



# BACKGROUND BRIEF

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION | DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



## 2017-18 Accountability Framework

This briefing paper provides basic background information to help you understand the 2017-18 school accountability data, including how the test data are used under the state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plan.

Data being released to State Board of Education members at their Sept. 5 meeting will provide insight into student academic progress and school performance for the 2017-18 school year.

This release includes student performance on end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments, academic growth, School Performance Grades (SPG) for schools and for school-level subgroups, long-term goals for schools to improve achievement and reduce performance gaps, and graduation rates.

Also included is information on the required identification of schools for support and improvement. Per the ESSA, schools that do not meet performance standards must be identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement and for Targeted Support and Improvement. In addition, North Carolina General Statute requires the identification of schools that are low-performing or continually low-performing and districts that are low-performing.

### Student Performance on State Assessments

North Carolina students in grades 3-8 and high school take assessments each year that measure achievement in English language arts/reading, mathematics and science. These end-of-grade and end-of-course assessments are reported as five academic achievement levels:

- Achievement Level 1:** Limited Command
- Achievement Level 2:** Partial Command
- Achievement Level 3:** Sufficient Command  
(Grade-Level Proficiency)
- Achievement Level 4:** Solid Command  
(Career and College Readiness)
- Achievement Level 5:** Superior Command  
(Career and College Readiness)

Achievement Level 3 identifies students who have a sufficient command of grade-level knowledge and skills in the tested content areas to move on to the next grade but who may need additional support to be on track for career and college readiness. Achievement Levels 4 and 5 indicate students are on track to be career and college ready by the time they graduate from high school.

The percentage of students meeting Level 3 and above and Level 4 and above will be reported to the State Board of Education, with previous years' data available for comparisons and with student cohort data from one year to another for an historical perspective.

Here are the state assessments that students took in the 2017-18 school year:

| GRADE | ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)     | MATHEMATICS            | SCIENCE      | OTHER        |
|-------|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 3     | Beginning of Grade/End-of-Grade | End-of-Grade           | —            | —            |
| 4     | End-of-Grade                    | End-of-Grade           | —            | —            |
| 5     | End-of-Grade                    | End-of-Grade           | End-of-Grade | —            |
| 6     | End-of-Grade                    | End-of-Grade           | —            | —            |
| 7     | End-of-Grade                    | End-of-Grade           | —            | —            |
| 8     | End-of-Grade                    | End-of-Grade/NC Math 1 | End-of-Grade | —            |
| 9     | —                               | NC Math 1              | —            | —            |
| 10    | English II                      | —                      | —            | Pre-ACT      |
| 11    | —                               | —                      | Biology      | ACT          |
| 12    | —                               | —                      | —            | ACT WorkKeys |

### Academic Growth

Academic growth is an indication of the progress that students in the school made over the past year. The standard is roughly equivalent to a year's worth of growth for a year of instruction. Growth is reported for each school and each subgroup within a school as Exceeded Growth Expectations, Met Growth Expectations, or Did Not Meet Growth Expectations as measured by EVAAS, a statistical tool North Carolina uses to measure student growth when common assessments are administered.

### School Performance Grades (SPG)

Since 2013-14, student performance data have been used to assign letter grades to North Carolina public schools as required by the North Carolina General Assembly. The grades are based on each school's achievement score (80 percent) and each school's students' academic growth (20 percent).

The total school performance score is converted to a 100-point scale and then used to determine a school performance grade of A, B, C, D or F. The final grade is based on a 15-point scale:

- A: 85-100
- B: 70-84
- C: 55-69
- D: 40-54
- F: Less than 40

All public schools will receive a letter grade, and for the first time, each student subgroup (American Indian, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Two or More Races, White, Economically Disadvantaged, Students with Disabilities, and English Learners) at the school level will also have a letter grade reported. Subgroup performance is reported when the number of tested students in a particular group is at least 30 students.

K-2 schools will receive letter grades of the schools to which they send the highest percentage of students. Schools approved to use the state's alternative accountability model will be assigned a letter grade only for the purposes of identifying Comprehensive Support and Improvement schools and Targeted Support and Improvement schools, as required by federal statute.

The indicators for elementary and middle schools differ from the indicators for high schools as presented in the chart and explanation below:

| ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL INDICATORS |                  |                     | HIGH SCHOOL INDICATORS |  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--|
| · 3rd Grade ELA                     | · 3rd Grade Math | · 5th Grade Science | <b>ASSESSMENTS</b>     | <b>OTHER MEASURES</b>                              |
| · 4th Grade ELA                     | · 4th Grade Math | · 8th Grade Science | · NC Math 1            | · 4-Year Graduation Rates                          |
| · 5th Grade ELA                     | · 5th Grade Math | · NC Math 1         | · English II           | · Successful completion of high-level math courses |
| · 6th Grade ELA                     | · 6th Grade Math | · Growth            | · Biology              | · Growth (NC Math 1 and English II)                |
| · 7th Grade ELA                     | · 7th Grade Math | · English Learner   | · ACT                  | · English Learner Progress                         |
| · 8th Grade ELA                     | · 8th Grade Math | Progress            | · ACT WorkKeys         |  |

## K-8 SPG Indicators

- Tested Grades – Statewide accountability testing is done in grades 3-8 only. For students in grades K-2, special age-appropriate assessments are used to chart students’ academic progress and are not included in the accountability model.
- End-of-Grade/End-of-Course Tests – Assessments in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8, NC Math 1 in grade 8, and science assessments in fifth and eighth grades are counted for academic growth and performance. **NCEXTEND1** is an alternate assessment for students with disabilities instructed on the Extended Content Standards and is included in performance only, not in growth.
- English Language Learners – Students who are classified as English learners take an English language attainment assessment which is included in the accountability model for students in grades 3-8

## Elementary School/Middle School Model

| Measure   | Numerator                      | Denominator                      | Score used in final calculations        |
|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| EOG Reading   | 50                             | 100                              |   |
| EOG Math and EOC NC Math 1  | 50                             | 100                              |   |
| EOG Science   | 20                             | 30                               |   |
| EL Progress   | 10                             | 30                               |   |
| Total Achievement   | 130 <i>(sum of numerators)</i> | 260 <i>(sum of denominators)</i> | 130/260 = 50                            |
|   | <b>Composite Index</b>         |                                  | <b>Score used in final calculations</b> |
| Accountability Growth Score<br>(Reading, Math, Science Composite) | -0.95                          |                                  | 75.2                                    |

The overall score for the example shown above is calculated using this formula. The numeric score is then converted to a letter grade on a 100-point scale:  $50(.8) + 75.2(.2) = 55.04 = 55$ : School Performance Grade is a C

## High School SPG Indicators

- End-of-Course Tests – Student performance on three end-of-course assessments – NC Math 1, English II and Biology – is counted for performance. NC Math 1 and English II are counted for growth. **NCEXTEND1** is an alternate assessment for students with disabilities instructed on the Extended Content Standards and is included in performance only, not in growth.
- Graduation Rates – The percentage of students who graduate with their cohort in four years or less.
- English Language Learners – Students who are classified as English learners take an English language attainment assessment which is included in the accountability model for students in grade 10.
- Math Course Rigor – The percentage of grade 12 students taking and passing the NC Math 3 course.
- ACT/WorkKeys – The percentage of grade 12 students meeting either the UNC system admissions minimum requirement of a composite score of 17 on the ACT or at least a Silver Level Career Readiness Certificate on the ACT WorkKeys assessments.

## High School Model

| Measure   | Numerator                       | Denominator                       | Score used in final calculations        |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| EOC Math  | 250                             | 300                               |   |
| EOC English II  | 225                             | 300                               |   |
| 4-year Cohort Graduation Rate                               | 280                             | 300                               |   |
| EL Progress   | 45                              | 100                               |   |
| EOC Biology   | 200                             | 300                               |   |
| The ACT/ACT WorkKeys  | 190                             | 200                               |   |
| Math Course Rigor   | 200                             | 300                               |   |
| Total   | 1390 <i>(sum of numerators)</i> | 1800 <i>(sum of denominators)</i> | 1390/1800 = 77.2                        |
|   | <b>Composite Index</b>          |                                   | <b>Score used in final calculations</b> |
| Growth Accountability Score<br>(Reading and Math Composite) | -0.95                           |                                   | 75.2                                    |

The overall score for the example shown above is calculated using this formula. The numeric score is then converted to a letter grade on a 100-point scale:  $77.2(.8) + 75.2(.2) = 76.8 = 77$ : School Performance Grade is a B

## Long-term Goals

Also required by the ESSA and being reported for the first time for the 2017-18 school year, North Carolina established long-term goals with yearly measures of interim progress for the following:

- Reading and mathematics assessments in grades 3-8
- Reading assessments in grade 10
- Mathematics assessments in grade 11
- 4-year cohort graduation rate
- English learner progress

The Long-term Goals are set with the purpose of increasing student achievement and reducing performance gaps among

student subgroups. The 10-year goals were set for each school, based on the school's starting point for each measure for each student subgroup. For example, School A has a long-term goal of increasing the percent of Hispanic students who score Level 4 and above on the reading and mathematics assessments. This long-term goal is broken into 10 yearly interim progress targets. The accountability reports will include the number and percentage of schools that met each interim progress target by student subgroup. If all schools met all progress targets across the 10 years, the state-level percentage of students meeting the Level 4 and above achievement standard would increase and the performance gap among student subgroups would decrease.

---

## Identifying Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools and Targeted Support and Improvement Schools

Under the ESSA, North Carolina must identify schools with low performance for providing additional support. These schools are classified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools and Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools.

There are two categories of CSI schools:

- CSI – Low Performing: Lowest performing five percent of all Title I schools
- CSI – Low Graduation Rate: High Schools with graduation rates lower than 66.7 percent

These schools receive support and interventions from the state for at least four years before being eligible to exit.

There are also two categories of TSI schools:

- TSI- Consistently Under-performing Subgroups (TSI-CU): Any school with one or more of the same subgroup receiving a grade of F, per School Performance Grades analysis, for the most recent and the previous two (2) years.
- TSI – Additional Targeted Support (TSI-AT): Any school with one or more subgroup(s) where the SPG score is below the highest identified CSI school's All Students during the identification year and the school was on the TSI-CU list for the subgroup(s) for the previous year.

These schools receive support locally to improve the subgroup performance within the school. If the schools fail to improve within three years, they can be identified as CSI schools.

---

## Identifying Low-Performing Schools and Districts

Per North Carolina statute, School Performance Grades and EVAAS growth data are used to determine whether a school or a district is low-performing.

As defined by General Statute 115C-105.37, low-performing schools are those that receive a School Performance Grade of D or F and a school accountability growth score of met expected growth or did not met expected growth. To avoid a low-performing designation, schools must earn a School Performance Grade of C or better or exceed growth.

Schools identified as low performing must develop a plan for improvement that specifically addresses the strategies the school will implement to improve both its School Performance Grade and School Growth designation (G.S. 115C-105.37(a1)). Schools also must notify parents of the school's low-performing status and actions it is taking to improve student performance.

Low-performing districts are those in which the majority of schools that receive a school performance grade and school growth score are identified as low performing.

As defined by General Statute 115C-105.39A, districts identified as low performing must develop a district plan for improving both the school performance grade and school growth score of each low-performing school in the district (G.S. 115C-105.39A(b2)).

School and district improvement plans are to be shared with the public, including parents, guardians, and staff and made available through the districts' website and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's website. Additional strategies for reform, changes to personnel, supports and interventions may apply to schools and districts that are continually low performing.

## Read to Achieve

The goal of the state's Read to Achieve program is to ensure that every third grader is reading at or above grade level.

Students who are not reading at grade level by the end of third grade receive extra support, including reading camps, multiple opportunities to show proficiency, guaranteed uninterrupted blocks of reading time, and intensive reading interventions so that they will be more prepared to do fourth-grade work.

The State Board of Education will receive a report in October on the success of the program's fifth year that will include:

- Number and percentage of third grade students demonstrating and not demonstrating proficiency on the end-of-grade reading test;
- Number and percentage of students who take and pass an alternative assessment;
- Number and percentage of students retained (this would include students who are retained in third grade and students placed in fourth grade with a retained reading label).



## RESOURCES

**DATA BY STATE/DISTRICT/SCHOOL** – [www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting)

**NORTH CAROLINA STANDARD COURSE OF STUDY** – [www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/)

**TESTING PROGRAM GENERAL INFORMATION AND POLICIES** –  
[www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/geninfopoliciesindex](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/geninfopoliciesindex)

**RELEASED TEST FORMS AND ANSWER KEYS FOR END-OF-GRADE AND END-OF-COURSE TESTS** – Parents and educators can see firsthand the rigor of questions on the assessments. [www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/releasedforms](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/releasedforms)

**READ TO ACHIEVE** – [www.ncpublicschools.org/k-3literacy/achieve/](http://www.ncpublicschools.org/k-3literacy/achieve/)

## 2018 INFORMATION CONTACTS

**ACCOUNTABILITY/BASIS FOR STATUS** – Accountability Services Division, Tammy Howard, director, 919.807.3787

**COMMUNICATIONS AND GENERAL INFORMATION** – Communication and Information Services, 919.807.3450

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION** – [www.ncpublicschools.org](http://www.ncpublicschools.org)