



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

# **Report to the North Carolina General Assembly**

Read to Achieve Alternative Assessment  
(State Level Summary)

S.L. 2021-8, SECTION 6.(b) G.S. 115C-83.3  
115C-83.7., SECTION 6.(g) G.S. 115C-83.8,  
115C-83.10. 115C-83.7A., SECTION 9.(a)  
G.S. 115C-83.3(2)

Date Due: October 15, 2021- Updated June 2, 2022 per RFP  
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2020-2021



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**NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

**Catherine Truitt, State Superintendent / 301 N. Wilmington Street / Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825**

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## **Read to Achieve Legislation**

### **SECTION 6.(b) G.S. 115C-83.3 Definitions.**

"Alternative assessment" means a valid and reliable standardized assessment of reading comprehension, approved by the State Board of Education, that is not the same test as the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third grade students. The State Board of Education shall (i) provide several valid and reliable alternative assessments to local school administrative units upon request, (ii) approve valid and reliable alternative assessments submitted by local school administrative units, and (iii) establish achievement level ranges for each approved alternative assessment. The State Board of Education shall annually review all alternative assessments to ensure ongoing relevance, validity, and reliability.

### **115C-83.7. Elimination of social promotion.**

Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause, One of the Good Cause Exemptions is

(1) Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education.

**SECTION 6.(g) G.S. 115C-83.8 Successful reading development for retained students.** (a). Local school administrative units shall provide at least one opportunity for students not participating in a reading camp to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third grade students on an alternative assessment or through a student reading portfolio process approved by the State Board of Education prior to retaining the student.

The State Board of Education shall establish a midyear promotion policy for any student retained under G.S. 115C-83.7(a) who, by November 1, demonstrates reading proficiency through administration of the alternative assessment of reading comprehension or student reading portfolio review. Principals shall use the provisions under G.S. 115C-288(a) to grade and classify students demonstrating reading proficiency after the November 1 midyear promotion deadline.

### **SECTION 6.(i) G.S. 115C-83.10 Accountability measures.**

The number and percentage of third grade students who take and pass an alternative assessment of reading comprehension and the name of each alternative assessment used for this purpose with the number of students who passed it.

### **115C-83.7A. Reading camps.**

Each local school administrative unit shall provide a reading camp performance bonus to a teacher who provided instruction at a third grade reading camp in a per-student amount determined by the local board of education that is at least one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00) for each student not demonstrating reading proficiency assigned to that teacher who demonstrates reading proficiency on an alternative assessment at the end of the reading camp.

## **PART IX. PHASE OUT CERTAIN ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

### **SECTION 9.(a) G.S. 115C-83.3(2) reads as rewritten:**

"Alternative assessment" means a valid and reliable standardized assessment of reading comprehension, approved by the State Board of Education, that is not the same test as the State-approved standardized test of reading comprehension administered to third grade students. The State Board of Education shall provide the valid and reliable alternative assessment to local school administrative units upon request and establish achievement level ranges for the approved alternative assessment. The State Board of Education shall annually review the alternative assessment to ensure ongoing relevance, validity, and reliability.

SECTION 9.(b) Based on data collected pursuant to G.S. 115C-83.10 and any other data useful for this purpose, the State Board of Education shall analyze the passage rates for alternative assessments in order to determine the comparative utility of each alternative assessment. No later than October 15, 2021, the State Board shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on the results of its analysis, along with the one alternative assessment it recommends using.

SECTION 9.(c) Subsection (a) of this section applies beginning with the 2022-2023 school year.

2020-2021 Alternative Assessment Data

State Board of Education-Approved Alternative Assessments		Total Number of Students Who Passed the Alternative Assessment to Meet Read to Achieve Legislation	Total Number of Students Who Passed the Alternative Assessment <sup>1</sup>
1	Acadience Reading	14	23
2	Achieve3000	93	290
3	Amplify—mClass Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC)	*	77
4	Certica Solutions—CASE Benchmarks Assessment	85	346
5	Charter/Lab/ISD School Local Option	66	235
6	Edmentum—Exact Path Individualize Learning Solution	32	158
7	FastBridge—Formative Assessment System for Teachers	*	*
8	Imagination Station—Initative's Indicators of Progress (ISIP) <sup>2</sup> Reading	*	*
9	Imagine Learning—Galileo English Language Arts/Reading Assessment	*	20
10	Imagine Learning—Reading Level Assessment	90	348
11	Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	*	71
12	i-Ready	172	1,130
13	Lexia Learning—RAPID Assessment	*	*
14	Northwest Evaluation System (NWEA)—Measures of Academic Progress	41	270
15	Reading Inventory (formerly Scholastic Reading Inventory)	14	159
16	STAR Reading	50	360

<sup>1</sup>The number of students who passed each alternative assessment is denoted in this column. If the approved alternative assessment was not used, N/A is shown. If the number of students who passed the alternative assessment is fewer than 10 students, an asterisk (\*) is shown.

<sup>2</sup>Note: Privacy policies dictate that for less than 10 students, the specific number and percentage should not be given. An \* indicates that the student population number and percentage is too small to report the value. The percentage and number of students are not shown if the percentage is greater than 95 percent (>95) or less than 5 percent (<5).

2018-19 Alternative Assessment Data

State Board of Education-Approved Alternative Assessments		Total Number of Students Who Passed the Alternative Assessment to Meet Read to Achieve Legislation	Total Number of Students Who Passed the Alternative Assessment <sup>1</sup>
1	Achieve3000	*	142
2	Case 21	150	1,506
3	Edmentum—Exact Path Individualize Learning Solution	18	74
4	Imagine Learning	14	204
5	Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)	*	69
6	iReady	533	8,200
7	Istation Benchmarks	91	494
8	Northwest Evaluation System (NWEA)—Measures of Academic Progress	221	8,448
9	Scholastic Reading Inventory	33	1,209
10	STAR Reading	31	1,867
11	Other (Charter/Lab Schools Only)	37	340

<sup>1</sup>The number of students who passed each alternative assessment is denoted in this column. If the approved alternative assessment was not used, N/A is shown. If the number of students who passed the alternative assessment is fewer than 10 students, an asterisk (\*) is shown.

<sup>2</sup>Note: Privacy policies dictate that for less than 10 students, the specific number and percentage should not be given. An \* indicates that the student population number and percentage is too small to report the value. The percentage and number of students are not shown if the percentage is greater than 95 percent (>95) or less than 5 percent (<5).

2014/15 – 2020/21 Statewide Alternative Assessment Data

		NC Alternate Assessments										
		EOG, BOG or Retest			RIA Assessment		Local Alt. Assessment		Statewide Diagnostic Assessment		Total Alt. Assessments	
LEA Name	Year	# of 3rd Grade Students	# Passed	% of 3rd Grade Students	# Passed	% of 3rd Grade Students	# Passed	% of 3rd Grade Students	# Passed	% of 3rd Grade Students	Total Passing Alt. Assessment	% of 3rd Grade Students
State of North Carolina	2021	112,621	49,269	43.7	*	<5%	*	<5%	13,204	11.7	16,482	14.6
State of North Carolina	2019	117,622	67,449	57.3	*	<5%	*	<5%	11,977	10.2	14,550	12.4
State of North Carolina	2018	121,566	68,397	56.3	*	<5%	15,623	12.9	N/A	N/A	17,999	14.8
State of North Carolina	2017	122,825	71,072	57.9	*	<5%	14,288	11.6	N/A	N/A	16,867	13.7
State of North Carolina	2016	122,155	70,671	57.9	*	<5%	13,477	11.0	N/A	N/A	16,392	13.4
State of North Carolina	2015	118,355	70,148	59.3	*	<5%	12,870	10.9	N/A	N/A	15,615	13.2

\*The number of students who passed each alternative assessment is denoted in this column. If the approved alternative assessment was not used, N/A is shown. If the number of students who passed the alternative assessment is fewer than 10 students, an asterisk (\*) is shown.

Note: Privacy policies dictate that for less than 10 students, the specific number and percentage should not be given. An \* indicates that the student population number and percentage is too small to report the value. The percentage and number of students are not shown if the percentage is greater than 95 percent (>95) or less than 5 percent (<5).

Based on data collected pursuant to G.S. 115C-83.10 and any other data useful for this purpose, the State Board of Education has been charged with conducting an analysis of the passage rates for alternative assessments to determine the comparative utility of each alternative assessment. The results of this analysis and one alternative assessment recommendation are to be submitted in a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by no later than October 15, 2021.

Effective 2014-15 NCDPI approved a list of alternative assessments that districts could use as an alternative pathway for third grade students as a good cause exemption reading proficiency measure. Beginning in 2015, districts reported the number of students who met the Read to Achieve legislation through the alternative assessment pathway. However, districts were not required to indicate which alternative assessment vendor was used in the report. This data collection process was implemented until 2018-19.

Effective 2018-19, locally approved alternative assessment data was separated from the statewide formative and diagnostic assessment data. Therefore, NCDPI had the first data point indicating the number of students who met the Read to Achieve reading proficiency requirements per specific alternative assessment vendor. In 2018-19, 1.0 percent of students statewide demonstrated proficiency for 3rd grade through the pathway of the locally approved alternative assessments. Amplify: mCLASS was the statewide formative and diagnostic assessment, which eliminated this vendor as an alternative assessment choice.

In 2019-20, a pandemic interrupted instruction in North Carolina which resulted in no data collection for Read to Achieve or alternative assessments specifically.

In 2020-21, amidst the pandemic, NCDPI approved a multi-state formative and diagnostic assessment approach, creating a process that allowed districts to select from five statewide approved vendors. This resulted in fewer districts purchasing an alternative assessment. While this provides NCDPI with a second data point, it does not allow for a comparative utility analysis. Unfortunately, there was too much variance in the process between 2018-19 and 2020-21, impacting the validity and reliability of the data.

It has been determined that we do not currently have valid and reliable data to complete the task of selecting one alternative assessment by means of comparative utility at this time. Our plan of action is to move forward with the NCDPI competitive bid process to be completed prior to July 1, 2022. This will allow ample time to select and announce one alternative assessment before the 2022-23 Read to Achieve implementation mandate.

**June 2, 2022 Update:**

NCDPI posted the Read to Achieve Alternative Assessment Request for Proposal (RfP). As a result, only two vendors responded to the RfP. Upon completion of all reviews and presentations, unfortunately, no vendor from the current bid was selected to move forward. This was unanimous from all voting members. While this is certainly not the outcome we had hoped for, the Evaluation Team unanimously agrees it necessary to cancel the current RfP and expedite a rebid.

As a result, we will begin the 22-23 school year with **no** approved third-grade alternative assessment as a pathway option.

However, we will continue with all other third grade proficiency options, including the NC Formative and Diagnostic Assessment: Amplify, the Beginning of Grade Assessment and all other Good Cause Exemption pathways identified in legislation. (*LEP and EC exemptions (Extend 1- and 2-year delay/IEP), Twice Retained, Portfolio, NC RtA, and EOG*)

While districts are not required to purchase an alternative assessment, we recognize most prefer to add this to the list of optional pathways for third grade students. Our intent is to rebid this proposal and begin next steps as soon as possible to have a final decision and option for districts to consider later this school year should they choose to purchase the final approved solution. We recognize the urgency and will continue to make this a priority.