



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

End-of-Grade English Language Arts
Assessment S.L. 2019-212, (SB 621)
Section 5

Date Due: March 15, 2020
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2019–20

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION VISION: Every public school student in North Carolina will be empowered to accept academic challenges, prepared to pursue their chosen path after graduating high school, and encouraged to become lifelong learners with the capacity to engage in a globally-collaborative society.

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION: The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is to use its constitutional authority to guard and maintain the right of a sound, basic education for every child in North Carolina Public Schools.

ERIC DAVIS

Chair: Charlotte – At-Large

JILL CAMNITZ

Greenville – Northeast Region

TODD CHASTEEN

Blowing Rock – Northwest Region

ALAN DUNCAN

Vice Chair: Greensboro – Piedmont-Triad Region

REGINALD KENAN

Rose Hill – Southeast Region

DONNA TIPTON-ROGERS

Brasstown – Western Region

DAN FOREST

Lieutenant Governor: Raleigh – Ex Officio

AMY WHITE

Garner – North Central Region

J. WENDELL HALL

Ahoskie – At-Large

DALE FOLWELL

State Treasurer: Raleigh – Ex Officio

OLIVIA OXENDINE

Lumberton – Sandhills Region

J.B. BUXTON

Raleigh – At-Large

MARK JOHNSON

Secretary to the Board: Raleigh

JAMES FORD

Charlotte – Southwest Region

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Mark Johnson, State Superintendent / 301 N. Wilmington Street / Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Joe Maimone, Chief of Staff

6307 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6307 / Phone: (919) 807-3431 / Fax: (919) 807-3445

Visit us on the Web: www.dpi.nc.gov

Introduction

Session Law 2019-212 (Senate Bill 621) states “The Department of Public Instruction shall examine the End-of-Grade English Language Arts assessment administered in third grade as compared to the Read to Achieve alternative assessment in order to determine whether the End-of-Grade English Language Arts assessment should be modified to better meet the goals of Read to Achieve, pursuant to Part 1A of Article 8 of Chapter 115C of the General Statutes. Based on its examination, the Department shall develop any modifications needed. No later than March 15, 2020, the Department shall report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the results of its examination and any modifications developed.”

This report addresses the above legislative directive with respect to the current (2019–20) school year.

Read to Achieve Background

The Read to Achieve program utilizes assessments that are part of the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program. The assessments are administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)/Accountability Services Division. As with all assessments it administers, the Accountability Services Division ensures all applicable state and federal laws are met, as well as technical standards for testing. These laws and standards are designed to promote student academic achievement and to assist stakeholders in understanding and gauging achievement against standards. To these ends, the NCDPI Accountability Services Division endeavors to accomplish the following three main objectives:

- (1) Design and develop reliable and valid assessment instruments,
- (2) Implement uniform suitable assessment instruments for all students, and
- (3) Provide accurate and statistically appropriate reports.

As stated in Article 8 Chapter §115C of the General Statutes including Part 1A, the goal of the North Carolina Read to Achieve program “is to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continue to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success.”

The program provides students multiple opportunities to demonstrate reading proficiency throughout the school year. These opportunities include the Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test, the Read to Achieve Portfolio, the Read to Achieve locally determined alternative assessments, and the Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test. Students who do not demonstrate proficiency on any of these and do not qualify for a Good Cause Exemption may take the Read to Achieve Test (1) after the regular (i.e., first) administration of the Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test, (2) at the end of reading camp, or (3) before the November 1 midyear promotion.

This report provides a comparison of the design and format of the Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test and the Read to Achieve Test, and subsequent design changes to the End-of-Grade Reading Test.

Assessment Design Comparison

The Grade 3 End-of-Grade English Language Arts/Reading Test (Edition 4) consisted of multiple-choice items organized around either a literature or informational reading selection. Students read a selection and then responded to approximately five to seven questions aligned to the North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* for English Language Arts at grade three. This design was consistent with the other end-of-grade assessments in English Language Arts/Reading that have been in place since the development of the first edition of these assessments in 1992.

With the Read to Achieve Test (Edition 1), the design was altered to give students the opportunity to access the selections and the items. To do this, the design broke the selections into sections with the associated items following each section. This test structure was encouraged by the recognition that the Read to Achieve Test is administered after the regular end-of-grade test and, in many cases, a retest of the end-of-grade test. Rather than create an additional end-of-grade test form, the Read to Achieve Test was designed to give students a different test experience, allowing them to show what they know and are able to do.

Development of New Reading End-of-Grade Three Test (Edition 5)

In April 2017, the NCDPI/Standards, Curriculum and Instruction Division presented revised content standards for adoption by the State Board of Education. As is the standard process when new content standards are implemented, the Accountability Division/Test Development Section has developed new assessments aligned to the newly adopted content standards. A key part of this process is test specification meetings with grade-level teachers and content experts to gather input on the test design.

In 2018, the decision was made to reformat the Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test to match the format of the Read to Achieve alternative test, as that format seemed to offer a better testing experience for students. The new format and new standards were incorporated into the new Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test, which will be administered in spring 2020. With the selections and items chunked, like the Read to Achieve Test, students will have a consistent testing experience across the two tests. The familiarity with this format, which will also be provided in the released form of the Grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test, will minimize students' performance being confounded by the test format.