a. Measurable outcomes (e.g., reduction in number of testing irregularities, shorter resolution time, more comprehensive test administration training sessions according to workshop evaluation summaries)
- b. Follow-up methodology (e.g., distribution of fact sheets, resources, activity logs, training sessions, quarterly needs assessments)

Appendix R: Abbreviations Commonly Used in the Offices of Accountability and Testing

Abbreviation	Meaning
ADM	Average Daily Membership
AP	Advanced Placement
ASL	American Sign Language
ASM	Accountability Services Management website
AST	Accommodation code: Assistive Technology Devices
BANA	Braille Authority of North America
BOG3	Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test
BOY	Beginning-of-Year
BRW	Accommodation code: Braille Writer/Braille Paper
BSS	Accommodation code: Slate and Stylus/Braille Paper
CAB	Accommodation code: Cranmer Abacus
CAN	Accommodation code: Special NCDPI-Approved Accommodation
CCB	Configuration Control Board
CCRAA	College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
CDM	Credit by Demonstrated Mastery
CEDARS	Common Education Data Analysis & Reporting System
CEP	Community Eligible Program
CGR	Cohort Graduation Rate
CR	Constructed Response
CSI	Comprehensive Support and Improvement
CTE	Career and Technical Education
DMG	Data Management Group
DSC	Accommodation code: Dictation to a Scribe
DTC	District Test Coordinator
EBN	Accommodation code: Electronic Braille Notetaker
ECATS	Every Child Accountability and Tracking System
EC	Exceptional Children

Abbreviation	Meaning
EDDIE	Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange
EDS	Economically Disadvantaged Students
EL	English Learner
ELAC	English Learners Advisory Council
ELP	English Learner's Progress
EOC	End-of-Course
EOG	End-of-Grade
EOY	End-of-Year
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act (an amendment to ESEA)
EVAAS	Education Value Added Assessment System
EXT	Accommodation code: Scheduled Extended Time
FDF	First Day of Fall
FDS	First Day of Spring
GLP	Grade Level Proficiency
IADA	Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority
IB	International Baccalaureate
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IHE	Institute of Higher Education
ISC	Accommodation code: Interpreter/Transliterator Signs/Cues Test
ISR	Individual Student Report
LEA	Local Education Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficient
LMS	Learning Management System
LTG	Long Term Goals
MAG	Accommodation code: Magnification Device
MCR	Math Course Rigor
MFELs	Monitored former English Learners
MLT	Accommodation code: Multiple Testing Sessions
MOY	Middle-of-Year
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Support
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCDPI	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics

Abbreviation	Meaning
NCEES	North Carolina Educator Evaluation System
NCEXTEND1	Alternate assessment for EOG and EOC tests
NCJDC	North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center
NCSCOS	North Carolina Standard Course of Study
NCSIS	North Carolina Student Information System
NSLP	National School Lunch Program
OTISS	Online Testing Irregularity Submission System
PD	Professional Development
PE	Partial Enrollment
PEP	Personalized Education Plan
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PSU	Public School Unit (districts, charter schools, lab schools, regional schools, and residential schools)
PSU TC	Public School Unit Test Coordinator (includes district and charter, lab, regional and residential school test coordinators)
PBIS	Positive Behavior Intervention and Support
RAC	Regional Accountability Coordinator
RAS	Accommodation code: Student Reads Test Aloud to Self
RCC	Regional Computing Consultant
RESA	Regional Education Service Alliance
ROA	Review of Accommodations Used During Testing form
RtA	Read to Achieve
SBE	State Board of Education
SCASS	State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards
SEA	State Education Agency
Section 504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIQ	Student Interface Questions
SIS	School Information System
SLC	[North Carolina] Student Learning Conditions [Survey]
SPG	School Performance Grades
STC	School Test Coordinator
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWD	Students with Disability
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey

Abbreviation	Meaning
TIMSS	Trends in Math and Science Study
TOPS	Technical Outreach for Public Schools
TMS	Test Measurement Specialist
TSI	Targeted Support and Improvement
TSIEL	Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners
TNN	Testing News Network
TRA	Accommodation code: Test Read Aloud (in English)
TRD	Accommodation code: Word-to-Word Bilingual (English/Native Language) Dictionary/Electronic Translator (EL Only)
TSR	Accommodation code: Testing in a Separate Room
TWC	[North Carolina] Teacher Working Conditions [Survey]
TWS	Test Window Scheduler
UEB	Unified English Braille
USED	US Department of Education
WIDA	World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (English proficiency test)

Appendix S: State Board of Education (SBE) Policies, North Carolina Administrative Codes, and Legislative Requirements

This section contains SBE policies, N.C. Admin. Codes, and other legislative requirements related to the Annual Testing Program.

Appropriate Use of State Tests and Testing Program Documents

- [TEST-009](#)—Policy regarding rules, guidelines, and procedures governing the Annual Testing Program.
- [TEST-013](#)—Policy delineating the test development process for multiple-choice tests.
- [TEST-015](#)—Policy outlining time devoted to standardized testing.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0310](#)—Policy delineating the appropriate use of state tests.

Test Security

- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#)—Policy of administrative testing procedures and *Testing Code of Ethics*.

End-of-Course Tests

- [CCRE-001](#)—Policy defining “Course for Credit”.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309](#)—Policy specifying the requirements for end-of-course testing (eligibility, participation, dropping a course, use of results). Note: For additional clarification on students excluded from the twenty percent grade calculation, see SBE policy [TEST-003](#).

Testing Students Who Are English Learners

- [TEST-011](#)—Policy outlining EL identification, participation in the Annual Testing Program, eligibility for testing accommodations, and exit criteria.

Graduation Requirements

- [ACCT-039](#)—Policy delineating the cohort graduation rate.
- [GRAD-001](#)—Policy giving the local school boards of education the authority to exceed minimum graduation requirements.
- [GRAD-004](#)—Policy delineating state graduation requirements.

Academic Achievement Standards and Achievement Level Descriptors

- [TEST-033](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for the Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test, the Read to Achieve Test, and the end-of-grade tests in reading, mathematics, and science.
- [TEST-036](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for end-of-course tests.
- [TEST-037](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments.

Accountability Model

- [ACCT-020](#)—Policy delineating the components of the accountability model.
- [CHTR-001](#)—Policy delineating charter school accountability requirements.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#)—Policy delineating the accountability annual performance standards.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0314](#)—Policy delineating the alternative schools' modified accountability system.

Use of Test Results

- [G.S. § 115C-288 \(a\)](#)—Law granting principals the authority to grade and classify students; this law instructs principals not to make the decision solely based on standardized test scores.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309](#)—Policy requiring schools to use results from all operational EOC tests as at least twenty percent of the student's final grade for each respective course (with exceptions).

Other Policies Related to the Annual Testing Program

- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307](#)—Policy governing test administrations in public schools.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308](#)—Policy governing the role of the test coordinator.

Appendix T: North Carolina Read to Achieve Promotional Pathways and Exemptions

Test	Purpose	Testing Window	Notes	Parental Opt-Out Permissible
Beginning-of-Grade 3 (BOG3) Reading Test	1. Establishes a baseline measure of beginning third-grade students' reading comprehension. 2. Satisfies the requirements of the Read to Achieve legislation for students who score achievement level 3 or higher on the test. Students who are not proficient on the end-of-grade test but were proficient on the BOG3 reading test count as proficient in the performance composite and school performance grades. 3. Is used for school accountability growth and student growth for teachers and administrators. 4. Serves as a teacher-growth tool for determining those teachers who are well-suited to teach at reading camps (G.S. §115C-83.3[4a]).	Days 1–15 of the school year.	State-required	No

Test	Purpose	Testing Window	Notes	Parental Opt-Out Permissible
Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio	The portfolio measures the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) Third-Grade Assessed Reading Standards . The purpose of the portfolio is to gather information on a student's reading proficiency over a period of time.	Per G.S. § 115C-83.3. (8) , teachers must begin using the portfolio with students beginning during the first half of the school year.	• Optional for schools to administer • Good cause exemption	No
SBE-approved alternative assessment (STAR)	A pathway for current third grade students to meet the Read to Achieve legislative requirement.	1. Beginning-of-Year (BOY) 2. Middle-of-Year (MOY) 3. End-of-Year (EOY)	• Optional for schools to administer • Good cause exemption	No
mClass DIBELS 8	K-3 formative and diagnostic reading assessment.	1. Beginning-of-Year (BOY) 2. Middle-of-Year (MOY) 3. End-of-Year (EOY)	State-required (monitored by Office of Early Learning)	No
End-of-Grade (EOG) Reading Test	Standards-based reading achievement test aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS).	Final ten days of the school year	State-required	No

Test	Purpose	Testing Window	Notes	Parental Opt-Out Permissible
EOG Reading Retest	General Statute §115C-83.7(a) states that the State Board of Education (SBE) “shall require that a student be retained in the third grade if the student fails to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for a third-grade student as demonstrated on a State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third-grade students” (i.e., EOG test of reading comprehension). “The test may be readministered once prior to the end of the school year.”	Final ten days of the school year, after the initial administration of the EOG reading test	Schools must offer the RtA Test, the grade 3 EOG reading retest, or both, to eligible students during the spring window.	Yes

Test	Purpose	Testing Window	Notes	Parental Opt-Out Permissible
Read to Achieve (RtA) Test	The Read to Achieve Test is a valid and reliable standardized alternative assessment of reading comprehension that has been approved for good cause by the SBE.	1. Spring—after the first administration of the grade 3 EOG reading test during the last ten days of the school year. 2. Summer—at the end of reading camp on a day designated by the public school unit. 3. Fall—by the November 1 midyear promotion of students placed in a transitional third- and fourth-class combination or a fourth-grade accelerated class	• Schools must offer the RtA Test, the grade 3 EOG reading retest, or both, to eligible students during the spring window. • Good cause exemption	Yes

Good Cause Exemptions

[General Statute §115C-83.7\(b\)](#) reads, “Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause, but shall continue to be eligible to participate in reading camps, receive instructional supports and services and reading interventions

appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

1. Limited English Proficient students with less than two school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program.
2. Students with disabilities, as defined in [G.S. 115C-106.3\(1\)](#), and whose individualized education program indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a two-school-year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive literacy interventions for at least two school years.
3. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on the alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
4. Students who demonstrate, through a student reading portfolio, reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students. Student reading portfolio and review processes used by local school administrative units shall be approved by the State Board of Education.
5. Students who have (i) received literacy interventions and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades.”

Appendix U: 2026–27 Courses for Credit Requiring the North Carolina End-of-Course Test

According to [16 NC Admin Code 06D .0309](#), students may drop a course with an EOC test within the first 10 days of enrollment in a semester course or within the first 20 days of enrollment in a traditional yearlong course. Students who are enrolled for credit after the 10/20 days, regardless of course delivery (e.g., classroom, NC Virtual Public School, vendor-based online), must participate in the appropriate EOC test (i.e., EOC standard administration with or without accommodations). Each student must take the appropriate EOC test the first time the student takes the course even if the course is an Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge course. Students who are exempt from final exams by local board of education policy must not be exempt from EOC tests. Students who are identified as failing a course for which an EOC test is required must take the appropriate EOC test.

Students Enrolled for Credit in Courses in which EOC Tests Are Required and Have a Proficient EOC Test Score. Students enrolled in courses that require the administration of the EOC test and previously obtained a proficient score (i.e., student is repeating the course) may use the first proficient EOC score as at least 20% of their final grade, or they may elect to take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the repeated course and use the higher of the two scores for the final grade calculation.

Students Enrolled for Credit in Courses in which EOC Tests Are Required and Do Not Have a Proficient EOC Test Score. Students enrolled in courses that require the administration of the EOC test but have not obtained a proficient score on the EOC test before enrolling in the course (i.e., student is repeating the course), must take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course.

Students enrolled in Credit Recovery Courses. Students enrolled in Credit Recovery courses may be administered the appropriate EOC test no later than thirty days upon completion of the course.

Advanced Placement (AP) Biology, International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology, Cambridge Biology, Biology II, and General Biology II Courses. Students enrolled in AP Biology, IB Biology, Cambridge Biology, Biology II 2nd Year, and General Biology II courses must be administered the EOC Biology test at the completion of the course with the exception of students who have (1) previously obtained a test score from the EOC test or (2) transferred from out-of-state or from a non-public school and the principal authorized course credit as having participated in the assessment by recording

the appropriate reason code in the NC Student Information System (NCSIS). Students meeting these exceptions are not eligible to take the EOC test.

Refer to the chart below for a list of course codes that require the administration of the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course during the 2026–27 school year. For questions regarding course codes, contact local district curriculum and instruction personnel.

Course Code	Course Name	Required EOC Test
1022	English II	English II
9211B*	English II	English II
2109	NC Math 1	NC Math 1
9225B*	NC Math 1	NC Math 1
2309	NC Math 3	NC Math 3
3C07	General Biology II	Biology
3A00	AP Biology	Biology
3I00	IB Biology SL**	Biology
3I01	IB Biology HL**	Biology
3V00	CIE Biology AS	Biology
3V01	CIE Biology A	Biology
3320	Biology	Biology
3321	Biology II 2nd Yr	Biology
9232B*	Biology	Biology

*Students enrolled in Occupational Course of Study (OCS) English II, NC Math 1, and Biology are required to take the associated EOC assessment upon completion of the course.

**Students enrolled in an AP Biology course and do not have a previous test score are required to take the EOC Biology test at the end of the course. For students who are enrolled in IB Biology and do not have a previous Biology test score, it is a local decision whether to administer the Biology EOC at the conclusion of IB Biology SL or IB Biology HL; however, all students who do not have a Biology score at the end of 11th grade will count against participation.

Appendix V: Process for Requesting Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies and/or Conditions

There may be rare instances in which a student is unable to participate in a required state assessment during the testing window, including makeup dates, because of a significant medical emergency and/or condition. Examples include, but are not limited to, circumstances involving students who are (1) in the final stages of a terminal or degenerative illness, (2) comatose, or (3) receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency. Under these circumstances, a school may request a testing exception for the student from the Office of Testing. If a medical exception is granted, the student remains enrolled in the school during the test window; however, the student does not take the assessment(s), and the student is not included when calculating participation rates.

When submitting medical exception requests, it is important to remember the medical exception committee provides a decision about the removal of the student's data from the school's denominator (given the supporting documentation and the details of the request). The school should make the decision to test a student based on the medical condition or emergency, not on approval of a medical exception request. Districts and schools should not wait for a medical exception decision before determining to test a student; however, if the student is not tested and the medical exception is denied, the student will be included in the participation calculation.

The following steps outline the process for requesting testing exceptions based on significant medical emergencies and/or conditions. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request or cause a delay in the response. All supporting documentation must indicate and apply to the current school year.

1. PSU superintendents or directors must support the request.
2. Parents or legal guardians must give consent to the PSU to submit the request.
3. The PSU test coordinator will submit an online request to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) through the Online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education's NCTest Admin.
4. Within the online request, the following information is required:
 - **Semester**
 - **School Name**
 - **Student Name**

- **Administration Type** (e.g., Standard, NCEXTEND1)
- **Test(s) Requested** (multiple tests may be requested)
- **Student Type** (indicate if the student has a current Individualized Education Program (IEP), current Section 504 Plan, transitory impairment documentation, and/or Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP).
- **Test Window** (specify dates of school's test window)
- **Date of Onset of the emergency and/or condition**
- **Expected Duration/Recovery Period**
- **Days of Instruction Missed** Include the student's current attendance record.
- **Homebound** Indicate if the student is homebound and include all relevant homebound documentation. Students receiving homebound services are expected to take all state-mandated tests. Homebound testing processes and procedures can be found in the [Hospital and Homebound Testing](#) section.
- **Medical Issue** Briefly describe the student's current medical condition(s). This information is intended to be concise and summative. The committee reviews the information provided here and verifies the issue in the submitted documentation.
- **Description of how the medical condition prevents participation in the respective test(s)** Briefly describe how the medical issue/condition impacts daily instruction/classroom participation and prevents participation in the respective test administration(s). This explanation should include sufficient details that can be verified by documented data (scanned attachments) that provides the review committee with a thorough understanding of the implications of the emergency and/or condition on the student's ability to test.
- **Parent Notification** Indicate (yes or no) if parent has been notified.
- **Affirmation** Indicate approval by the PSU superintendent or director to submit the request.
- **Supporting Documents** All requests must be accompanied by supporting documentation dated within the current school year. If information is expired or missing from the request, a resubmission may be required. Only the following types of documentation are accepted.
 - **Attendance Record:** Upload a detailed attendance record for each student.
 - **IEP, BIP, Section 504 Plan, Homebound Documentation:** If a student has a current IEP, Section 504 Plan, transitory impairment documentation,

and/or BIP, the most recent version of the full documentation must be scanned and accompany the request.

- **IEP:** Upload a complete copy of the current IEP from ECATS (including present levels of performance, IEP goals, special education services, etc.).
- **BIP:** Upload a complete copy of the current BIP as well as the Functional Behavioral Assessment.
- **Section 504 Plan:** Upload a copy of the current Section 504 documentation.
- **Homebound Documentation:** Upload the student's homebound documentation including the dates of homebound services, the provider's signature and PSU leadership signature(s). Medical exception requests for students in a homebound setting require justification and supporting documentation that clearly details the reason(s) the student is unable to access or participate in testing in the homebound setting.
- **Medical Documentation:** These documents must be legible, dated within the current school year, and clearly address the student's medical condition and limitations that prevent the student from testing in the specified window. These documents should not violate the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Notes from doctors and medical professionals must be on official letterhead, dated within the current school year, include a provider's signature, and must address and/or explain the impact of the condition.
- Significant medical emergencies and/or conditions should be supported by uploading current school year medical documentation that may include, but is not limited to:
 - a referral for medical treatment or statement of hospital confinement,
 - concussion form,
 - statements of treatment from medical providers/facilities, seizure logs, or
 - doctor's notes with a provider's signature.

If information is missing in the request, a resubmission may be required.

The Office of Testing does not process the following medical exception submissions:

- Requests for field test administrations. It is a local decision as to how requests for medical exceptions are to be processed for field tests.
- Requests for Career and Technical Education (CTE) Proofs of Learning (POL).

These include: CTE state assessments, third party-assessments, local assessments, CTE indicator POL assessments, credentials, and performance- based measures. The CTE Office, Reporting and Assessment section determines special exceptions for these courses. Contact Misty Wolfe, misty.wolfe@dpi.nc.gov for questions or concerns about CTE POL medical exceptions.

Medical Exceptions Submission Timeline for 2026–27

Testing Window	Deadline for Submission
Fall testing window	February 26, 2027
Spring testing window	June 25, 2027

5. Submit requests for consideration through the Online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education's NCTest Admin. Do not email, mail, or fax requests.
6. The NCDPI will securely transmit an email response with the decision about a medical exception request to the PSU test coordinator. This email will only identify the student by the assigned "Request ID #" in the Online Medical Exception Request System.
7. Any exception granted by the NCDPI is limited to the testing period for the specific test(s) for which it was requested and does not carry forward to future test administrations unless noted in the decision.

PSUs are encouraged to submit requests as early in the school year as possible. Due to the increase in requests submitted during end-of-year testing, processing will occur as soon as possible, but PSUs should expect a delay in response. With that in mind, it is important for PSUs to make decisions about testing students based on what is appropriate for the student during the testing window, not on approval or denial of a medical exception request.

It is the expectation of the NCDPI that only students who are unable to participate in a state assessment due to a medical emergency or condition are submitted for consideration. Students who are granted a medical exception shall not be reported or counted in the school, district, or state test scores and will not be included in the

calculation of the 95 percent tested rule. In addition, students who are granted an exception are required to meet all state and local graduation requirements before receiving a high school diploma.

Please be reminded that any written material containing personally identifiable student information shall not be disseminated or otherwise made available to the public by any member of the State Board of Education, any employee of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, any employee of the NCDPI, any member of a local board of education, any employee of a local board of education, or any other person, except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Appendix W: Process for Requesting Approval for a 10/20 Day Withdrawal

The following steps outline the process for requesting approval for a 10/20 day withdrawal. Failure to adhere to this process or include all requested information may result in the need to resubmit the request or cause a delay in the response. All supporting documentation must indicate and apply to the current school year. All requests must be submitted for consideration through the *Online 10/20 Day Withdrawal Request System* in NC Education's NCTest Admin. The requests must be submitted by the public school unit (PSU) test coordinator and be approved by the superintendent or school director.

1. PSU superintendents or directors must support the request.
2. The PSU test coordinator will submit an online request to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) through the *Online 10/20 Day Withdrawal Request System* in NC Education's NCTest Admin.
3. PSUs are required to complete and/or submit all fields listed within NC Education's NC Test Admin.
4. The NCDPI will securely transmit an emailed response with the decision to the PSU test coordinator. This email will identify the student by the assigned "Request ID#" assigned in the online system.
5. Any approval granted by the NCDPI is limited to the specific semester requested.

PSUs are encouraged to submit requests as early in the semester as possible. Processing is completed as soon as possible, but PSUs may experience a delay in response during peak submission times.

Please be reminded that any written material containing personally identifiable student information shall not be disseminated or otherwise made available to the public by any member of the State Board of Education, any employee of the State Board of Education, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, any employee of the NCDPI, any member of a local board of education, any employee of a local board of education, or any other person, except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

Appendix X: Flexible Testing Permission Request Process

Schools may request permission to administer end-of-course (EOC) tests outside of the school's normal end of semester or yearlong testing window in NC Education's NCTest Admin for the circumstances outlined below.

- Schools with established alternative instructional programs where students complete course work before the state-mandated testing window is available (e.g., courses being repeated for credit, credit recovery courses, North Carolina Virtual Public School courses, and alternate course calendars).
- Schools administering tests to satisfy Phase I of the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery process.

For the 2026–27 school year, flexible testing windows are as follows:

- July (last 10 days of the month)
- September and October (last 5 school days of each month),
- March (last 10 school days of the month), and
- the fall and spring EOC testing window(s).

The PSU test coordinator must submit an online request to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) through the *Flexible Testing Permission Request System* in NC Education's NCTest Admin.

If the flexible testing permission request is granted, the school may administer an EOC test within the designated flexible testing windows.

- The school must administer the EOC test online (paper versions of the test are available for students with a documented accessibility need).
- Approval for flexible testing is not approval for implementation of an alternative instructional program or course.
- The Annual Testing Program reserves the right to place restrictions on testing schedules based on test material availability and test security.
- Tests administered under Flexible Testing Permission must be administered using the same testing policies and procedures for fall and spring testing cycles.
- Test administrators must be trained prior to test administrations, utilize the current test administration manual, and test content must be kept secure at all times.

Annual EOC flexible testing permission cannot be requested for individual student special circumstances (e.g., student relocation, family emergency, to accommodate a student's IEP or Section 504 Plan) or individual student medical exception requests.

PSUs are encouraged to submit requests in a timely fashion (minimum of 5 days prior to planned test administrations). Evaluation and processing of requests will occur as soon as possible; however, PSUs may experience a delay in response during peak submission times.

Appendix Y: Monitoring Checklists

PSU Assessment Monitoring Checklist

Date:
PSU Name:
Test Coordinator:
Regional Accountability Coordinator:

Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Review the <i>PSU Test Coordinator's Responsibilities Checklist</i>	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
District only: Verify testing plans for all schools within the district are on file (i.e., electronic or paper copy) with the district test coordinator.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Review evidence of district/school test coordinator training (e.g., training materials, attendance roster, testing staff certificates of completion) Date(s):	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Review evidence that test materials were counted, and test material numbers correlate with packing slips upon receipt from vendor.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	

Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Verify sufficient copies of test materials were ordered in a timely fashion	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify a system is in place to monitor all documented accommodations (i.e., IEPs, Section 504 Plans, EL Plans, transitory impairment documentation, Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms).	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify procedures exist to ensure all testing irregularities, including misadministrations and situations that may compromise test security, are reported in OTISS within five days of occurrence.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Desk Monitored	
Verify test materials are stored according to testing policy and in a secure, locked storage facility and review evidence of secure test material distribution (check-in and checkout system).	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify a plan is in place to destroy/return secure test materials in accordance with NCDPI/vendor requirements.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify there is a plan in place to monitor school test sites during each test cycle.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	

School Assessment Monitoring Checklist

Date:	Monitor:
District:	School:
District Test Coordinator:	School Test Coordinator:
☐ Online ☐ Paper	Assessment:
☐ Standard ☐ Accommodated	Other:

School Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Verify the testing plan for the school is available in the front office.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify evidence that all test administrators were trained. Date(s):	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify evidence that all proctors were trained (if used). Date(s):	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify test materials were stored in a secure, locked, storage facility.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify test materials were distributed in accordance with the testing plan.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	

School Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Verify the school test coordinator or designated staff were actively monitoring testing sessions.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify that the school testing plan includes provisions for secure transcriptions of student paper test responses to NCTest.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify a plan is in place to report all irregularities and misadministrations in OTISS within five days of occurrence.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify bulletin boards, instructional displays, notes on devices, and reference materials were covered or removed.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify desks and workstations were cleared of books and other materials (i.e., personal belongings) not required for the test were adequately stored.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Verify devices were set up appropriately before testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Verify handheld calculators (if used) were cleared before and after testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	

School Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Students were provided the appropriate test materials.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Personal cell phones and electronic devices were turned off and appropriately stored.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Policies and procedures were followed for the provision of accommodations.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Procedures were followed for distribution and collection of test materials.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Directions were read to the students as they are written in the test administration guide.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
There were no distracting behaviors in the room.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Test log-in procedures were followed according to the test administration guide/manual.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
The test administrator's username and password were not displayed or shared with students.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Student access codes were kept secure at all times.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	

School Monitoring Process	Compliance	Notes
Additional devices were charged and available in the event a student experiences an issue during testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
If technical issues arose, the issue(s) were resolved with limited delay and students were able to complete testing as scheduled.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	
Visitors were prohibited in the classroom during the test administration.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Test administrators did not leave students unattended at any time during the testing session and moved throughout the room during testing.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed	
Maximum time procedures were followed, if applicable.	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Observed ☐ Not Applicable	

Appendix Z: Timing Information for Required Assessments 2026–2027

The following times refer to a standard administration and may be used to support Individualized Education Program, Section 504 Plan, and English Learner teams in making decisions regarding accommodations required by students.

Test Name	Work Time Segments	Breaks	Maximum Time Allowed
The ACT (Standard Time)	Test 1: English – 35 minutes Test 2: Mathematics – 50 minutes Test 3: Reading – 40 minutes Test 4: Science – 40 minutes	The English, Mathematics and Reading tests must be administered in the same sitting. Refer to vendor resources for administration (or break) requirements.	165 minutes
ACT WorkKeys (Standard Time)	Test 1: Workplace Documents–55 minutes Test 2: Applied Math–55 minutes Test 3: Graphic Literacy–55 minutes (3 Assessments total)	If schools administer several sessions, back-to-back, in a continuous schedule, breaks should be provided between sessions. Allow for a 15-minute break after every two sessions or tests.	165 minutes
Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading	40 minutes (3 segments total)	2, three-minute breaks	180 minutes
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessments (Grades 10 and 11)	50 minutes (3 segments total)	2, three-minute breaks	150 minutes

Test Name	Work Time Segments	Breaks	Maximum Time Allowed
End-of-Course Biology	50 minutes 50 minutes 20 minutes (3 segments total)	2, two-minute breaks	180 minutes
End-of-Course English II	50 minutes (3 segments total)	2, two-minute breaks	240 minutes
End-of-Course NC Math 1	60 minutes (3 segments total)	2, two-minute breaks	240 minutes
End-of-Course NC Math 3	60 minutes (3 segments total)	2, two-minute breaks	240 minutes
End-of-Grade (Reading, Mathematics, and Science)	40 minutes (3 segments total)	2, three-minute breaks	180 minutes
NCEXTEND1	Timing is determined by individual student need.	Breaks may be taken at any time, as needed	No maximum time
PreACT (Standard Time)	Test 1: English – 35 minutes Test 2: Math – 45 minutes Test 3: Reading – 40 minutes Test 4: Science – 40 minutes	Break after Test 2 15 minutes	160 minutes
Read to Achieve	40 minutes (3 segments total)	2, three-minute breaks	180 minutes
WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.	Test times vary slightly depending on the mode, grade level, and tier placement.	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.
WIDA ACCESS (Grades 1–12)	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.	Test times vary slightly depending on the mode, grade level, and tier placement.	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.

Test Name	Work Time Segments	Breaks	Maximum Time Allowed
WIDA Alternate ACCESS (Grades K–12)	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.	Test times vary slightly depending on the mode, grade level, and tier placement.	See specific guidance from WIDA regarding test times.
WIDA Alternate Screener (Grade Level Clusters: K–2, 3–5, 6–12)	Timing is determined by individual student need.	Breaks may be taken at any time, as needed	No maximum time
WIDA Screener for Kindergarten	Approximately 30 minutes (Listening and Reading) and up to 45 minutes (all 4 domains) but may vary.	N/A	Depending on a student's age, schooling, and proficiency level, the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten may take anywhere from as little as ten minutes to as much as forty-five minutes.
WIDA Screener Grade 1 (2 nd Semester) and Grades 2–12	Listening, Reading, and Speaking – approximately 45 minutes Writing – approximately 25 minutes Total – up to 70 minutes	N/A	Depending on a student's age, schooling, and proficiency level, the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten may take anywhere from as little as ten minutes to as much as forty-five minutes.

Appendix AA: *Testing Code of Ethics*

Introduction to the *Testing Code of Ethics*

In North Carolina, standardized testing is an integral part of the educational experience of all students. When properly administered and interpreted, test results provide an independent, uniform source of reliable and valid information, which enables:

- *students* to know the extent to which they have mastered expected knowledge and skills and how they compare to others,
- *parents and legal guardians* to know if their children are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a highly competitive job market,
- *teachers* to know if their students have mastered grade or course-level knowledge and skills in the curriculum, and if not, what weaknesses need to be addressed,
- *community leaders and lawmakers* to know if students in North Carolina schools are improving their performance over time and how the students compare with students from other states or the nation; and
- *citizens* to assess the performance of the public schools.

In order to achieve those objectives, teachers and administrators must conduct testing in a fair and ethical manner, which includes:

Security

- assuring adequate security of the testing materials before, during, and after testing and during scoring
- assuring student confidentiality

Preparation

- teaching the tested curriculum and test-preparation skills
- training staff in appropriate testing practices and procedures
- providing an appropriate atmosphere

Administration

- developing a local policy for the implementation of fair and ethical testing practices and for resolving questions concerning those practices
- assuring all students who should be tested are tested
- utilizing tests which are developmentally appropriate
- utilizing tests only for the purposes for which they were designed

Scoring, Analysis, and Reporting

- interpreting test results to the appropriate audience
- providing adequate data analyses to guide curriculum implementation and improvement

Standardized test scores are only one of the many indicators of how well the student is learning. Test scores should be used in conjunction with all other available information about a student to understand student progress and improve student learning. When administering tests, school administrators and teachers must comply with applicable statutes, rules, and policies. In particular, administrators and teachers must comply with the *Testing Code of Ethics* ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 6D .0311](#)), which is printed on the following pages.

16 NCAC 06D .0311 TESTING CODE OF ETHICS

- a. This Rule shall apply to all public school unit (PSU) employees or agents while they are administering the Annual Testing Program defined in Rule .0307(c) of this Section.
- b. The PSU shall develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in coordination with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher.
- c. The PSU shall require all testing coordinators, school test coordinators, test administrators and proctors to be trained as required in Rule .0308 of this Section.
- d. The PSU shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to secure test materials. "Access" to test materials by school personnel means handling the materials but does not include reviewing tests or analyzing test items.
 1. Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use those materials for any purpose other than test administration.
 2. No person shall copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials without the express written consent of the test publisher.
- e. The principal shall store test materials in a locked facility to which only the principal has access. The principal shall not allow anyone access to the test materials except as necessary for administration.
- f. When PSU personnel discover loss of materials, failure to account for materials, or any evidence of unauthorized access to the materials, they shall report the discovery without delay to the principal, school test coordinator, school system (LEA) test coordinator, or charter school director.
- g. PSUs shall ensure that test coordinators:
 1. plan and implement training for school test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors;
 2. ensure each school test coordinator and test administrator is trained in accordance with Rule .0308 of this Section; and
 3. in conjunction with program administrators, ensure test accommodations to students entitled to testing accommodations as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0315; are documented and provided.
- h. The principal or the principal's designee shall serve as school test coordinator.
- i. The principal shall ensure the school test coordinator maintains test security and accountability of test materials, including taking the following actions:
 1. before each test administration, the school test coordinator shall count and distribute test materials;

2. after each test administration, the school test coordinator shall without delay collect, count, and return all test materials to the locked storage facility;
 3. establishes procedures to assure all students participating in the Annual Testing Program have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test; and
 4. identifies and trains personnel, proctors, and backup personnel for test administrations.
- j. Teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by:
1. helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content;
 2. teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions;
 3. helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests; and
 4. using resource materials such as test questions from test item banks and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.
- k. With respect to test administration, PSUs shall:
1. assure each school establishes procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with test publisher guidelines;
 2. inform the local board of education of any breach of this code of ethics; and
 3. inform test coordinators and principals of their responsibilities.
- l. The school test coordinator shall:
1. assure school personnel know the content of rules in this Section and local testing policies;
 2. implement the school system and local testing policies and procedures to assure all students participating in the Annual Testing Program have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test;
 3. ensure proctors are trained; and
 4. ensure all violations of rules in this Section and local testing policies are reported to the school system (LEA) test coordinator.
- m. Test administrators shall:
1. administer tests according to the directions in the assessment guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher;
 2. administer tests to all students enrolled in a grade or course that requires a test in the Annual Testing Program;
 3. report all violations of rules in this Section and local testing policies to the school test coordinator; and

- n. Proctors shall serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test.
- o. Scoring. The school system test coordinator shall:
 - 1. ensure each test is scored according to the procedures and guidelines defined for the test by the test publisher;
 - 2. maintain quality control during the entire scoring process, which consists of handling and editing documents, scanning answer documents, and producing electronic files and reports. Quality control shall address scoring accuracy and scoring consistency.
 - 3. maintain security of tests and data files at all times, including;
 - a. protecting the confidentiality of students at all times when publicizing test results; and
 - b. maintaining test security of answer keys and item-specific scoring rubrics.
- p. Educators shall use test scores as one piece of information to be interpreted together with other scores and indicators when determining a student's grade. The PSU shall ensure that school personnel analyze and report test data within the limitations described in this Paragraph.
 - 1. Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. PSU personnel shall not publicize test scores or any written material containing personally identifiable information from the student's educational records except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.
 - 2. Staff development relating to testing must enable school personnel to respond knowledgeably to questions related to testing, including the tests, scores, scoring procedures, and other interpretive materials.
- q. Unethical testing practices include the following practices:
 - 1. encouraging students to be absent the day of testing;
 - 2. encouraging students not to do their best;
 - 3. using secure test items or modified secure test items for instruction;
 - 4. changing student responses at any time;
 - 5. interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test directions or the test items;
 - 6. classifying students for the purpose of avoiding State testing;
 - 7. not testing all students enrolled in a grade or course that requires a test in the Annual Testing Program;

8. failing to provide required accommodations during testing to students entitled to testing accommodations as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0315;
 9. modifying scoring programs including answer keys, equating files, and lookup tables;
 10. modifying student records for the purpose of raising test scores;
 11. using a single test score to place a student in a grade or a course; and
 12. providing inaccurate test results and interpretations to the public.
- r. In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:
1. withhold any monetary incentive awards;
 2. file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
 3. seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and
 4. in accordance with the provisions of 16 NCAC 06C .0312, suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-12(9); [115C-174.11](#); [115C-174.12](#); 115C-218.85(a)(3);

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