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

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Title: Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement

Legislation: SL.2012-142 (HB 950, Budget Bill), sec.7A.1(b) as amended by SL 2014-115, sec.80

G.S. 115C-83.4

Date Due: October 15, 2016
Report # 67
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2016-17

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SBE VISION: Every public school student will graduate ready for post-secondary education and work, prepared to be a globally engaged and productive citizen.

SBE MISSION: The State Board of Education will use its constitutional authority to lead and uphold the system of public education in North Carolina.

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent
301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

Dr. Rebecca Garland, Deputy State Superintendent
6368 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6368 :: Telephone: (919) 807-3200 :: Fax: (919) 807-3388

Visit us on the Web :: www.ncpublicschools.org

M0716

Introduction:

During the 2012 session, the General Assembly passed the Excellent Public Schools Act. A component of this legislation is the North Carolina Read to Achieve Program which began with the 2013-2014 school year. As part of this program the State Board of Education is directed to report biennially to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15 of each even-numbered year. The report should include information on the implementation, evaluation, and revisions to the comprehensive plan for reading achievement and include recommendations for legislative changes to enable implementation of current empirical research in reading development. This report is comprised of six sections that include the overall strategic plan implemented by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) by component of the legislation, the statewide accountability measures of numbers of students falling within specific categories of the program, the revisions and changes to the Comprehensive Reading Plan, the NCDPI deliverables from the Comprehensive Reading Plan, results of an external report during the 2014-15 school year, and current practices in response to stakeholder feedback with recommendations for future legislation.

Section 1: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Strategic Plan for Implementation:

The legislation provided funding for technical assistance to LEAs to implement the program locally. As a result, NCDPI established the K-3 Literacy Division which is charged with the state-wide implementation of this law. The division includes a director, a lead consultant, one field-based consultant in each state board district, one contract consultant for charter schools, and one contract consultant for data and budget analysis. The strategic plan involved prioritizing the six components of the law for full implementation in 2013-14. The priorities have changed slightly in order of importance as the schools and districts have become more familiar with the legislation and are in full implementation.

Priority One: Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement (115C-83.1D)

This component of the legislation states that the State Board of Education shall develop, implement, and continuously evaluate a comprehensive plan to improve reading achievement in the public schools. The plan shall be based on reading instructional practices with strong evidence of effectiveness in current empirical research in reading development. Per legislation this plan was to be developed with the active involvement of teachers, college and university educators, parents and guardians of students, and other interested parties. The K-3 Literacy division conducted eight regional meetings in each state board district in the late spring of 2013. Attendance at these focus groups included parents, teachers, principals, central office administrators, instructional coaches, and representatives from institutions of higher education. Each session followed the same procedures. The participants were given guiding questions and areas to consider in their conversations to provide input about how to move achievement forward in the state of North Carolina. All feedback was gathered, sorted and categorized into major

headings and target areas. The K-3 Literacy Division researched Comprehensive Reading Plans from across the United States and enlisted the help of the Southeast Education Development Laboratory (SEDL). SEDL is one of fifteen regional comprehensive centers that provides training and technical assistance to state education agencies to enable them to assist school districts and schools. A draft Comprehensive Reading Plan was developed based on feedback from the focus groups. The draft plan was redistributed to all focus group participants, other divisions, and literacy groups across North Carolina to gather additional feedback. The finalized Comprehensive Reading Plan was approved by the State Board of Education in September of 2013 and distributed to all local education agencies (LEAs) and charters. The K-3 Literacy Division began trainings to inform the field of the practical use of the plan in their schools and districts. The plan includes specific deliverables for the NCDPI to accomplish. These deliverables can be found in Section 4 of this plan. One major deliverable for the Comprehensive Reading Plan is the development and dissemination of a supplemental document listing research-based reading strategies. This document provides teachers with instructional strategies aligned to the five areas of reading development: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

The plan is developed around six major pillars: standards, assessment, instruction, professional development, leadership, and communication and partnerships. The changes, additions, and deletions to the Comprehensive Reading Plan are the major focus of this report. The K-3 Literacy consultants used feedback and input from their field experiences to suggest some changes/additions/deletions to the plan. The document was then sent to teacher, administrator, superintendent, parent and community partners' list serves for public comments. It was also publically displayed on the Read to Achieve Livebinder. A google form was established for stakeholders to record any feedback or comments. The public comment period lasted for approximately seven weeks to allow time for stakeholders to review the plan. The ideas and suggestions from public comment were incorporated into the plan as appropriate. Some feedback included content that would need to be addressed through specific training, communication, or clarification sessions. A copy of the plan approved by the State Board of Education in October of 2016 is located in Appendix A.

Priority Two: Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency (115C-83.1F)

This component of the legislation states that kindergarten, first, second, and third grade students shall be assessed with valid, reliable, formative, and diagnostic reading assessments made available to local school administrative units by the State Board of Education. In August of 2012, one month after the legislation passed, the State Board of Education passed a policy adopting mClass:Reading 3D as the formative, diagnostic assessment system that would be provided to every K-3 classroom teacher statewide. This involved the purchasing and distribution of student assessment materials, the allocation of funding to districts for technology devices needed for the assessments, and the training of approximately 23,000 teachers. A train-the-trainer model was utilized involving two teacher trainers from each elementary school not currently using the program. These trainings and distribution occurred throughout the school

year 2012-2013, and a majority of school systems and charters began the assessments early during different benchmark periods of that school year. At the beginning of 2013-2014 all elementary schools in all school systems (approximately 1,440 schools) statewide began using the mClass:Reading 3D assessment system affecting 477,000 students. The K-3 Literacy Division was involved with the training of these schools and currently maintains trainings on: new teacher and refresher courses on the product, data analysis, administrative reports and usage, instructional practices stemming from data findings, using progress monitoring as instruction, and collaborative conversations around data and instruction among teachers and administrators. During this timeframe three training sessions were also offered for Institutions of Higher Education in order for faculty in higher education to know and understand the assessment system and train pre-service students to be familiar with the assessments before they participated in their field experiences for student teaching.

Over the course of the last three years, the K-3 Literacy Division consultants have worked in the field directly with teachers, administrators, and parents. The consultants have listened to the stakeholders, analyzed trends, and gathered data in order to develop crucial and targeted professional development to assist teachers and administrators in understanding and using the formative, diagnostic reading assessment.

Having one formative, diagnostic reading assessment for all K-3 students across the state allows for consistency and uniformity in measuring students' reading foundational and comprehension skill development. Students can move seamlessly across district lines with assessment information following them electronically, allowing for instruction to begin immediately on deficit skills or enhancements in their new district. Also, SAS Institute uses the results of the assessments in grades K-2 to determine EVAAS value-added growth for teachers and schools across the state.

It is important to emphasize that a formative, diagnostic reading assessment is a tool for teachers to use in determining the root cause of reading difficulties. It is only one of many tools teachers can use to make informed decisions about students and their instructional needs. Teachers can use classroom performance and work, observations, grades on assignments, teacher-made assessments, project-based work, and computerized programs to gather data. A balanced assessment system (including methods listed above) should be used to make decisions about instruction. Gathering data and data tools will not change the achievement of a student. Careful data analysis and instruction that match the needs of the students will help children move forward to overcome deficit gaps or enrich and enhance their current skill levels.

Priority Three: Successful Reading Development for Retained Students (115C-83.1H)

The NCDPI staff has continually emphasized the level of support this law provides for struggling readers. There are multiple opportunities for students to show proficiency in third grade, including the Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) test, End-of-Grade (EOG) test, EOG retest, Read to Achieve alternative test, the completion of a portfolio, or passing an alternative test approved by the State Board of Education. In addition, funding was established to offer reading camps for third graders who were unable to show proficiency through any of the opportunities mentioned and to give students extra instructional time to develop skills. The North Carolina General Assembly also provided funding and legislation for the establishment of first and second- grade reading camps beginning in the summer of 2016. This legislation is a proactive approach that LEAs/charters use to intervene early in a child's educational career to support and build foundational literacy skills BEFORE the child reaches the third grade.

Each LEA is responsible for the planning, development and implementation of reading camps. NCDPI created a separate Livebinder specifically targeting reading camps: (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1279155&present=true#anchor). The information included in the tabs and subtabs is only suggested activities, guidelines, and resources. Districts and schools are encouraged to use the ideas to customize reading camp experiences to meet the unique situation of their districts and schools. If students are not successful in showing proficiency in reading camps, there are still supports. The State Board of Education adopted a mid-year promotion policy in March of 2013. Students can be placed in 3/4 Transition classes or 4th grade Accelerated classes and again have more chances to show proficiency by November 1. After November 1, the students still have opportunities to complete a portfolio, pass an alternative test, or pass the 4th grade EOG.

As mentioned above, in the second priority section on formative, diagnostic reading assessments, assessment tools do not produce achievement. In the same manner, multiple opportunities to show proficiency and reading camps will not produce higher achievement **unless** instruction is aligned with what the child needs. Daily high quality core literacy instruction is needed to make gains. The K-3 Literacy staff developed, trained, and modeled professional development on the 90-minute uninterrupted block of reading instruction. This model can be used effectively in transition or accelerated classes. The staff also trained on small group instruction and the use of research-based instructional strategies based on a student's formative data on reading skills, comprehension and standards.

Priority Four: Elimination of Social Promotion (115C-83.1G)

This component involves clear communication to the field on what to expect with the legislation. State meetings began in October of 2012 with curriculum coordinators from across the state. Read to Achieve was discussed in multiple statewide curriculum meetings and superintendents' meetings during the planning phase. Summer Institutes involving teams of participants from

districts and charters were also used to publicize and explain details of the legislation. The sessions on Read to Achieve involved a detailed breakdown of the law with participants exchanging ideas on how to inform parents thoroughly. Many districts established websites to inform parents about Read to Achieve. In February of 2013, the State Board approved the Read to Achieve Guidebook. This Guidebook gives details of how each component of the law should be implemented and identifies the responsibilities at each level (state, district, school, classroom). The Guidebook is routinely updated each year in July according to any new legislative or clarifying components of the legislation and displayed on the K-3 Literacy Livebinder (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/850102). The North Carolina Read to Achieve Livebinder is the fifth most viewed Livebinder in the nation and houses all information and resources associated with Read to Achieve. A parent letter explaining the Read to Achieve legislation was developed by DPI, distributed to the LEAs and charters, and placed on the Livebinder. This letter can be customized to the needs of the LEAs/charters. DPI produced a parent slide deck for schools to use at open houses at the beginning of school. There is also a narrated version of the slide deck so that a consistent message would be heard by all who use the resource.

This component includes Good Cause Exemptions. The law states that two of the exemptions could be proficiency on an alternative assessment or completion of a student reading portfolio. DPI provides all districts and charters with the Beginning-of-Grade (BOG) test, the End-of-Grade (EOG) test, and the retest of the End-of-Grade (EOG). The Read to Achieve alternative test and mClass:Reading 3D at Level P are also provided by the state as alternatives to the EOG. The State Board of Education also approved the use of eight local alternative assessments and achievement levels that districts can use as a means for third graders and retained students to show proficiency. DPI Accountability and K-3 Literacy staff work with North Carolina State Technical Outreach for Public Schools (NC TOPS) to develop a North Carolina portfolio model that aligns with the NC EOG. NC TOPS has developed the NC EOG since its inception. The North Carolina portfolio system ensures that teachers have choice in the selection of materials to use for the portfolio while offering a consistent state-wide formative system that measures student understanding and application of standards. The same multi-step processes are used for developing the portfolio as are used for the development of an EOG. North Carolina teachers review the passage selections and develop the questions. Teachers have full access to the portfolio passages so that they could use their discretion as to when and if students should begin to develop a portfolio. Each year passages are added to the portfolio, increasing the resources that teachers have at their disposal to use with students in the classroom. As a result of changes in HB 230, LEAs have an option of developing their own portfolio process. This process must be approved by the State Board of Education. To this point, only one district has taken advantage of this option.

Priority Five: Notification Requirements to Parents and Guardians (115V-83.1I)

To assist LEAs/charters with this component, NC DPI created sample templates that districts and schools can customize for their needs. The templates are forms that provide documentation required by legislation and give parents valuable information about the current needs of the student with interventions being employed to address those needs. The Notification forms are included in the Guidebook. Templates for the monthly progress reports for students retained under the G.S. 115C-83.1G (a) are also provided to LEAs/charters. These forms can be customized.

Priority Six: Accountability Measures (115C-83.1J)

Per legislation, the Accountability Division established a uniform process for collecting the required information for reporting and posting on district websites. Through this process districts are able to report numbers through an electronic system that calculates the needed information into a uniform template. The state-wide, district, and charter results follow in Section 2 of this report.

Conclusion:

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI) strategic plan for the implementation of Read to Achieve has shifted slightly in the last two years. With the original rollout in 2013-14, all schools needed a solid understanding of all components of the legislation. The foundation of the strategic plan revolves around the first two priorities – a consistent formative, diagnostic reading assessment and a Comprehensive Reading Plan. As implementation has evolved, the focus on quality literacy instruction in the classroom that matches student needs has become central to implementation. Strong literacy instruction and intervention strategies that begin in kindergarten are proactive approaches to more positive gains in student achievement. By using data from the formative, diagnostic reading assessment along with other balanced literacy observations and assessments and strategies in the Comprehensive Reading Plan, teachers are able to identify needs early and create instructional plans that meet the needs of individual students. The NCDPI has provided direct professional development and support to districts and schools over the course of the last three years. The K-3 Literacy Dvision is charged with providing technical support to all stakeholders in the implementation of this legislation. The focus from awareness of the legislation and training to implement assessments has shifted to targeted professional development and support on translating data into appropriate literacy instruction in the classroom. A supplemental document to the Comprehensive Reading Plan of research-based instructional reading strategies provides the next step for teachers after assessing and analyzing data. The professional development and support provided by the K-3 Literacy Division helps teachers, administrators, and central office staff realize how all the pieces of the legislation fit together to provide positive supports for struggling readers.

School Name **2015–16** **Read to Achieve Grade 3** **End-of-Year Results**	G.S. §115C-83.10 requires "each local board of education to publish annually on a Web site maintained by that local school administrative unit and to report in writing to the State Board of Education (SBE) by **September 1** of each year the following information on the prior school year:"

Note: The denominator for calculating the required percentages for Rows 1, 2, and 3 is all students in membership at grade 3 for the first day of spring testing.		**Number of Students**	**Percentage**
1	Demonstrated reading proficiency on the Beginning-of-Grade 3 (BOG3) ELA/Reading Assessment, the End-of-Grade (EOG) ELA/Reading Assessment, or the EOG ELA/Reading Retest (i.e., scored Level 3 or higher).	70670	57.9%
2	Did not demonstrate reading proficiency on the BOG3 ELA/Reading Assessment, the EOG ELA/Reading Assessment, or the EOG ELA/Reading Retest.	51487	42.1%
3	The number and percentage of students exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause. Students may be counted in this category only once.	13684	11.2%
The denominator for Row 4 is the number of students from Row 2 minus the number of students from Row 3.			
4	The number and percentage of students who took and passed an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) (i.e., Read to Achieve Test or locally determined SBE-approved alternative assessment). Students may be counted in the numerator and/or the denominator only once for this category.	16387	43.3%
The denominator for Row 5 is all students in membership at grade 3 for the first day of spring testing.			
5	Total number and percentage of students retained for not demonstrating reading proficiency on third-grade standards. (For 2015-16, students who are not proficient will be either: [1] retained in a third grade accelerated class, [2] placed in a transition class with a retained label, or [3] placed in a fourth-grade accelerated class with a retained reading label.)	17630	14.4%
The denominator for Row 6 is the number of retained students recorded in number 5.			
6	**Charter Schools Only**: Charter schools must indicate the number and percentage of retained students recorded in number 5 who do not return to the charter school for 2015–16.	**	**

Note: Privacy laws dictate that for fewer than 10 students, the specific number and percentage should not be given. Therefore, if the number is fewer than 10 students, schools should use an asterisk (*) to represent fewer than 10 students and the percentage. 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).

**This information is not available as statewide data but is on each Charter School's website.

Section 3: Revisions to the Comprehensive Reading Plan

As stated in Section 1, Priority 1, the revisions to the Comprehensive Reading Plan are the major focus for this report. The reading plan is based on six pillars: standards, assessment, instruction, leadership, professional development, and communication and partnerships. The current plan was distributed to stakeholders through several list serves and was placed on the Read to Achieve Livebinder for public review for approximately seven weeks. A google feedback form was provided for people to easily provide input. The complete plan with deletions indicated with a ~~strike through~~ and additions indicated with <u>underlines</u> is found in Appendix A.

The plan is divided into sections which include NCDPI, LEAs, School Administrators, and Teachers. The actions listed under the NCDPI section are actions that the state will provide. The actions listed under the LEA, School Administrator, and Teacher sections are suggestions that district leadership, school administrators and teachers can use. The appendices of the plan have been some of the most widely used resources. The appendices include Literacy-Rich Instruction for grades K-5 and 6-12, a tool for dialogue suggestions on literacy instruction between administrators and teachers, examples of 90-minute block schedules, a glossary of terms, a listing of all the professional development offerings of the K-3 Literacy team, and resources and references.

An overall summary of the major revisions/additions to the plan include:

-focused efforts to demonstrate and train the vertical progression of ELA standards through the grade levels

-opportunities for training, collaboration and data analysis sessions for leaders to inform decisions on scheduling, professional development, and teacher placement

-scheduling of regional meetings for central office contacts and Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) for updates and collaboration opportunities

-creation and continuous maintenance of Livebinders as resources for all stakeholders: Read to Achieve, Big Ideas in Reading, Principal, Parent, Reading Camp, Written Response to Text

-annual training of new MLT cohorts

-development of Literacy Leaders' Conferences to build capacity around literacy instruction in the classroom

-continued support in assisting stakeholders in translating data into literacy instruction

-encouragement and modeling of a balanced approach to literacy instruction including whole group, small group, differentiated and intentional literacy stations, and intensive interventions

-promotion of the use of evidence-based instructional strategies

-providing customized regional, district and school support and professional development aligned to specific needs

-building of virtual, blended, and online professional development opportunities

-providing current and updated listings of professional development offered by the K-3 Literacy division

-updating and adding materials and passages to the state portfolio annually

-revising the written response to text component of the assessment system to align with NAEP formatting and current NCSCoS standards

-providing videos and webinars to describe classroom management, clarify new updates and changes to legislation, and explain assessment components

-providing brochures, PowerPoints and meetings to inform parents and community partners of Read to Achieve

-creating and providing a booklet on comprehension for first and second grade parents to use at home with students

-holding local meetings to inform the community of legislation

An overall summary of the major deletions includes:

-references to specific vendors and/or vendor products

-references to Personal Education Plans

-references to summer camps changed to reading camps

-references to reading strategies to literacy strategies

-references to Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI) changed to Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework

-changes from statewide Parent Advisory group to local and regional parent meetings

Licensure Updates

In December 2012, the State Board of Education adopted policy requiring new licensure exam requirements for elementary and special education general curriculum teacher education candidates. Effective October 1, 2014, elementary and special education general curriculum teacher education candidates must pass the State Board adopted Foundations of Reading for North Carolina and General Curriculum for North Carolina exams in order to be issued a teaching license. For elementary education candidates, the exams will replace the currently required Praxis II Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications licensure exam. For special education candidates, the exams will replace the currently required Praxis II Fundamental Subjects: Content Knowledge licensure exam.

The Foundations of Reading exam assesses four sub-areas: (i) foundations of reading development; (ii) development of reading comprehension; (iii) reading assessment and instruction; and (iv) integration of knowledge and understanding. The test framework and a full length practice exam can be found at http://www.nc.nesinc.com/prepare.asp .

The exams were effective for teacher education graduates beginning in the 2014-15 academic year.

Through the first year of implementation, the DPI learned lessons and listened to feedback from all stakeholders. Changes and adjustments were made to some procedures in 2013-14 if it was within the parameters of the law. HB 230 provided further clarifications and flexibility to districts in June of 2014. The DPI established proactive measures to respond to feedback during the year and will continue these practices going forward. A listing of these practices with suggestions for the future is included in Section 4 along with the recommendations for legislation.

Regarding testing according to TCP-A-001, 04/07/16:

Beginning April 1, 2016, and extending to the end of the 2015-2016 school year, educators licensed in Elementary Education who have passed the Pearson Test for North Carolina: Foundations of Reading shall be deemed “highly qualified.”

Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, all North Carolina initially licensed educators, including Elementary and EC General Curriculum educators, are required by NC General Statute to have attempted the NCSBE-approved tests for the license area(s) at least once in their first year of teaching. Professional educator license holders shall pass all testing requirements for the license area(s) before or during the second year of teaching. Institutions of Higher Education with Educator Preparation Programs may have more rigorous expectations and continue to require teacher candidates pass required tests prior to recommendation for initial licensure.

Regarding admission into an approved teacher education program: According to TCP-A-003, 06/04/2015

Undergraduate degree-seeking students must satisfactorily complete the Praxis I Core Academic Skills for Educators for formal admission to approved teacher education program in North Carolina IHEs. The required scores follow:

Core Academic Skills for Educators:	Reading	156
Core Academic Skills for Educators:	Writing	162
Core Academic Skills for Educators:	Mathematics	150

There are exemptions to this requirement.

- Individuals with a composite score of 468 on Praxis I Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics shall be deemed to have satisfied this requirement.

- Individuals with a total SAT score of 1100 are exempt from Praxis I testing requirements for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a total SAT score of less than 1100, but a score of at least 550 on the Verbal test are exempt from the Preprofessional Skills Tests in Reading and Writing for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a total SAT score of less than 1100, but a score of at least 550 on the Math test are exempt from the Preprofessional Skills Test in Mathematics for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a composite ACT score of 24 are exempt from Praxis I testing requirements for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a composite ACT score of less than 24, but with a score of at least 24 on the English test are exempt from the Preprofessional Skills Tests in Reading and Writing for teacher education program admission.

- Individuals with a composite ACT score of less than 24, but a score of at least 24 on the Math test are exempt from the Preprofessional Skills Test in Mathematics for teacher education program admission.

Regarding testing requirements for a North Carolina License: Individuals seeking a North Carolina professional educator's license must meet the testing requirements established by the State Board of Education. The Standard Professional 1 license may be converted to a clear Standard Professional 2 license provided the State Board of Education approved exam is taken at least once during the first year of teaching, and passed before or during the second year of teaching. Additional and specific information about testing requirements can be found at http://www.ncpublicschools.org/licensure/.

Section 4: Reading Plan Deliverables

The following listings provide the deliverables provided by NCDPI to stakeholders as referenced in the Comprehensive Reading Plan. These actions are documented in the NCDPI section of the Comprehensive Reading Plan.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

Reading Plan Deliverables

NCDPI Actions for Standards:

- Provide a list of research-based interventions and strategies that align with the NCSCoS
- Provide a list of research-based reading strategies to include explanations, instructional focus, North Carolina ELA standards, strategies, and research
- Provide professional development and awareness of strategies and resources during Master Literacy Trainer (MLT) and leadership sessions with building administrators
- Research and provide an organized list of strategies and resources in each of the Big Ideas of Beginning Reading on the NC Read to Achieve LiveBinder (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1665908)
- Create, continuously update, and maintain a separate Livebinder specifically addressing the Big Ideas in Beginning Reading
- Create awareness of strategies and resources during trainings in schools and districts
- Support districts in developing and communicating policy expectations for all students
- Provide visits, emails, phone calls, meetings with LEA administrators and principals, regional sessions, and presentations
- Meet with new central office contacts to communicate policy expectations and provide support from the K-3 Literacy Division
- Provide regular updates and clarifications to central office and teacher list serves and post all correspondence on the Read to Achieve Livebinder (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/850102#anchor)

NCDPI Actions for Leadership:

- Support districts in the development of a reading plan to include school, community and parent/guardian partnerships
- Offer assistance to Central Office contacts with local reading plan development
- Provide support to low-performing districts and schools through professional development, school improvement and data analysis
- Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders

- Conduct statewide and regional meetings about reading achievement as well as discussions about Read to Achieve (RtA) and the formative, diagnostic reading assessment requirements.
- Facilitate regional/LEA meetings for collaboration opportunities about Reading Camps, 3/4 Transition and Accelerated Classes
- Schedule regional meetings annually for each of the State Board regions
- Plan and provide sessions for the Beginning Teacher (BT), Principal Ready and Assistant Principal Ready meetings in all eight state board regions in collaboration with the Educator Effectiveness division
- Use state-level data to inform decision making in the area of reading/literacy across all content areas
- Participate in EVAAS training conducted by state and regional leaders
- Use the formative, diagnostic reading assessment data to facilitate school, state, regional, and district data reviews
- Provide statewide, regional, and MLT discussions and sessions with DPI EVAAS experts to inform stakeholders of the teacher growth model
- Continue use of state, regional, and district data to review with LEAs to determine professional development needs for teachers, reading camps, and needs for the districts
- Support LEAs in planning professional learning opportunities in reading

- Provide quality professional development for regions and districts in the area of reading
- Provide and continually update a listing of the K-3 Literacy Division's professional development offerings
- Create professional development offerings in the area of literacy in alignment with the needs of schools and districts
- Customize professional development and support for districts/schools based on specific needs
- Provide information and guidance on the selection of highly qualified teachers who teach the reading camps, the third/fourth transitional classes, and the accelerated classes
- Communicate through email updates from K-3 Literacy Division director and consultants to all appropriate list serves
- Share information during RESA meetings
- Support administrators in determining effective teachers of reading through teacher evaluations, observations, and walkthroughs
- Provide Principal Livebinder as a resource for administrators (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1694441)

NCDPI Actions for Instruction:

- Provide instructional support in the area of reading through regional consultants
- Provide customized training as needed – see NCDPI listing of Professional Development offerings
- Present literacy trainings at CCSA state conferences, RESAs, NCCAT, Western Leadership Conference, Synergy Conference, Institutions of Higher Education (NC State, Peace, Barton), C4 Summit for the United Methodist Conference, and Literacy Leadership Conferences for principals in all regions
- Provide intensive statewide literacy training for approximately 400 Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs)
- Create teacher demonstrations and video tutorials to place on the LiveBinder
- Conduct over 2,000 support or professional development sessions directly to schools and districts (averaging about 90-100 sessions per month)
- Continue to develop and provide instructionally focused professional development – see K-3 Literacy Professional Development offerings
- Recommend to LEAs that time be provided for collaborative planning, professional learning opportunities, uninterrupted blocks of instruction in the area of reading
- Offer support to administrators and district leaders and assist with school planning and scheduling
- Meet with grade-level teams to discuss instructional strategies as they relate to data through the formative, diagnostic reading assessment
- Review data with district, school, and grade level teams during PLCs, guiding discussions about instruction
- Facilitate book studies during professional learning communities
- Provide guidance to LEAs on the structure of reading camps
- Provide information to LEAs through the Reading Camp LiveBinder, including first, second, and third grade resources (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1279155&present=true)
- Provide information and support to LEAs around the selection of first and second grade students for reading camps as well as possible structures and content
- Provide LEAs with Excel form to determine instructional needs for first and second-grade reading camp students
- Create and distribute a Parent Resource booklet on comprehension for parents of first and second-grade students
- Conduct regular reading camp visits to observe instructional practices and provide feedback
- Facilitate networking opportunities between districts to share reading camp practices and procedures

- Promote the ongoing study of current research in reading, teaching, and learning
- Share resource books during PD as well as the professional reading list located on the LiveBinder
- Share current articles and resources with the field through the teacher list serve
- Provide The Big Ideas in Beginning Reading Livebinder as an instructional resource for teachers and administrators
- Develop and provide a specific Livebinder for principals and administrators that includes information on literacy instruction, walkthroughs, and research on literacy
- Create a Master Literacy Trainers' web-based collaboration platform for sharing of research-based literacy information

- Encourage the use of resources that address the needs of students whose communication skills are below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level

- Share strategies in the NC Comprehensive Reading Plan located on the Read to Achieve and Big Ideas Livebinders
- Provide professional development targeted for specific learner needs
- Provide differentiation resources on the Big Ideas Livebinder
- Promote the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills development for all learners.

- Offer professional development to address differentiated instruction including the use of complex texts, vocabulary building, 90 minutes reading blocks, small group instruction, writing in response to reading, visual literacy, using informational texts, and strengthening vocabulary across all content areas
- Continue to add and customize professional development as the needs of regions and districts change

- Encourage the use of Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) to support the reading programs and instructional practices in all schools
- Communicate with central office contacts to share Extended Learning Opportunities with Regional Consultants

NCDPI Actions for Professional Development:

- Promote regional, district, and school-level professional development in the area of reading that is high quality, job-embedded, ongoing, and research-based for administrators, teachers, and support personnel
- Offer customized professional development to schools/districts
- Follow up with professional development participants to facilitate implementation and progress and to be accessible for questions/concerns

- Create and provide Master Literacy Training to build capacity in districts
- Provide trainings regionally and district-wide, within RESAs, and at NCCAT facilities
- Provided on-going training of MLTs
- Provide training and support to low performing schools
- Provide a list of professional development sessions that can be customized to the specific needs of the schools/district
- Collaborate with administrators to build capacity in using data to allocate resources, analyze trends, and make informed decisions for professional development
- Participate in EVAAS trainings
- Discuss all data points with principals to determine trends and needs for professional development
- Provide instructional leadership training for administrators to understand the formative, diagnostic reading assessment
- Provide training and discussion around Judge Howard Manning's reading report
- Review district and school-level data with district administrators and principals, to assist in the decision-making process and to customize professional development
- Continue to develop/create professional development as the needs of regions and districts change
- Continue professional development in the area of reading/literacy and the NCSCoS
- Present at state-wide conferences
- Collaborate with the Hill Center on presentations for the field
- Incorporate Friday Institute Technology Training in professional development trainings and presentations
- Embed NCSCoS ELA standards in all professional development
- Promote the continuous skill development of literacy and instructional coaches
- Provide regional trainings for school-level leaders on the formative, diagnostic reading assessment
- Develop and provide Master Literacy Trainings
- Collaborate with Master Literacy Trainers to provide regional, district, and school trainings
- Continue to build capacity in districts by providing trainings for new cohorts of Master Literacy Trainings annually

NCDPI Actions for Assessment:

- Support LEAs in their efforts to maintain fidelity of assessment systems
- Continue to work with district and school leadership on fidelity of implementation
- Process invalidation requests from LEAs

- Provide statewide training, narrated PowerPoints, and videos for constructing written response to text for common understanding
- Provide LEAs refresher trainings to ensure inter-rater reliability and accurate recording of errors and miscues to inform instruction
- Provide video updates
- Provide guidance to districts in utilizing a balanced system of assessments including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments

- Conduct data analysis sessions using the results of the formative, diagnostic reading assessment with teachers and administrators at the school and LEA levels
- Assist teachers with instructional planning for student needs
- Continue support sessions with teachers during PLCs to review data and provide strategies to assist with student needs
- Support Spanish Immersion schools with the use of a Spanish assessment system, including annual training and refreshers
- Provide continued data analysis sessions with MLTs for ongoing district support
- Encourage the problem-solving model used in the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to identify students who need additional reading support, including students who are in need of intensive support as well as those who are reading at advanced levels
- Participate in training on the Pathways of Progress tab (for MTSS) for the formative, diagnostic reading assessment
- Collaborate with DPI MTSS staff and EC staff to develop a common language and understanding of Read to Achieve and MTSS
- Create professional development that involves K-3 Literacy, MTSS, and EC collaboration

NCDPI Actions for Partnerships and Communication:

- Provide sample notification templates to LEAs to fulfill the written notification requirements of the NC Read to Achieve law
- Provide templates to district contacts
- Continue to update forms for various components of RtA such as Reading Camp, Parent Letters, and narrated PowerPoints
- Maintain multiple Livebinders to provide resources and information for stakeholders
- Create a Parent Resource on Comprehension for parents of first and second grade students
- Develop and utilize a self-enrolling teacher list serve for sending monthly updates directly to teachers
- Maintain a Read to Achieve twitter account

- Recommend the funding of a literacy/instructional reading specialist at each school to support classroom teachers and school leaders

- Continue to recommend literacy/instructional reading specialist for each school to the State Board and General Assembly
- Present to the Special House Committee on Education as requested with ideas on supporting students with Good Cause Exemptions and fifth graders who are non-proficient
- Collaborate with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) on the development of courses that demonstrate coursework in reading instruction for teacher preparation programs to include the NCSCoS reading content; the use of the formative, diagnostic, assessment system; and the integration of all content areas
- Train appropriate staff from IHEs on North Carolina's formative, diagnostic reading assessment
- Provide customized training for ECU reading professors
- Continue to offer trainings to IHEs as requested
- Provide formative, diagnostic reading assessment training to in-service teachers at William Peace University, Brevard, and NCSU as well as other IHEs across the state as requested by the IHE
- Establish a statewide parent advisory board to provide suggested opportunities for parent involvement, education, and open communication
- Conduct multiple state-wide and regional Parent Advisory meetings
- Continue to address questions from parents about Read to Achieve
- Develop pamphlets, brochures, narrated PowerPoints, and LiveBinder resources to inform parents, including a specific Parent Livebinder (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1326906)
- Establish a self-enrolling teacher list serve to provide direct information to teachers on Read to Achieve
- Send out correspondence monthly through the teacher list serve on current topics of interest
- Collaborate with community, civic and faith-based organizations, business partners, service organizations and families to promote reading achievement and to support school and district efforts for reading proficiency
- Receive input from Parent Advisory participants on how to include business, faith-based organizations, and community partners
- Share information with parents about how to assist in promoting Read to Achieve and reading proficiency in their communities
- Develop brochures for parents of third grade students as well as a Read to Achieve informational cards

- Develop a Resource Booklet on Comprehension for parents to use at home that provides meaningful learning activities to increase reading proficiency
- Collaborate with the REL Southeast on literacy research
- Collaborate nationally with the Foundation for Excellence in Education and with other states that have reading laws
- Promote the use of community mentors to serve as role models for student projects
- Make recommendation for training mentors to read with students on the Reading Camp Livebinder
- Serve on the NCDPI Parent Engagement Committee
- Present at the North Carolina United Methodist Conference for reading mentors and other faith-based organizations

Section 5: SERVE External Report 2014-2015

Shortly after initial implementation of Read to Achieve (RtA), NCDPI contracted with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to conduct focus groups with stakeholders across the state and report on initial thoughts, concerns, and promising aspects of the RtA legislation. The findings were reported to the Joint Legislation Education Oversight Committee. As a result of the 2014 report findings, NCDPI and the State Board of Education made adjustments, clarifications, and provided flexibility within the parameters of the law for the 2014-2015 school year.

During the second school year of the implementation of Read to Achieve, the SERVE Center conducted an external report on the continued implementation of the formative, diagnostic assessment system; reading camps; and alternative assessments. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide information to NCDPI on three specific areas of the program in order to guide future policy and programmatic decisions.

1) Implementation and teachers' use of information provided from progress monitoring and benchmarking with mCLASS:Reading 3D, the state-selected formative assessment tool,
2) Implementation, perceptions and outcomes of reading camps after the 2013-14 school year and the 2014-15 school year, and
3) Alignment of local alternative assessments with the end-of-grade exams (EOGs).

mCLASS:Reading 3D

This report documents findings from data gathered in January 2015 in the early part of the second year of implementation of Read to Achieve. As information for this report was being collected, SERVE briefed the K-3 Literacy Division so the team could begin to address perceptions and issues through professional development during onsite visits and regional meetings. The most prevalent concern was around how teachers felt about loss of instructional time with students, even though they felt that the information gained from the system was valuable.

In response, the K-3 Literacy team immediately developed and rolled out a training called "Give Me 5". These sessions emphasize the difference between what is perceived as testing and what

is considered instruction. Benchmarking is key because it is a time when teachers are working directly with children to establish a rapport and to gain knowledge of the child's strengths and weaknesses. NCDPI suggests that teachers aim for benchmarking just 2 children a day which greatly reduces the amount of time taken away from the other children. Progress monitoring occurs between benchmarks and is used to determine if a teacher's targeted instruction for a child or small group of children is effective. Progress monitoring in not a test. "Give Me 5" emphasizes that progress monitoring can occur at any time during the day or during guided reading group time. Teachers again work directly with individual children for about five minutes and can take anecdotal notes, simply conference and discuss content, complete a one-minute skill check-in, or listen to a child read and ask questions. This is a brief one-on-one time for a teacher to give immediate and personalized feedback on a child's work. Progress monitoring is not taking away from a child's instruction but it is instruction. During the "Give Me 5" training, the consultants suggests that each day is focused on a specialized individual time for five children to work with the teacher one-on-one for five minutes. There are no specified calendars or "red" days or "yellow" days of shutting down instruction for all to complete progress monitoring at one time. Progress monitoring is a seamless part of everyday work. This training will continue to be a focus for the upcoming 2016 school year.

Reading Camps

The SERVE report compared the differences in reading camps during the summer of 2014 and 2015. The 2014 and 2015 reading camps were similar in many ways, but districts made slight but significant changes between the two years. Just as the 2014 summer reading camps began, House Bill 230 passed and the General Assembly changed the minimum length of the camps. As a result, educators expressed some uncertainty about their plans for camps. In 2015, districts had more experience with program requirements and execution and there were no changes in legislation. The report indicates an overall positive experience for students during both years of camps. However, in 2015 districts felt that increased planning, lower student/teacher ratios, and highly qualified teaching staff along with engaging materials and a focus on literacy instruction were keys to the success of the camps.

Local Alternative Assessments

In the last portion of the report, SERVE summarizes the results of an analysis of the alignment between local alternative assessments approved by the State Board of Education and the End-of-Grade (EOG) test of reading in third grade. In the 2013-14 school year, districts were allowed to use local alternative assessments that had been identified by local boards of education as valid and reliable tests of reading comprehension. LEAs set the achievement levels for the chosen local assessments. With the passing of House Bill 230, the State Board of Education was charged with approving local alternative assessments and establishing achievement levels for the 2014 school year. The number of times a particular assessment was chosen by LEAs varied from 1 to 96 which produced a wide-range of sample sizes for interpreting data.

The full SERVE report for specific components of the second year of implementation of Read to Achieve can be found in Appendix B.

Section 6: Current Practices in Response to Feedback and Recommendations

The NCDPI continues to receive feedback from all stakeholder groups as we work directly with teachers and administrators across the state. Parent input is gathered through emails and regional and local parent meetings. NCDPI uses the feedback to adjust processes and develop procedures as needed to clarify and communicate the positive support offered with the Read to Achieve legislation.

1. Parent Communication

In the beginning of the implementation of the legislation, NCDPI created a state parent advisory committee comprised of parents of all ages of children from all State Board districts. The meetings involved updates on the legislation, networking with other parents, receiving feedback on the needs of parents, and opportunities for parents to give suggestions about clear and transparent communication that reaches everyone. These statewide parent meetings were not attended well, and, as a result, the K-3 Literacy Division has facilitated local and regional meetings over the last two years. The division has also produced sample parent letters, narrated PowerPoints, parent brochures, parent templates for reading progress, and a parent resource book on comprehension for younger children. The division maintains and continually updates a Parent Livebinder to inform parents and provide resources for use at home with students.

2. Regional Meetings for LEAs/Charters

The K-3 Literacy consultants hold regional meetings involving district leaders, curriculum coordinators, and Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs). The consultants facilitate the meetings, but generally let the district leaders pose questions, network, share ideas and propose solutions to pressing issues. This is another way for NCDPI to receive feedback and gather educator input from the field before moving forward with initiatives. During these meetings, districts have the opportunity to share successful strategies related to Read to Achieve implementation and the best practices and successes of reading camps.

3. Master Literacy Trainers

NCDPI has trained approximately 400 MLTs to date in all LEAs and some charters across the state. The training, which is provided by the consultants in the K-3 Literacy Division, involves eight days of intensive literacy professional development. These MLTs are a point of contact in the districts and work closely with the K-3 Literacy consultants delivering professional development and support to teachers and administrators in their schools and districts. The expectation is that this will build capacity in the district for literacy, and MLTs will model best practices and research-based instructional strategies. The plan is to add an additional cohort of MLTs each year.

4. Establishment of Livebinders

Livebinders, electronic notebooks with specific tabs, provide a resource of being able to post information immediately and keep all stakeholders informed. Currently, the K-3 Literacy Division has six public Livebinders; Read to Achieve, Big Ideas in Reading, Reading Camp,

Parent, Principal, and Written Response to Text. The main Read to Achieve Livebinder is the fifth most viewed Livebinder nationally.

5. **Portfolio**

NCDPI adds new passages annually to the state portfolio system to give teachers more choice. All passages are vetted and completely reviewed by content experts and third-grade teachers. Three instructional passages per standard are designated for instructional purposes and the Implementation Guide specifically states that portfolios are OPTIONAL and that teachers should have total discretion in choosing passages to align to their instruction.

6. **Revised Comprehensive Reading Plan**

Per legislation, the State Board of Education shall report in each even-numbered year the implementation, evaluation, and revisions to the comprehensive plan for reading achievement. Additions and deletions to the plan include feedback and input from the field. The plan was displayed on the Read to Achieve Livebinder for seven weeks and was distributed through list serves to superintendents, teachers, central office administrators, principals, and various community organizations. Ideas for input were collected through a google document aligned to the plan.

7. **Professional Development**

The K-3 Literacy Division has developed 33 professional development sessions that can be customized and targeted to the needs of the school or district. These trainings, listed in Appendix E of the Comprehensive Reading Plan, revolve around the Read to Achieve legislation, the formative, diagnostic reading assessment system, leadership, and literacy instruction. Videos and tutorials to help teachers are displayed on the various Livebinders so that teachers have access to them as needed.

8. **Direct Support to Low-Performing Schools**

The K-3 Literacy Division collaborates with other divisions at the NCDPI to provide support to low-performing schools. The division offers support to each district and works directly with teachers and administrators in schools that respond. The direct work with teachers and administrators in schools around literacy has been very successful in some schools.

9. **Literacy Leaders Conferences**

The K-3 Literacy Division has planned eight regional meetings in September of 2016 (one in each State Board district) to work with school-level administrators. These meetings will focus on the Read to Achieve legislation as well as helping leaders understand their role as the literacy instructional leader in the school.

10. **Cross Divisional and Cross Agency Work**

The K-3 Literacy Division works closely with other divisions within NCDPI to present a united front for literacy instruction. Collaboration with Educator Effectiveness, Exceptional Children, Multi-Tiered System of Support, NCCAT, Accountability, and the Office of Early Learning

along with work on the EVAAS value-added system ensures that the field is hearing the same message. The division also works closely with the Hill Center, Institutions of Higher Education, the Friday Institute, the Regional Education Laboratory Southeast, and the Foundation for Excellence in Education. Through the Foundation for Excellence in Education, the division makes connections with other states who have reading legislation to discuss and share ideas for implementation.

11. List Serves

The K-3 Literacy Division maintains several list serves to keep stakeholders informed, to clarify information, or to provide updates. A self-enrolling list serve for principals and teachers has been established and monthly correspondence is delivered. A central office list serve is used to provide information to the contacts in each district who are charged with the implementation of Read to Achieve.

12. Reading Camps

Through funding provided by the NC General Assembly, reading camps were provided in 2016 for students after first, second, and third grades who needed more support in reading comprehension and proficiency. The K-3 Literacy Division provides flow charts to describe which students would be eligible for camps and sample letters for districts to use to send to parents. The division also maintains and continuously updates a Reading Camp Livebinder to help districts plan, develop and make decisions about the LEA-sponsored camps. Resources are also listed on the Livebinder for districts to use as they decide how to provide quality instruction and support for their students.

Recommendations for legislation:

1. Instructional Coaches

All elementary schools need an instructional coach to work with classroom teachers. These instructional coaches would be instrumental in assisting the classroom teachers with analyzing data, collaborating with peers, planning instruction, providing professional development, co-teaching, modeling, and assessing student and teacher needs. The coaches would be a liaison between teachers and the district and would work with the K-3 Literacy consultants and district MLTs to help build capacity for literacy at the teacher level. This also addresses the feedback NCDPI receives from schools/districts about ways to provide additional staffing and supports to help meet the needs of the extra opportunities included in Read to Achieve for students.

2. Expanding the number and future development of Master Literacy Trainers

The response to this training has been extremely positive due to the depth of literacy focus, the analysis process for identifying needs of struggling readers, the identification of next steps for teachers in adjusting instruction, and the development of quality targeted instruction. There is a need for the current MLT cohorts to hold periodic joint meetings and a need to continue to build the pool of MLTs in each district. Funding for a yearly bonus or stipend for MLTs would be

well received. The MLTs provide support and professional development to their colleagues in addition to regular duties and job responsibilities that they hold in their schools/districts.

3. Expand Transitional and Accelerated Classes

For many reasons, some students move on to the fifth grade without showing proficiency in reading. These students should be afforded the same opportunities and support in fifth grade that they received in fourth grade to continue to help them catch up and develop their skills. The transitional or accelerated classes guarantee that the student has a teacher selected based on demonstrated student outcomes in reading proficiency, has a daily 90-minute uninterrupted block of evidence-based reading instruction, and receives other appropriate instructional supports and services and reading interventions that have evidence in improving reading outcomes for the identified area(s) of concern. Progress monitoring should be utilized to determine the effectiveness of the instruction, as well as the students' response to the provided instruction.

Included in this recommendation are proactive strategies for children struggling in the early grades. Research shows that children of poverty enter school at a disadvantage with oral language and vocabulary development which are foundations needed to succeed in school. In addition, schools that serve a majority of students living in poverty and/or learning English as a second language should adopt a strong Core reading approach that fosters vocabulary vertically and horizontally throughout the continuum of schooling. It is also recommended that schools use the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to analyze what is being provided for all K-5 students and make determinations if the instruction and services are strong enough for the population that is being served. The focus is to help students succeed without a reliance on supplemental services and to determine if what is being provided is effective across all sub-groups. The use of multiple data points outside of and including academics is needed. The proactive use of the universal screeners provided by the state would help identify students who need supplemental services and supports in addition to the 90-minute reading block, small group instruction, and frequent progress monitoring in the earlier grades.

4. Increase Funding for Preschool

More funding for preschool and an emphasis on services for children before they enter school is essential. A robust body of research provides evidence that prekindergarten programs of a defined high-quality yield long-term benefits to program recipients as well as society as a whole. In fact, results from various meta-analyses demonstrate the overall effects associated with a strong academic prekindergarten program to be both profound and long-lasting and include: higher achievement test scores (reading/math), reduced special education identification and grade repetition, increased high school graduation, reduced behavior problems, delinquency, and crime, and increased employment with higher earnings and reduced welfare dependency.

Research on the science of early childhood development has shown that children's experiences and the conditions of their lives are pivotal to school readiness, third-grade reading proficiency,

and high school graduation. And, pre-kindergarten has demonstrated its effectiveness in mitigating early learning disparities for children from low-income families. Taken together, a robust state-funded prekindergarten effort continues to be a sound strategy for ensuring North Carolina's population of at-risk perspective enrollees are prepared for school success at kindergarten entry.

5. Recognize the work of K-2 Teachers

The Read to Achieve legislation is not just a third-grade law. The premise that all students will be reading at or above grade level by the end of the third grade is a collaborative effort of all teachers who work with students from the time they enter kindergarten. The idea behind using a formative, diagnostic reading assessment beginning in kindergarten is to identify gaps and root causes of reading difficulties early in a student's educational career and intervene with high quality literacy instruction. Any monetary awards should be distributed among all of the teachers that helped students reach proficiency.

6. Consider a statewide literacy campaign

Other states have developed statewide literacy campaigns that involve the legislature, the state education agency, and the business community. Read to Achieve is the branded name for the legislation in North Carolina. The involvement of the business community to move the literacy initiative forward in the state would build awareness and shine a positive light on what everyone would like to see accomplished in North Carolina – all children reading at or above grade level by the end of third grade.

7. Calendar Flexibility

Local school calendar flexibility is needed for all LEAs. Calendar flexibility would give LEAs the ability to determine the needs of the specific student population in their schools and district. Research shows that children can lose from 1 to 3 months of learning during the summer months. The General Assembly is funding camps for children after first, second and third grades. LEAs should use the data collected on students to make instructional decisions during camp and in the subsequent school year to determine if their practices are effective. In turn, the LEAs need the flexibility to determine the amount of time needed for summer breaks and how local calendars and schedules can positively impact student achievement.

Comprehensive Reading Plan K-12

A Supplement to the North Carolina Literacy Plan

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

2016

Table of Contents

Introduction

In July of 2012, the North Carolina General Assembly passed the 2012 budget act, House Bill 950/S.L. 2012-142 Section 7A, which included the Read to Achieve program as part of the Excellent Public Schools Act. One component of the program was the development, implementation and continuous evaluation of a comprehensive plan to improve reading achievement in the public schools of North Carolina. According to the law, "the plan shall be based on reading instructional practices with strong evidence of effectiveness in current empirical research in reading development."

The North Carolina State Board of Education adopted a State Literacy Plan in April of 2012. The document provides a consistent voice with which to address literacy challenges in the state and provides a plan for focused support from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction for all state initiatives. This proposed Comprehensive Reading Plan will become a supplement to the State Literacy Plan. The Reading Plan will specifically address the requirements of the state law and the feedback received from the participants in the focus group sessions.

In June of 2013, the newly developed K-3 Literacy Division conducted focus group sessions in all eight state board districts of North Carolina. Session participants included parents, teachers, administrators, reading and literacy specialists, central office personnel, curriculum coordinators, and representatives from Institutes of Higher Education. The framework for the Comprehensive Reading Plan is developed from the perspective and input of all of these stakeholders. It focuses on six areas: standards-based curriculum, leadership, instruction, professional development, assessment, and partnerships and communication.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has provided a detailed list of actions employed to assist districts and schools with the implementation of the Comprehensive Reading Plan in these six focus areas. In order to increase reading achievement across our state, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), school administrators, and teachers have been provided suggested actions. Districts and schools are encouraged to use the Comprehensive Reading Plan as a guide for aligning, developing, and implementing local plans to advance reading proficiency.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

The following actions and evidences outline the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's commitment of support to districts and schools in meeting the goal of a fully implemented comprehensive reading plan.

Standards-Based Curriculum

The North Carolina State Board of Education has adopted the College and Career Ready standards to determine competencies for each grade level with a rigorous set of academic standards that is uniform across the state and nation. Based on a philosophy of teaching and learning that is consistent with current research, exemplary practices, and international benchmarking, North Carolina educators seek to provide the most appropriate education possible for the diverse learners in our public schools. The curriculum is reviewed and revised, as needed, to meet the needs of our nation, state, districts, and local communities.

Teachers use the standards-based curriculum to plan instruction that supports the integration of reading in all content areas. These standards allow for vertical and horizontal alignment of reading skills. The standards-based curriculum promotes the use of 21st Century Skills in reading instruction. Literacy standards are embedded in science, social studies, and technical subjects. Just as students must read, write, speak, listen and use language effectively, so, too, must the standards specify what students need to know and understand to be career and college ready in multiple disciplines.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Standards-Based Curriculum	NCDPI will: • Support the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCoS) and Extended Content Standards in the teaching of literacy • Support integration of reading instruction in all grade levels, ~~and~~ content areas, and the arts • Foster instructional planning that includes the strands of literacy learning: reading, writing, speaking and listening and language skills • Support districts in developing and communicating policy expectations for all students • Promote the use of 21st Century Skills in all literacy areas • Provide a list of research-based interventions and strategies that align with the NCSCoS • Demonstrate the progression of the standards in planning sessions with teachers and administrators • Develop and provide professional development training on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Coordinate and collaborate with the English Language Arts Division at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to provide consistent language in the field	• North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) online resources for Common Core State Standards • Extended Content Standards resources • State and regional meetings to include Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs), LEAs, school administrators, teachers, parents, and community partners • Meeting agendas and summaries • List of research-based interventions and strategies for reading/literacy instruction (http://www.livebinders.com/media/get/MTI4MzQzOTk=) • Samples of different forms of the standards progressions that could be shared with teachers/administrators • Standards professional development • Collaborative meetings and sessions

Leadership

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and post-secondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century. In order to meet this mission, literacy instruction must be rigorous and integrated into all content areas.

School, district and state leadership must actively plan for and implement systems that support best practices, including ongoing program monitoring and evaluation that are inclusive of all reading initiatives. Leaders at all levels must be knowledgeable, committed, and supportive of the implementation of reading programs and instructional best practices, of assessment and diagnostics tools, and of the use of data systems to monitor students' progress towards goals. Comprehensive implementation of these programs, tools, and resources includes development of a full continuum of academic and behavioral support for all students. All levels of leadership will work collaboratively with stakeholders to maximize every student's potential. School, district, and state leadership create systems of support in which resources are aligned, barriers are removed, and best practices are implemented.

Successful implementation of reading initiatives will be realized in the creation and maintenance of a culture in which all levels of leadership have a shared vision; open and honest communication; and a focus on the use of data, teamwork, and research-based practices. For example, teachers demonstrate leadership by taking responsibility for the progress of all students in their classrooms. They use formative and summative assessment information to assist in making informed decisions and to make adjustments to the teaching and learning process. They work collaboratively with school leaders and other team members to analyze data to develop goals and strategies to ensure that children are reading at or above grade level.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Leadership	NCDPI will: • Communicate State Comprehensive Reading Plan to all stakeholders • Support districts in the development of a reading plan to include school, community, and parent/guardian partnerships • Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders • Support districts in their efforts to maintain fidelity of assessment systems for all students • Provide a list of research-based interventions and strategies • Use state-level data to inform decision making in the area of reading/literacy across all content areas • Support LEAs in planning professional learning opportunities in reading • Allocate and distribute funding for mandated reading assessment program, technology devices, and assessment materials in K-3 • Provide information and guidance on the selection of highly qualified teachers who teach the ~~summer~~ reading ~~classes~~ camps, the third/fourth transitional classes, and the accelerated classes • Encourage teachers to lead in their classrooms and schools through the use of data to inform instruction, professional development, and collaboration with other colleagues • Encourage administrators to be instructional leaders in their schools, providing professional development, scheduling, and curriculum support, all based on data trends and data conversations • Share opportunities for instructional leaders to use data to inform instruction in their schools including the Judge Manning Reading Report	• Email and meeting summaries • Reading plans as determined by the LEA • Meeting agendas • Site visits • List of recommended research-based strategies and interventions for reading instruction • Analysis of End of Grade tests (EOG), End of Course exams (EOC), Reading 3D, Common Exams, Education Value-Added Assessment System (EVAAS), Reading Proficiency Data • Documentation of allocations to LEAs • Guidance document on selection of highly qualified teachers • Assessment/data records • Excerpts from Judge Manning's Reading Report • Data sessions with principals • North Carolina Principal LiveBinder • http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=1694441

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	• Provide data sessions for administrators to understand and analyze teacher web reports in the formative, diagnostic reading assessment system so that administrators can understand strengths and weaknesses • Provide at least four regional meetings per year for district office contacts and Master Literacy Trainers to share legislative updates, professional development, and collaboration of instructional practices • Provide resources through the North Carolina Principal LiveBinder • Collaborate with the Educator Effectiveness Division to provide professional development for principals and assistant principals at READY meetings • Organize and develop Literacy Leaders Conference to build understanding of instructional practices in literacy • Develop and provide the Master Literacy Trainers program that includes professional development to build capacity of literacy leaders in each district	

Instruction

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. This mission requires a new set of skills that teachers must use daily in order to help their students learn 21st century content and master reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills in all content areas so they will be prepared for higher education and/or entry into the workforce.

As a part of the State Comprehensive Reading Plan, teachers deliver reading instruction that is rigorous and relevant for all students. They provide a balanced curriculum that enhances reading skills. Teachers work collaboratively with all stakeholders to ensure that instruction optimally meets the needs of every learner. They monitor the progress of their students and use available data to inform their instruction. Teachers differentiate reading instruction based upon formative, summative, and benchmark assessment data. They adapt resources to address those students needing intensive, strategic, and accelerated support. Teachers keep abreast of evolving research on reading, teaching and learning. Teachers assist students in developing critical thinking skills so they can analyze and synthesize diverse texts. Teachers think systematically and critically about learning in their classroom: why learning happens and what can be done to improve student achievement.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Instruction	NCDPI will: • Provide assistance with data analysis and instructional support to meet the learning needs of ALL students in the area of ~~reading~~ literacy through K-3 Literacy regional consultants • ~~Recommend~~ Encourage LEAs ~~that~~ to provide time ~~be provided~~ for collaborative planning, professional learning opportunities, uninterrupted blocks of instruction in the area of reading • Provide guidance to LEAs on the structure of the required 90-minute block of uninterrupted reading instruction ~~in grades K-5~~ for retained reading students • Provide guidance to LEAs on the structure of ~~the required summer~~ reading camps and encourage the use of the Reading Camp LiveBinder • Provide a list of research-based interventions and strategies • Use data to inform decision making in the area of reading • Encourage LEAs, school administrators, teachers to use all available data to inform decision making and instruction based on the needs of all students • ~~Provide sample Personal Education Plan (PEP) documents to LEAs and encourage the problem-solving model in the development of these documents~~ • Promote the ongoing study of current research in reading, teaching, and learning • Encourage the use of resources that address the needs of students whose ~~communication~~ literacy skills are below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level • Promote the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills development for all learners	• Meeting summaries • List of recommended research-based strategies and interventions for reading instruction • School report cards, data reports • Site visits by regional consultants • Agendas and handouts from professional development opportunities provided by regional consultants • Guidance documents on 90-minute uninterrupted reading block • Guidance document and Reading Camp LiveBinder ~~on summer reading camps~~ • Walkthrough documentation • ~~Sample PEP forms~~ • ELO plans and calendar • Presentations at conferences and Regional Education Service Alliance (RESA) • Examples of whole group, small group, differentiated learning stations, and intensive interventions • Model lesson examples shared during professional development

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	• ~~Encourage~~ Provide ~~the use of~~ vocabulary-building strategies for use in all content areas • Promote the use of authentic tasks and projects in all grades that incorporate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills • Encourage the use of Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) to support the reading programs and instructional practices in all schools • Make available a learning management system (HomeBase) for district, school, and teacher access to instructional resources • Promote and model literacy instruction for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy stations, and intensive intervention • Recommend evidence-based instructional strategies observed throughout the state during reading camp, transitional, and accelerated class visits • Plan, develop, and organize professional development for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction based on and aligned to the specific needs of each LEA and/or school • Promote reading of complex text and authentic opportunities to engage in rich discussions and conversations of literacy	• Examples instructional strategies used during reading camps, transitional classes, and accelerated classes • Professional development listings on Read to Achieve LiveBinder

Professional Development

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. This vision requires a new set of skills that teachers must use daily in order to help students learn 21st century content and skills they will need when they graduate from high school and enroll in higher education or enter the workforce. In order to prepare teachers, state, LEA, and school leadership must provide appropriate professional development based on teacher and student needs.

Elementary teachers understand that reading instruction is integrated in all areas of the curriculum. They work collaboratively with other members of their grade-level teams to integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language instruction with social studies, science, and math. They attend professional development related to reading instruction and research-based best practices. Middle and high school teachers embed reading instruction into all content areas. Professional development at all levels provides teachers with reading strategies to implement instructional best practices into all content areas so that students will be able to read and comprehend a variety of texts, including complex texts from diverse genres.

State, LEA, and school leaders attend professional development in the area of reading to align reading plans and goals, monitor and assist with the implementation of reading programs and instructional best practices, utilize diagnostic assessment tools, and support teachers as they teach research-based reading strategies in all content areas. Leaders ensure that professional development is informed by teacher and program evaluation, targets student learning and specific skill development, and is sustained by ongoing support where collaboration and coaching opportunities exist.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Professional Development	NCDPI will: • Communicate the State Comprehensive Reading Plan to all stakeholders • Involve stakeholders in the review of the State Comprehensive Reading Plan • ~~Promote~~ Create and provide regional, district, and school-level professional development in ~~the area of reading~~ literacy that is high quality, job-embedded, ongoing, and ~~research~~ evidence based for administrators, teachers, instructional coaches, and support personnel • Encourage trainings in the area of ~~reading~~ literacy for parents and community partners • Collaborate with administrators to build capacity in using data to allocate resources, analyze trends, and make informed decisions for professional development • Facilitate data analysis sessions for teachers and administrators to build capacity in using data to inform instruction • Promote professional development in the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language development for all learners • ~~Continue professional development in the area of reading/literacy and the NCSCoS~~ • ~~Continue~~ Share face-to-face, virtual, blended, and online professional development opportunities • ~~Promote the continuous skill development of literacy and instructional coaches~~ • Provide literacy training to Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) to build capacity for literacy instruction and collaborative partnerships with DPI consultants in LEAs and charters and to	• Webinars to share state reading plan with all stakeholders • Professional development session agendas and handouts • Training summaries • Meeting summaries • List of professional development offerings, resources, and sign-in sheets • Survey of Enacted Curriculum tool to align standards, assessments, and instruction • Literacy professional development modules developed and delivered through Master Literacy Trainer sessions and district sessions • List of literacy strategies and activities to promote reading at home • List of professional development modules on the NC Read to Achieve LiveBinder and Appendix E • Samples of the standards progressions shared with teachers/administrators • Standards professional development

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	keep districts abreast of current research and best practices for instruction and assessment • Provide literacy information to parents at regional parent meetings to assist with reading at home and to reinforce skills addressed in reading camps • Provide a list of professional development modules created by the K-3 Literacy Division (See Appendix E) available for administrators and teachers • Develop and provide professional development training on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Promote and model literacy instruction and effective lesson planning for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy instruction, and intensive intervention • Recommend evidence-based instructional strategies observed throughout the state during reading camp, transitional, and accelerated class visits • Plan, develop, and organize professional development for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction based on and aligned to the specific needs of each LEA and/or school • Collaborate with MLTs to establish district priorities • Facilitate MLT meetings to provide networking opportunities for districts to share ideas • Provide additional training videos for teachers to access as needed • Continue to offer multiple trainings throughout the year for teachers, lead teachers, and district administrators on reading proficiency • Collaborate with the Educator Effectiveness division to provide literacy in the content area training	• Training videos

Assessment

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	• Collaborate with the Digital Teaching and Learning division to provide training for reading instruction and assessment	

The mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century. To meet this mission, teachers must use formative and summative assessments to monitor student progress towards goals and inform instruction. Teachers are reflective and knowledgeable in their practice and include assessments that are authentic, aligned to instruction, and demonstrate student understanding. Teachers and administrators strive to maintain fidelity of assessments so that data accurately informs instructional practices.

A comprehensive balanced assessment system includes formative, interim/benchmark, and summative assessments to maximize every student's potential. Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to help students improve their achievement of intended instructional outcomes. Formative assessment of students is embedded in instruction. It is used to determine the level of performance and to modify instruction accordingly. Teachers use developmentally appropriate universal screenings and ongoing assessments to understand student needs and guide learning. They use this information to implement research-based strategies for the instructional needs of all students' critical skill development in reading/literacy. Teachers measure and monitor student progress frequently to determine if learning experiences, curriculum and instruction, and school organization are effective. Teachers utilize the problem-solving method to guide interventions and provide support for at-risk and accelerated students. Benchmark assessments are used to measure growth over periods of time. Teachers and administrators use these assessments to determine

trends in learning and growth towards achievement of standards. Summative assessments are a means to gauge student learning at a particular point in time relative to content standards. Information gleaned from summative assessments assists in evaluating certain aspects of the learning process. Summative assessments are tools to help determine the effectiveness of programs, school improvement goals, alignment of curriculum, and student placement.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Assessment	NCDPI will: • Support LEAs in their efforts to maintain fidelity of assessment systems • Provide guidance to districts in utilizing a balanced system of assessments including formative, benchmark, and summative • Offer professional learning and support in formative, benchmark, summative assessments and data analysis • Encourage the problem-solving model used in ~~Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI)~~ Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to identify students who need additional reading support, including students who are in need of intensive support as well as those who are reading at advanced levels • Make available a learning management system (HomeBase) for district, school, teacher, and parent access to assessment data • Encourage districts to limit the use of multiple benchmarking assessment systems for reading ~~to those that inform instruction~~ • Provide a standardized portfolio development system for third-grade students and students with a retained third-grade label following ~~summer~~ reading camp • Update the portfolio annually to increase the assessment passages within the system • Provide a Read to Achieve (RtA) alternative test for use after EOG administration, after ~~summer~~ reading camp, and/or at mid-year promotion for students in third/fourth transitional classes or accelerated classes • Provide guidance and State Board policy on the process for mid-year promotion • Provide continued support, training, updates, and analysis on the implementation of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system	• Documentation of allocations • State and district-level fidelity reports • Information, data, and resources located in HomeBase • Training agendas • Meeting summaries • Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) documentation • Portfolio guidance document and materials • Read to Achieve (alternate) test • Mid-year promotion policy • Trainings and on-site visits to schools/districts ~~on mClass Reading 3D~~ • ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ Video tutorials and archived webinars • Portfolio passages • Required online training videos • Listing of professional development and access to videos on the Read to Achieve LiveBinder

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	• Allocate and distribute funding for required reading assessment system in grades K-3 including technology devices and student materials • Provide video tutorials and webinars on the process, procedures, and operation of all components of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic assessment system • Revise the written response to text component of the assessment system to align to grade level standards • Develop required online training video to clarify new changes to the written response to text component • Create professional development and video tutorials on the formative, diagnostic assessment system to help teachers understand the continuous instructional cycle	

Partnerships and Communication

In North Carolina's public schools, communication between the home, school, state, LEA, community, and higher education is key to positive relationships and optimum student achievement. This partnership develops ongoing, two-way dialogue, so that student needs are met through parent participation in the development of a child's reading skills. Good communication creates positive feelings between teachers and parents, leading to students who are college and career ready upon graduation from high school. Parents are kept up-to-date on policy changes affecting their student through parent/teacher organizations or parent advisory boards. Information about the North Carolina Standard Course of Study is shared with all stakeholders through websites, school visits, and conferences.

Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) are partners with public schools as they develop teacher preparation programs that include the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, instruction in the use of diagnostic assessment systems, and integration of a balanced curriculum that includes the arts and all other non-tested content areas. Public schools provide pre-service teachers with opportunities to develop their teaching skills as veteran teachers provide feedback and work collaboratively with university personnel.

North Carolina's public schools encourage community organizations and business partners to support school and district efforts in the area of reading. Schools partner with local civic and faith-based organizations, as well as businesses, for community support in various school programs, which, in turn, positively impacts student achievement. Volunteerism is crucial for schools to be successful in meeting the needs of students.

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
Partnerships and Communication	NCDPI will: • Communicate State Comprehensive Reading Plan to all stakeholders • Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders • Provide consistent communication through regional consultants between NCDPI and all stakeholders • Provide sample notification templates to LEAs to fulfill the written notification requirements of the NC Read to Achieve law • Recommend the funding of a literacy/instructional reading specialist at each school to support classroom teachers and school leaders • Collaborate with IHEs on ~~the development of courses that demonstrate coursework in reading instruction for teacher preparation programs to include the NCSCoS reading content~~, the use of the formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system, and the integration of all content areas • Provide families and school communities with information about NCSCoS • Provide families and school communities with information about Read to Achieve legislation • ~~Establish a statewide parent advisory board to provide~~ Meet with parents regionally to provide suggested opportunities for parent involvement, education on literacy strategies, and open communication • Collaborate with community, civic and faith-based organizations, business partners, service organizations and families to promote reading achievement and to support school and district efforts for reading proficiency • Promote the use of community mentors to serve as role models for student projects	• Webinars, websites, brochures, parent ~~nights~~ meetings, narrated PowerPoints • Meeting agendas and summaries • Revised programs and documents related to educator preparation • IHE training sessions provided by NCDPI • Reports and other documents demonstrating results of various collaborative efforts • Parent Advisory Board meeting agendas and summaries • Sample notification templates • Sign-in sheets and agendas • Parent LiveBinder • Comprehension Strategy booklet • Informational webinars

Focus	NCDPI Actions	Evidences
	• Promote volunteerism of all partner stakeholders • Provide parent brochures and narrated PowerPoints to inform parents about literacy and Read to Achieve • Create and provide a booklet of comprehension strategies and activities to support reading instruction at home • Meet with local boards of education, parents, and community to provide information about Read to Achieve and the formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system • Encourage trainings in the area of reading for parents and community partners • Participate in the NCDPI Parent Engagement Committee • Create and maintain Read to Achieve LIveBinder for parents • Provide informational webinars that all stakeholders can access • Support administrators, teachers, parents and community members by providing the appropriate group information to all stakeholders	

Local Education Agencies

The North Carolina Comprehensive Reading Plan outlines the actions, processes, and procedures that the State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will follow to advance reading achievement and proficiency across the state. Districts and schools are encouraged to use this plan as a guide in developing and implementing local reading plans. The following tables outline possible next steps and strategies to implement a comprehensive reading plan within the LEAs.

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Standards-Based Curriculum	LEAs will: • Support the NCSCoS and Extended Content Standards in the teaching of literacy • Integrate explicit reading instruction in all grade levels and content areas • Promote instructional planning that includes the strands of literacy learning: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language to advance the use of critical thinking and communication skills • Collaborate with all stakeholders to communicate policy expectations for all students • Integrate 21st Century Skills in all literacy areas • Utilize research-based materials, interventions, and strategies that align with the NCSCoS and the Extended Content Standards • Align horizontally and vertically within the school and across the district to provide rigor, consistency, and continuity for all students • Review, evaluate and revise the curriculum to allow for student-centered learning opportunities • Use the standards progression chart in planning with teachers and administrators • Schedule professional development training with K-3 Literacy Consultants on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards	• Administrator walkthroughs and evaluations • Syllabi of courses • Teacher planning documents and school improvement plans • Agendas for PLC meetings, parent communications and meetings • Curriculum review, evaluation, and revision documentation • Standards progression charts and PowerPoints • Trainings with K-3 Literacy Consultants

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Leadership	LEAs will: • Align LEA reading plans with the State Comprehensive Reading Plan • Provide support to schools in developing a reading plan specific to school needs based on available data • Provide opportunities for district and school leaders to collaborate on research-based strategies for reading instruction • Maintain fidelity of assessment systems using available reports, meetings and discussions with teachers, and fidelity checks • Ensure 90 minute blocks of reading instruction in every classroom in grades K-5 • Provide professional development in the area of reading which includes differentiation for Exceptional Children and academically gifted students • Safeguard common planning times for teachers including exceptional children's teachers and other reading support staff to discuss specific students' needs • Use district and school-level data to inform decision making in the area of reading • Support the development of teacher leaders through professional development • Support school administrators in the use of data to inform instruction in their schools, including the Judge Manning Reading Report to ensure fidelity of data monitoring • Ensure that the formative, diagnostic reading assessment data is used by school administrators to understand and analyze student data to engage teachers in data conversations for instruction • Attend at least four regional meetings per year for district office contacts and Master Literacy Trainers to share legislative	• District and school reading plans • Meeting agendas • Site visits by district level reading instructional coaches and staff • Analysis of EOG, EOC, Reading 3D, Common Exams, EVAAS, Reading Proficiency Data • Master Schedules • Professional development plans • Judge Manning report • Agendas and meeting notes on the use of teacher web reports

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
	updates, professional development, and collaboration of instructional practices • Use and share resources with school level administrators found on the North Carolina Principal LiveBinder • Encourage school level administrators to attend professional development for principals and assistant principals at READY meetings • Encourage attendance at a Literacy Leaders Conference to build understanding of instructional practices in literacy • Support the Master Literacy Trainers program to build capacity of literacy leaders in the district	

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Instruction	LEAs will: • Provide time for collaborative planning and uninterrupted blocks of instruction in the area of reading • Recommend research-based materials, interventions, and strategies • Use data to inform decision making in the area of reading • Implement Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to understand current reading and teaching and learning research • Use available resources to address the needs of students whose ~~communication~~ literacy skills are below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level • Provide allocations for and promote the use ~~and allocations~~ of complex texts, resources and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills development for all learners • Support instruction that requires students to read increasingly complex texts with increasing independence. • Encourage the development of research skills through the use of authentic tasks and projects that develop reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language proficiencies • Set the expectation that reading instruction takes places in all content areas in grades ~~6~~ K-12 • Utilize literacy instruction for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy instruction, and intensive intervention • Utilize evidence-based instructional strategies observed throughout the state during reading camp, transitional, and accelerated class visits • Promote and schedule professional development provided by the K-3 Literacy Division for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction	• Meeting agendas and summaries • List of recommended ~~research~~ evidence-based strategies, interventions, and materials for reading instruction • All available data • List of resources from NCDPI and regional consultant site visits • Professional development plans and agendas • NCDPI trainings/attendance sheets • Schedules of modeling opportunities • Examples of differentiated lesson plans that incorporate whole group, small group, and literacy stations for K-5 students provided to teachers and administrators • District professional development plans

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
	based on and aligned to the specific needs of each LEA and/or school • Set expectations that reading takes place in all content areas and grade levels	

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Professional Development	LEAs will: • Communicate state and district reading plans to all stakeholders • Provide district and school-level professional development in the area of reading that is high quality, job-embedded, ongoing, and ~~research~~ evidence based for administrators, teachers, and support personnel • Offer ~~trainings~~ support in the area of ~~reading~~ literacy to parents and community partners • Collaborate with administrators to build capacity in using data to allocate resources, analyze trends, and make informed decisions for professional development • ~~Provide~~ Utilize the K-3 Literacy Division to provide professional development in the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills development for all learners • ~~Ensure that literacy and instructional coaches have professional development that includes adult learning theories to assist teachers with reading instruction in all content areas~~ • Encourage professional development for secondary teachers that promotes the use of comprehension skills for reading diverse texts in all content areas • Encourage the development of academic vocabulary in all content areas • Utilize Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) to build capacity for literacy instruction and collaborative partnerships with DPI consultants in LEAs and charters • Distribute and discuss literacy information to parents at district parent meetings to assist with reading at home and to reinforce skills addressed in reading camps	• Meeting agendas • District literacy plan • District professional development plans • Meeting summaries • Training summaries • NCDDPI trainings/attendance sheets • MLT trainings agendas, MLT LiveBinder, and training modules • K-3 Literacy Division Professional Development listings • Parent Resource Book on Comprehension

	• Provide a list of professional development modules created by the K-3 Literacy Division (See Appendix E) available for administrators and teachers • Schedule professional development training with the K-3 Literacy Division on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Promote literacy instruction for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy stations, and intensive intervention • Recommend evidence-based instructional strategies shared at Read to Achieve regional meetings about reading camp, transitional, and accelerated classes • Schedule professional development trainings with the K-3 Literacy Division for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction based on and aligned to the specific needs of each LEA and/or school • Provide professional development on scaling back to find foundational gaps that exist and research-based interventions to address the gaps	

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Assessment	LEAs will: • ~~Embed~~ Promote authentic assessment within the instructional cycle in all grade levels • Focus on reading standards in all content areas • Distribute materials and devices for required formative, diagnostic reading assessment system in grades K-3 • Encourage administrators and teachers to view the video tutorials ~~and webinars~~ on the Read to Achieve LiveBinder on the process, procedures, and operation of all components of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic assessment system • Review continuously the fidelity reports associated with the assessment system • Provide guidance, support and training on the use of a balanced system of assessments including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments • Encourage the use of data analysis to inform instructional practices • Encourage the use of the problem-solving model ~~(RtI)~~ (MTSS) to identify students that need additional reading support, including students that are in need of intensive support, core support, and those who are reading at advanced levels • Encourage teachers to ~~progress monitor~~ monitor the progress of students on a continuous basis ~~as a part of formative assessment practice~~ to adjust instruction as needed • Utilize multiple sources of information including quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions and guide interventions and instruction for students • Utilize the learning management system (HomeBase) for district, school, teacher, and parent access to assessment data	• State and district-level fidelity reports for benchmarking and progress monitoring • Teacher plans • Information, data, and resources located in HomeBase • Training agendas • Meeting summaries and materials • ~~Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI)~~ Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)documentation • ~~Completed~~ Third-grade portfolios • ~~Completed~~ Read to Achieve ~~(alternate)~~ test • Roster of students promoted at mid-year • Documentation of trainings and on-site visits to schools viewing the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic assessment system process • PLC agendas • Documentation of parent communications • Annual ~~account~~ data review sessions on the use of ~~Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic assessment system • State and national assessment results

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Communicate continuously and explicitly with parents/guardians on assessment results • Limit the use of multiple benchmarking assessment systems for reading ~~to systems that inform instruction appropriately~~ • Encourage the use of the standardized portfolio system for third-grade students and students with a retained third-grade label following ~~summer~~ reading camp • Utilize the Read to Achieve (RtA) alternative test for use after EOG administration, after ~~summer~~ reading camp, and/or at mid-year promotion for students in ~~third/fourth~~ transitional ~~classes~~ or accelerated classes • Follow the State Board policy on the process for mid-year promotion • Provide continued support, training, updates, and analysis on the implementation of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment system • Use state and national diagnostic assessment results to identify trends for course planning • Ensure the use of the revised written response to text component of the assessment system to align to grade level standards • Require viewing of the online training video to clarify new changes to the written response to text component • Encourage participation in professional development and video tutorials on the formative, diagnostic assessment system to help teachers understand the continuous instructional cycle	• Additional passages and updated Portfolio Implementation Guide

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
Partnerships and Communication	LEAs will: • Communicate State Comprehensive Reading Plan and LEA reading plan to all stakeholders • Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders • Provide consistent, ongoing, up-dated information on changes, enhancements, and additions to the reading plan • Send notification to parents/guardians to fulfill the written notification requirements of the NC Read to Achieve law • Use resources to employ literacy/instructional reading specialists to support classroom teachers • Collaborate with IHEs to allow pre-service students to observe, practice assessments, teach reading classes across all content areas, and develop and implement arts integration strategies for instruction • Provide families and community partners with information about the NCSCoS • Provide families and community partners with information about the Read to Achieve legislation • Develop a district parent advisory board to provide suggested opportunities for parent involvement, education, and communication • Collaborate with community organizations, business partners, civic and faith-based organizations, service organizations and families to promote reading achievement and to support school and district efforts for reading proficiency • Promote volunteerism of all partner stakeholders • Provide parent brochures and narrated PowerPoints to inform parents about literacy and Read to Achieve	• Webinars, websites, brochures, parent ~~nights~~ meetings • Meeting agendas and summaries • Revised programs and documents related to educator preparation • Reports and other documents demonstrating results of various collaborative efforts • Parent Advisory Board meeting agendas and summaries • Documentation of notification to parents of struggling readers • Listing of elementary schools with literacy/instructional resource teachers • IHE documentation of pre-service student involvement in district schools • School volunteer lists • Comprehension booklet for parents • NC Read to Achieve Parent LIveBinder • Agendas and sign in sheets from family/community literacy trainings • Communication logs detailing information shared with parents

Focus	Districts/LEA Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Inform local boards of education, parents, and community to provide information about Read to Achieve and the formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system • Encourage trainings in the area of reading for parents and community partners • Share and encourage the use of Read to Achieve Parent LIveBinder (include link on district website) • Meet the needs of a culturally diverse population by providing interpreters at parent meetings • Utilize a variety of methods to communicate with parents such as phone, email, text, and PowerSchool • Distribute the reading comprehension booklets to parents • Advocate and provide opportunities for parent and community involvement	

School Administrators

The North Carolina Comprehensive Reading Plan outlines the actions, processes, and procedures that the State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will follow to advance reading achievement and proficiency across the state. Districts and schools are encouraged to use this plan as a guide in developing and implementing local reading plans. The following tables outline possible next steps and strategies for school administrators to use to implement a comprehensive reading plan within their schools.

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Standards-Based Curriculum	School Administrators will: • Ensure the implementation of the NCSCoS • Ensure that reading instruction in the school is aligned to the NCSCoS • Confirm that all teachers are integrating explicit reading instruction in all grade levels and content areas • Verify through teacher plans that instructional planning includes the strands of literacy learning: reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language to advance the use of critical thinking and communication skills • Collaborate with stakeholders to communicate policy expectations for all students • Ensure that all teachers are using instructional strategies that integrate 21st Century Skills in all literacy areas • Ensure that teachers have access to research-based materials, interventions, and strategies that align with the NCSCoS • Allow for horizontal and vertical planning within the school to provide rigor, consistency and continuity for all students • Provide time and resources for teachers to review, evaluate and revise the curriculum to allow for student-centered learning opportunities • Use the standards progression chart during professional learning communities to plan with all teachers and other instructional staff • Schedule professional development training with K-3 Literacy Consultants on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards	• Administrator walkthroughs and evaluations • Teacher planning documents • Agendas and summaries for PLC meetings, parent communications, faculty meetings, ~~and~~ professional development sessions, and school improvement plans • Curriculum documentation • School and teacher master schedules • Standards progressions chart and PowerPoints • Trainings with K-3 Literacy Consultants

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Leadership	School Administrators will: • Align school reading plan with the state and LEA reading plan • Meet with teachers to discuss the use of research-based strategies for reading instruction • Maintain fidelity of assessment systems using available reports, meetings and discussions with teachers, and fidelity checks • Ensure 90-minute blocks of reading instruction in every classroom in grades K-5 • Provide professional development in the area of reading • Safeguard common planning times for teachers including exceptional children's teachers, AIG teachers, and other reading support staff to discuss instructional needs of students • Use school and classroom level data to inform decision making in the area of reading instruction • Use walkthroughs to ensure the use of research-based strategies and the use of diagnostic assessment systems with fidelity • Attend PLCs and grade-level meetings to talk with teachers about instructional needs of students in the area of reading • Use available data during parent conferences • Utilize the guidance document to select highly qualified teachers to teach the summer reading classes, the third/fourth transitional classes, and the accelerated classes • Meet with departments to identify students struggling with reading in the content areas to develop strategies that meet learning needs • <u>Support teachers in the use of data to inform instruction in their classrooms, including the Judge Manning Reading Report to ensure fidelity of data monitoring</u>	• Meeting summaries • Agendas • Data reports • School reading plans • Professional development plans and handouts • Master schedule • Walkthrough checklists • PLC and grade-level notes • Guidance document for choosing highly qualified teachers

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Ensure formative, diagnostic assessment data is used by teachers to understand and analyze student strengths and weaknesses and to engage in data conversations about differentiated instruction • Use resources found on the North Carolina Read to Achieve LiveBinder as well as the North Carolina Principal LiveBinder • Share the North Carolina Parent LiveBinder with parents and guardians at PTO/PTA, Title I , and all other opportunities • Attend professional development for principals and assistant principals at READY meetings • Participate in the Literacy Leaders Conference to build understanding of instructional practices in literacy • Support the Master Literacy Trainers program to build capacity of literacy leaders in the district • Protect collaborative planning and PLC times • Schedule support staff to be in classrooms during literacy blocks	

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Instruction	School Administrators will: • ~~Provide time for collaborative planning~~ • Promote reflective and responsive teaching and learning by providing time for collaborative planning, ongoing review of data and the use of data to inform instructional decisions • Recommend and promote the use of ~~research~~ evidence-based materials, interventions, and strategies • Ensure the structure for the required 90-minute block of uninterrupted reading instruction occurs daily in grades K-5 • Use available data to inform decision making in the area of reading instruction • Implement PLCs to develop an understanding of current reading and teaching and learning research • Use available resources to address the needs of students whose communication skills are below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level • ~~Participate in the development and monitor the use of PEP documents and~~ Encourage the use of the problem-solving model in the development of t~~hese documents~~ instructional plans for individual students • Use allocations to purchase complex texts and resources that facilitate reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language skills development for all learners • Observe classroom instruction in the area of ~~reading~~ literacy to ensure the use of research-based strategies and rigorous instruction in all content areas • Utilize ELOs to support ~~the~~ reading programs in the school • Set the expectation that reading instruction takes place in all content areas in grades ~~6~~ K-12	• Meeting agendas • List of recommended materials, interventions, and strategies • Principal walkthrough checklists, data, and observations • Allocation documentation • PLC plans • Master schedules • ~~PEP meeting agendas and documents~~ • ELO school schedule • School professional development plans

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Utilize literacy instruction for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy stations, and intensive intervention • Incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies during reading camp, transitional, and accelerated class visits • Promote and schedule professional development provided by the K-3 Literacy Division for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction based on and aligned to the specific needs of each school	

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Professional Development	School Administrators will: • Lead in the development of a school-based literacy plan and communicate the ~~school reading~~ plan to ~~all~~ stakeholders • ~~Provide~~ Schedule school-level professional development using teacher input in the area of reading that is high quality, job-embedded, ongoing, and research-based for administrators, teachers, and support personnel • ~~Offer~~ Provide trainings in the area of reading to parents and community partners • Collaborate with teachers to build capacity in the use of data to make informed decisions about personal professional development plans • ~~Provide~~ Support professional development in the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills development for all learners • Encourage professional development opportunities for teachers to develop comprehension and vocabulary skills in content areas • Ensure that literacy and instructional coaches at the school level have professional development that includes adult learning theories to assist teachers with reading instruction • Utilize Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) to build capacity for literacy instruction and collaborative partnerships with DPI consultants in schools • Distribute and discuss literacy information to parents at school parent meetings to assist with reading at home and to reinforce skills addressed in reading camps • Utilize the list of professional development modules created by the K-3 Literacy Division (See Appendix E) available for administrators and teachers to align with school needs	• Meeting agendas/attendance sheets • ~~District~~ School plan • ~~District~~ School professional development plans and handouts • Meeting summaries • Training summaries • K-3 Literacy Division Professional Development listings • Parent Resource Book on Comprehension, Read to Achieve Brochures, Parent LiveBinder • List of Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) • Listing of Research-Based Literacy Strategies document

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Ensure that all teachers have been trained on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Promote literacy instruction for K-5 teachers that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy stations, and intensive intervention • Recommend evidence-based instructional strategies appropriate for classrooms, reading camps, transitional, and accelerated classes • Promote and attend professional development trainings aligned to the specific needs of the school	

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Assessment	School Administrators will: • Ensure that teachers embed authentic assessment within the instructional cycle • Monitor and maintain materials and devices for required formative, diagnostic reading assessment system in grades K-3 • Encourage teachers to view the video tutorials ~~and webinars~~ on the Read to Achieve LiveBinder on the process, procedures, and operation of all components of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic assessment system • Review continuously the fidelity reports associated with assessment systems • Review and analyze data reports specific to the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment to identify trends, student needs, and necessary professional development • Analyze all available assessment data to inform decision making • Provide and support professional development in the use of a balanced system of assessments including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments • Encourage the use of data analysis to inform instructional practices • Encourage and participate in the problem-solving model to identify students who need additional reading support, including students that are in need of intensive support, core support, and those who are reading at advanced levels • Encourage teachers to ~~progress monitor~~ monitor the progress of the students in their class on a continuous basis • Promote the use of multiple sources of information including quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions and guide interventions and instruction for students	• State and district-level fidelity reports for benchmarking and progress monitoring • Teacher plans • Information, data, and resources located in HomeBase • Training agendas • Meeting summaries • ~~Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI)~~ Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) documentation • EOG, EOC, EVAAS, School Report Cards, Proficiency • ~~Completed~~ Third-grade portfolios • ~~Completed~~ Read to Achieve ~~(alternate)~~ test • Roster of students promoted at mid-year • ~~Documentation of trainings and on-site visits to schools viewing the mClass Reading 3D process~~ Walkthroughs and observations • PLC agendas • Documentation of parent communications

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Utilize the learning management system (HomeBase) for district, school, teacher, and parent access to assessment data • Communicate continuously with parents/guardians on assessment results • Limit the use of multiple benchmarking assessment systems for reading ~~to systems that inform instruction appropriately~~ • Encourage the use of the standardized portfolio system for third-grade students and students with a retained ~~third grade~~ reading label ~~following summer reading camp~~ • Utilize the Read to Achieve (RtA) alternative test and/or EOG retest or a local alternative approved by the State Board of Education ~~for use after EOG administration, after summer reading camp, and/or at mid-year promotion for students in third/fourth transitional classes or accelerated classes~~ • Follow the State Board policy on the process for mid-year promotion • Provide continued support, training, updates, and analysis on the implementation of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment system • Analyze local, state, and national data to plan course offerings • Monitor and review the use of reading portfolio passages • ~~View with teachers and facilitate discussion centered on webinars for the new changes to the written comprehension component by BOY 2015~~ • Ensure the use of the revised written response to text component of the assessment system to align to grade level standards • Require viewing of the online training video to clarify the written response to text component	• Documentation of required written response to text video viewing • Annual ~~account~~ data review sessions on the use of ~~Reading 3D~~ the formative, diagnostic assessment reading system • List of course offerings provided by the K-3 Literacy division • Portfolio Kit • Professional development and training tutorials

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Encourage participation in professional development and video tutorials on the formative, diagnostic reading assessment system to help teachers understand the continuous instructional cycle	

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
Partnerships and Communication	School Administrators will: • Communicate State Comprehensive Reading plan and school plan to all stakeholders • Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders • Provide consistent, ongoing, updated information on changes, enhancements, and additions to the reading plan • Send notification to parents/guardians to fulfill the written notification requirements of the NC Read to Achieve law • Use resources to employ literacy/instructional reading specialists to support classroom teachers • Collaborate with IHEs to ~~allow~~ provide opportunities for pre-service students to observe, ~~practice assessments~~, teach reading classes across all content areas, and develop and implement arts integration strategies for instruction • Provide families and community partners with information about the NCSCoS • Provide families and community partners with information about the Read to Achieve legislation • ~~Utilize newsletters, messaging systems, emails, and other forms of communication to promote reading proficiency~~ • Work with parent organizations to provide suggested opportunities for parent involvement, education, and communication	• Webinars, websites, brochures, parent ~~nights~~ meetings • Meeting agendas and summaries • ~~Revised programs and~~ Documents related to educator preparation • Reports and other documents demonstrating results of various collaborative efforts • Parent Advisory Board meeting agendas and summaries • Documentation of notification • Listing of elementary schools with literacy/instructional resource teachers • IHE documentation of pre-service student involvement in schools • School volunteer lists • Comprehension booklets for parents • NC Read to Achieve LiveBinder for Parents

Focus	School Administrator Suggested Actions	Evidences
	• Collaborate with community organizations, business partners, civic and faith-based organizations, service organizations and families to promote reading achievement and to support school and district efforts for reading proficiency • Promote volunteerism of all partner stakeholders • Provide parent brochures and narrated PowerPoints to inform parents about literacy and Read to Achieve • Inform local boards of education, parents, and community to provide information about Read to Achieve and the formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system • Encourage trainings in the area of reading for parents and community partners • Share and encourage the use of Read to Achieve Parent LIveBinder (include link on district website) • Meet the needs of a culturally diverse population by providing interpreters at parent meetings • Utilize a variety of methods to communicate with parents such as newsletters, phone, messaging systems, email, text, and PowerSchool • Distribute and encourage the use of the reading comprehension booklet	

Teachers

The North Carolina Comprehensive Reading Plan outlines the actions, processes, and procedures that the State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will follow to advance reading achievement and proficiency across the state. Districts and schools are encouraged to use this plan as a guide in developing and implementing local reading plans. The following tables outline possible next steps and strategies for teachers to use to implement a comprehensive reading plan within their classrooms

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Standards-Based Curriculum	Teachers will: • Implement the NCSCoS with fidelity • Plan reading instruction that is aligned to the NCSCoS and includes the strands of literacy learning: reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language to advance the use of critical thinking and communication skills • Integrate explicit reading instruction in all grade levels and content areas • Collaborate with stakeholders to communicate policy expectations for all students • Use instructional strategies that integrate 21st Century Skills in all content areas • Utilize research-based materials, interventions, and strategies that align with the NCSCoS • Participate in horizontal and vertical planning within the school to provide consistency and continuity for all students • Review, evaluate and revise the curriculum to allow for student-centered learning opportunities • Use the standards progression chart during professional learning communities for instructional planning and collaborating with resource teachers and other instructional staff • Participate in professional development training with K-3 Literacy Consultants on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Include reading opportunities for gleaning information and enjoyment • Include hands-on/manipulatives, music, art, and role playing for actively engaging reading activities • Include opportunities for student choice and peer interaction	• Planning documents • Agendas, summaries, and handouts for PLC meetings, parent communications, faculty meetings, and professional development sessions, school improvement plan • Curriculum documentation • Class schedule • Standards progression charts and PowerPoints

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Leadership	Teachers will: • Assist in the development of the school reading plan • Attend and lead PLCs with stakeholders to discuss the use of research-based strategies for reading instruction across all content areas • Serve on leadership teams to identify trends in teaching and learning that promote the development of reading in all content areas • Maintain fidelity of assessment systems by following NCDPI guidelines for benchmarking and progress monitoring found in the formative, diagnostic reading assessment FAQs and other resources on the North Caroina Read to Achieve LIveBinder • Plan for a 90-minute block of reading instruction in grades K-5 • Participate in professional development in the area of reading, especially across all content areas • Utilize common planning times with grade level, exceptional children's teachers, and instructional coaches to plan for reading instruction that addresses students' needs in all content areas • Use classroom data to inform instruction • Use available data during parent conferences to explain instructional levels and needs as well as resources found on the North Carolina Parent LiveBinder • Assist with summer reading camp • Review the Judge Manning Reading Report to ensure fidelity of data monitoring • Use resources found on the Read to Achieve LiveBinder, including The Big Ideas in Beginning Reading LiveBinder, the Written Response to Text LiveBinder, the Reading Camp LiveBinder, and the North Carolina Parent LIveBinder	• Meeting summaries • Agendas • Data reports • School reading plans • Professional development plans • PLC and grade-level notes • Judge Manning Report • Read to Achieve Livebinder (http://www.livebinders.com/play/play/850102#anchor

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Instruction	Teachers will: • Use ~~research~~ evidence-based materials, interventions, and strategies in the planning of ~~reading~~ literacy instruction in all content areas • ~~Teach reading and writing in response to text in at least~~ Provide a 90-minute block of uninterrupted ~~time~~ reading instruction ~~in grades K-5~~ for retained reading students • Teach reading and writing in response to text in grades ~~6~~ K-12 to assist students in developing critical thinking skills in order to analyze and synthesize diverse texts • Use available data to inform instruction • Participate in PLCs to develop an understanding of current reading, teaching, and learning research • Use available resources to address the needs of students whose reading skills are below grade level, on grade level, and above grade level • ~~Develop and use PEP documents as a way to monitor the use of intervention strategies, use data to inform instruction, and record parent conferences and other communication~~ • Use the Multi Tiered System of Support (MTSS) problem-solving model, ~~(RtI)~~ in discussions about students in need of strategic and intensive support ~~as well as during the development of PEP documents~~ • Use complex texts and resources and selected text that exposes students to diverse cultures during reading instruction that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills development for all learners • Assist with ELOs to support the reading programs in school including content-area reading	• Meeting agendas • List of recommended materials, interventions, and strategies • PLC plans • Classroom schedule • Lesson plans for 90-minute block • ~~PEP documents~~ • ~~PEP meeting agendas~~ • ELO school schedule • ELO plans • Differentiated lesson plans that incorporate whole group, small group, and literacy stations for K-5 students • Professional development on diverse cultures and global understanding

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
	• Provide reading instruction in all content areas in grades ~~6~~ K-12that includes deeper thinking and response to text • Collaborate with other teachers to design instruction that meets the needs of all students • Plan and facilitate literacy instruction that incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy stations, and intensive intervention • Incorporate evidence-based instructional strategies during reading camp, transitional, and accelerated class visits • Participate in professional development provided by the K-3 Literacy Division for all areas of K-5 literacy instruction based on and aligned to the specific needs of each school • Increase vocabulary develop by teaching the connection of language among domains (math and science) so students can learn the interrelationship of concepts and skills • Teach a balance of informational text and literacy • Assist students in understanding the importance of reading in all content areas • Communicate consistently with parents/guardians on how they can assist students at home	

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Professional Development	Teachers will: • Communicate the school reading plan to stakeholders as it pertains to student policies and actions • Participate in professional development in the area of literacy that is high quality, job-embedded, ongoing, and research based for all teachers • Offer ~~trainings~~ support in the area of literacy to parents and community partners • Build capacity in the use of data to make informed decisions about personal professional development plans • Attend professional development in the use of complex texts, resources, and literacy-rich experiences that facilitate reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills development for all learners • Document the use of ~~research~~ evidence-based best practices in instructional planning • Utilize Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) as support for literacy instruction • Distribute and discuss literacy information to parents at school parent meetings to assist with reading at home and to reinforce skills addressed in reading camps • Utilize the list of professional development modules created by the K-3 Literacy Division (See Appendix E) to align with personal professional development needs • Participate in training on standards progressions and vertical alignment of standards • Ensure that literacy instruction for K-5 students incorporates whole group, small group, differentiated literacy instruction, and intensive intervention	• Meeting agendas • School reading plan • Meeting summaries • Training summaries and materials • ~~Professional development manuals~~ • Instructional plans • K-3 Literacy Division Professional Development listings • Parent Resource Book on Comprehension, Read to Achieve Brochures, Parent LiveBinder • District List of Master Literacy Trainers (MLTs) • Listing of Research-Based Literacy Strategies document • Professional development on diverse cultures and global understanding

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
	• Utilize evidence-based instructional strategies appropriate for classrooms, reading camps, transitional, and accelerated classes • Attend professional development trainings aligned to the specific needs of the school • Participate in professional development that promotes global understanding and effective communication skills for students	

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Assessment	Teachers will: • Embed authentic assessment within the instructional cycle • Monitor and maintain security of assessment materials and devices for required formative, diagnostic reading assessment system in grades K-3 • View the video tutorials and webinars on the process, procedures, and operation of all components of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment system • Review and analyze class summaries and probe details specific to ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment to identify student needs and inform instruction • Participate in professional development in the use of a balanced system of assessments including formative, benchmark, and summative assessments • Participate in the problem-solving model ~~(RtI)~~ (MTSS) to identify students that need additional reading support, including students who are in need of intensive support, core support, and those who are reading at advanced levels • ~~Progress monitor~~ Monitor the progress of students on a continuous basis in the area of reading • Use multiple sources of information including quantitative and qualitative data to make decisions and guide interventions and instruction for all students • Utilize the learning management system (HomeBase) for teacher and parent access to assessment data • Communicate continuously with parents/guardians on assessment results and instructional or interventional implications	• Teacher plans • Information, data, and resources located in HomeBase • Training agendas • Meeting summaries and materials • ~~Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI)~~ MTSS documentation • EOG, EOC, EVAAS, School Report Cards, Proficiency • Progress monitoring data • ~~Completed~~ Read to Achieve portfolios • ~~Completed~~ Read to Achieve ~~(alternate)~~ test • PLC agendas • Documentation of parent communications • Portfolio passages • Video on written response to text • Video tutorials and professional development • Documentation of required written response to text video viewing

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
	• Use the standardized portfolio system for third-grade students and students with a retained ~~third-grade~~ reading label ~~following summer reading camp~~ • Utilize the Read to Achieve (RtA) alternative test and/or the EOG retest ~~for use after EOG administration after summer reading camp, and/or at mid-year promotion for students in third/fourth transitional classes or accelerated classes~~ • Seek continued support, training, updates, and analysis on the implementation of the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment system as needed • Use reading portfolio passages to inform instruction on standards • Utilize the revised written response to text component of the assessment system to align to grade level standards • View the online training video to clarify the written response to text component	

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
Partnerships and Communication	Teachers will • Provide collaboration opportunities for all stakeholders • Send notification to parents/guardians to fulfill the written notification requirements of the NC Read to Achieve law • Collaborate with IHEs to provide opportunities for pre-service students to observe, ~~practice assessments~~, teach reading classes across all content areas, and develop and implement arts integration strategies for instruction • Provide families and community partners with information about the NCSCoS • Provide families and community partners with information about Read to Achieve legislation • Work with parent organizations to provide suggested opportunities for parent involvement, education, and communication • Discuss with parents available student data as it pertains to reading and the impact on learning in all content areas • Conference with parents regularly to discuss student progress towards instructional goals • Implement a class newsletter that provides parents and guardians with reading activities that can be completed at home to enhance reading instruction in all content areas • Collaborate with community organizations, business partners, civic and faith-based organizations, service organizations and families to promote reading achievement and to support school efforts for reading proficiency • Promote volunteerism of all partner stakeholders • Provide parent brochures and narrated PowerPoints to inform parents about literacy and Read to Achieve	• Webinars, websites, brochures, parent ~~nights~~ meetings • Meeting agendas and summaries • ~~Revised programs and~~ Documents related to pre-service teacher preparation • Reports and other documents demonstrating results of various collaborative efforts • Documentation of notification of parents in regards to NC Read to Achieve law • IHE documentation of pre-service student involvement in classrooms • Classroom volunteer logs • Class newsletters • NC Read to Achieve LiveBinder for Parents • Reading comprehension booklet • Narrated PowerPoints

Focus	Suggested Teacher Actions	Evidences
	• Inform parents and community partners information about Read to Achieve and the formative, diagnostic, reading assessment system • Encourage trainings in the area of reading for parents and community partners • Share and encourage the use of the Read to Achieve Parent LIveBinder (include link on class website) • Meet the needs of a culturally diverse population by providing interpreters at parent meetings • Utilize a variety of methods to communicate with parents such as newsletters, phone, messaging systems, email, text, and PowerSchool • Distribute and encourage the use of the reading comprehension booklet	

Appendix A: Literacy-Rich Instruction

Appendix A: Literacy-Rich Instruction K – 5

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Overall Organization of ELA Block	Significant amount of time, at least 50% of the school day, is allocated for integrated reading instruction. Reading instruction includes attention to: • oral language development and vocabulary • guided reading with strategy and skill development • read alouds with text-dependent questions and discussions <u>to build comprehension</u> • interactive, shared reading, partner reading, independent or emergent reading • phonological/phonemic awareness • beginning phonics instruction including sound-symbol correspondence, letter names • modeling of writing • interactive and shared writing • independent writing • the instructional cycle, including identifying need, brainstorming strategies, creating an action plan, assessing the effectiveness, and discussion of results • monitoring the progress of students in foundational skill development using the ~~mClass Reading 3D screener~~ <u>formative, diagnostic reading assessment</u>	Sufficient time, at least 90 uninterrupted minutes daily, for ELA block within the school day. Integrated reading instruction includes attention to: • guided reading with strategy and skill development • read alouds with text-dependent questions and discussion • comprehension skills • oral language development • independent, small group, and partner reading • word and language study including phonemic awareness, phonics, spelling, vocabulary and usage • modeling of writing in response to text • guided, interactive, independent, shared writing • teacher-student conferences • explicit instruction as well as literacy work stations • the instructional cycle, including identifying need, brainstorming strategies, creating an action plan, assessing the effectiveness, and discussion of results • monitoring the progress of students in foundational skill development using the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~	Sufficient time, at least 90 uninterrupted minutes, for the ELA block within the school day. Integrated reading instruction includes attention to: • guided reading with strategy and skill development • literature study • read alouds with text-dependent questions and discussion • comprehension skills • vocabulary and oral language development • independent, self-selected, partner, and small group reading • word and language study including spelling, vocabulary and usage • modeling of writing in response to text • independent writing, sharing, and conferencing • explicit instruction as well as literacy work stations • the instructional cycle, including identifying need, brainstorming strategies, creating an action plan, assessing the effectiveness, and discussion of results • <u>self-selected reading</u> • <u>teacher-student conferences</u> • <u>monitoring continued development of reading behaviors</u>

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
	• monitoring the development of reading behaviors using the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment ~~digital running records~~ • conference writing • literacy work stations • developing sight vocabulary • providing opportunities for retelling • providing targeted intervention	formative, diagnostic reading assessment screener • monitoring the development of reading behaviors using the ~~mClass Reading 3D~~ formative, diagnostic reading assessment digital running records • conference writing • self-selected reading • developing oral language • continuing to develop sight vocabulary • opportunities for retelling • providing targeted intervention	• providing targeted intervention

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Instructional Focus (Big Picture)	Literacy instruction includes attention to: • exploring and expanding language, building concepts through experience, discussion and play • building background knowledge and vocabulary • phonemic awareness including rhyming and segmenting sounds • systematic, explicit, developmentally appropriate phonics to include sound-symbol correspondence, onset-rime work • strategies for comprehension: predicting, central ideas, questioning, identifying schema, retelling, inferring, text features, structures, and author's purpose • fostering the motivation to read • building basic sight vocabulary • modeling writing in response to text • building beginning writing skills in response to text for a specific purpose (narrative, informational, and argumentative/explanatory, and opinion writing with intentional organization and specific details across genres) • helping emergent spellers use "inventive" spelling • communication skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language	Literacy instruction includes attention to: • grade level foundational skills as identified through the NCSCoS • building accuracy and fluency to support comprehension • building understanding of text features, text structure, literary devices, figurative language, and author's purpose • strategies for comprehension including predicting, central ideas, questioning, identifying schema, retelling/recounting, inferring, text features, text structures, and author's purpose • fostering the motivation to read • building academic and domain-specific vocabulary • modeling writing grounded in text • building beginning writing skills grounded in text for a specific purpose (narrative, explanation/informational, and opinion writing with intentional organization and specific details across genres) • spelling • writing in response to text • communication skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language • utilizing fiction and informational text	Literacy instruction that includes attention to: • strategies for comprehension including predicting, central ideas, questioning, identifying schema, summarizing, inferring, text features, structures, and author's purpose • utilizing fiction and informational text • building understanding of text features, text structure, literary devices, figurative language, and author's purpose • building accuracy and fluency to support grade level comprehension • word study and academic and domain-specific vocabulary development • fostering motivation to read • building writing skills grounded in text for a specific purpose (narrative, explanation/informational, and opinion writing with intentional organization and specific details across genres) • writing across all content areas • communication skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language • utilizing fiction and informational text • writing in response to text • reading across all content areas

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
	• handwriting, letter formation, spacing between word • utilizing fiction and informational text • reading across all content areas	• systematic, explicit, developmentally appropriate phonics to include sound-symbol correspondence, onset-rime work • building basic vocabulary • reading across all content areas	

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
English/Language Arts Instruction (Details)	Kindergarten literacy that includes: • explicit demonstration and modeling of the processes in literacy learning • collaborative conversations, posing a range of questions based on *Depth of Knowledge* and Close Reading practices during the ELA block • the use of diverse complex texts • teacher conferencing, listening and watching, then providing feedback • teacher prompting and providing scaffolding support for the gradual release of responsibility	Literacy instruction that includes: • explicit demonstration and modeling of the processes in literacy learning • collaborative conversations and discussions, posing a range of questions based on *Depth of Knowledge* and Close Reading practices during the ELA block • the use of diverse complex texts • teacher conferencing, listening and watching, then providing feedback • teacher prompting and providing scaffolding support for the gradual release of responsibility	Literacy instruction that includes: • explicit demonstration and modeling of the processes in literacy learning • collaborative discussions, posing a range of questions based on *Depth of Knowledge* and Close Reading practices during the ELA block • the use of diverse complex texts • teacher conferencing, listening and watching, then providing feedback • teacher prompting and providing scaffolding support for the gradual release of responsibility • building automaticity in the use of comprehension strategies in all content areas

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Independent Student Activities	Students working away from the teacher are provided • established routines that include what to do, as well as when, where and how to get help if needed • integration of literacy with opportunities for play • reading and writing activities which are engaging, interesting, and meaningful • opportunities to use technology and digital media • literacy work stations	Students working away from the teacher are provided • established routines that include what to do, as well as when, where and how to get help if needed • reading and writing activities that actively engage students with connected, meaningful text • opportunities to use technology and digital media • literacy work stations	Students working away from the teacher are provided • established routines and expectations that include what to do, as well as when, where and how to get help if needed • reading and writing activities that actively engage students with connected, meaningful, increasingly complex text • literacy learning that is engaging, interesting, meaningful • opportunities to use technology and digital media • literacy work stations

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Assessment Practices	Informing instruction in Kindergarten includes • a system for collecting and maintaining formative, diagnostic, and summative assessment information • ongoing and consistent assessment practices • evidence of using assessment practices to inform and differentiate instruction • benchmarking and ongoing progress monitoring using mClass Reading 3D • teacher observations, conferences, and anecdotal notes, in addition to formal assessments • mClass Reading 3D data analysis for determining effectiveness of instructional practices • using multiple data points and the problem-solving model to address student learning needs	Informing instruction includes • a system for collecting and maintaining formative, diagnostic, and summative assessment information • ongoing and consistent assessment practices • rubrics, checklists or scales that are linked to standards so that students understand what is valued • evidence of using assessment practices to inform and differentiate instruction • benchmarking and ongoing progress monitoring using mClass Reading 3D • teacher observations, conferences, and anecdotal notes, in addition to formal assessments • mClass Reading 3D data analysis for determining effectiveness of instruction • using multiple data points and the problem-solving model to address student learning needs	Informing instruction includes • a system for collecting and maintaining formative, diagnostic, and summative assessment information • ongoing and consistent assessment practices • rubrics, checklists, scoring guides, or scales that are linked to standards so that students understand what is valued and can self-assess • evidence of using assessment practices to inform and differentiate instruction • using multiple data points and the problem-solving model to address student learning needs

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Classroom Environment	A literacy-rich environment includes • a variety of high-quality books from all genres, displayed and easily accessible to students • daily standards and learning objectives are displayed • displayed print materials • accessible resources including word charts, word walls, and anchor charts • a safe and encouraging atmosphere, conducive to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language • literacy activities in which students read and write with purpose • established routines and procedures in which students know expectations	A literacy-rich environment includes • a variety of high-quality books from all genres, displayed and easily accessible to students • daily standards and learning objectives are displayed • accessible resources including word charts, word walls, and anchor charts • writing models and display of student writing • a safe and encouraging atmosphere, conducive to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language • authentic learning in which students read and write with purpose • established routines and procedures in which students know expectations	A literacy-rich environment includes • a variety of high-quality books from all genres, displayed and easily accessible to students • daily standards and learning objectives are displayed • accessible resources including word charts, word walls, and anchor charts • writing models and display of student writing • a safe and encouraging atmosphere, conducive to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language • authentic learning in which students read and write with purpose • established routines and procedures in which students know expectations

Emphasis	Kindergarten Classroom Suggested Actions	1st – 3rd Grade Classroom Suggested Actions	4th – 5th Grade Classroom Suggested Actions
Collegial Collaboration	Collaboration for • planning and consulting with other staff members • coordinated planning and follow through with support services staff to meet students' individual needs • communication and involvement with parent programs • ongoing professional development, grade level team meetings, PLC work, and data analysis to meet student needs • keeping abreast of current research and best practices	Collaboration for • planning and consulting with other staff members • coordinated planning and follow through with support services staff to meet students' individual needs • communication and involvement with parent programs • ongoing professional development, grade level team meetings, PLC work, and data analysis to meet student needs • keeping abreast of current research and best practices	Collaboration for • planning with and consulting with other staff members • coordinated planning and follow through with support services staff to meet students' individual needs • communication and involvement with parent programs • ongoing professional development, grade level team meetings, PLC work, and data analysis to meet student needs • keeping abreast of current research and best practices

Appendix A: Literacy-Rich Instruction 6-12

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
Text-based Evidence	ELA instruction includes attention to: • learning that is deeply connected to text • developing student habits in conversation and in writing for making arguments based on evidence	ELA instruction includes attention to: • learning that is deeply connected to text • developing student habits in conversation and in writing for making arguments based on evidence
Writing from Sources	ELA instruction includes attention to: • various written forms that draw evidence from the text to inform, explain, or make an argument	ELA instruction includes attention to: • various written forms that draw evidence from the text to inform, explain, or make an argument
Academic Vocabulary	ELA instruction includes attention to: • strategic focus on general academic terms and less on domain specific terms, building the ability to access more complex texts across disciplines and in later grades	ELA instruction includes attention to: • strategic focus on general academic terms and less on domain specific terms, building the ability to access more complex texts across disciplines and in later grades
Increasing Text Complexity Over Time	ELA instruction includes attention to: • a "step" of growth on the "staircase" of complexity in each grade level • scaffolding, supports for access to complex texts for all	ELA instruction includes attention to: • a "step" of growth on the "staircase" of complexity in each grade level • scaffolding and supports for access to complex texts for all
Close Reading	ELA instruction includes attention to: • time and instructional support to grapple with rich texts worthy of rereading • short texts that enable students to participate in close analysis of more demanding text. • time to read and re-read deliberately and slowly to probe and ponder the meaning of individual words, the order in which sentences unfold, and the development of ideas over the course of the text	ELA instruction includes attention to: • time and instructional support to grapple with rich texts worthy of rereading • short texts that enable students to participate in close analysis of more demanding text. • time to read and re-read deliberately and slowly to probe and ponder the meaning of individual words, the order in which sentences unfold, and the development of ideas over the course of the text

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
Balance of informational and Literary Texts	ELA instruction includes attention to the fact that: • 50% of texts read are informational in grades K-5, • in ELA instruction 6-12, the focus should be on literature and literary non-fiction	ELA instruction includes attention to the fact that: • 50% of texts read are informational in grades K-5, • in ELA instruction 6-12, the focus should be on literature and literary non-fiction
Balance of Writing	ELA instruction includes attention to: • routine writing in a variety of forms • notes, summaries, short responses, on-demand, short research, process writing, and digital texts where appropriate • use of mentor texts to model style, structure, content, and literacy devices	ELA instruction includes attention to: • routine writing in a variety of forms • notes, summaries, short responses, on-demand, short research, process writing, and digital texts where appropriate • use of mentor texts to model style, structure, content, and literacy devices
Integration of Reading in the Content Areas	Reading in all content areas includes attention to: • close reading as the active process used to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension of text o rereading that requires answers to text-dependent questions, allowing students to think about the text, the author's purpose, the structure and flow of the text o focused rereading that requires complex thinking about what the author said, comparing what the student already knows, believes, and thinks • explicit academic vocabulary instruction the specialized words and phrases that have specific meanings within a course that are critical to understanding the concepts of the content	Reading in all content areas includes attention to: • close reading as the active process used to uncover layers of meaning that lead to deep comprehension of text o rereading that requires answers to text-dependent questions, allowing students to think about the text, the author's purpose, the structure and flow of the text o focused rereading that requires complex thinking about what the author said, comparing what the student already knows, believes, and thinks • explicit academic vocabulary instruction the specialized words and phrases that have specific meanings within a course that are critical to understanding the concepts of the content

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
Close Reading Instruction for Comprehension of Complex Text	Close reading complex text instruction includes attention to: • rereading, each time with a specific purpose o first read – determining what a text says o second read – determining how a text works o third read – evaluating the quality and value of the text, connecting it to other texts and experiences • text-dependent questions, with the teacher gradually releasing responsibility, developing the students' capacity to observe and analyze, such as o What is the author telling me here? o Are there any hard or important words? o What does the author want me to understand? o How does the author play with language to add to meaning? o Who is speaking in the passage? o Who is the audience to whom the narrator is speaking? o What is the first thing that jumps out at me? Why? o What's the next thing I notice? Are these 2 things connected? How? Do they seem to be saying different things? o What seems important here? Why? o What does the author mean by _____? What exact words lead me to this meaning? o Is the author trying to convince me of something? What? How do I know? o Is there something missing from this passage that I expected to find? Why might the author have left this out?	Close reading complex text instruction includes attention to: • rereading, each time with a specific purpose o first read – determining what a text says o second read – determining how a text works o third read – evaluating the quality and value of the text, connecting it to other texts and experiences • text-dependent questions , with the teacher gradually releasing responsibility, developing the students' capacity to observe and analyze, such as o What is the author telling me here? o Are there any hard or important words? o What does the author want me to understand? o How does the author play with language to add to meaning? o Who is speaking in the passage? o Who is the audience to whom the narrator is speaking? o What is the first thing that jumps out at me? Why? o What's the next thing I notice? Are these 2 things connected? How? Do they seem to be saying different things? o What seems important here? Why? o What does the author mean by _____? What exact words lead me to this meaning? o Is the author trying to convince me of something? What? How do I know? o Is there something missing from this passage that I expected to find? Why might the author have left this out?

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
	○ Is there anything that could have been explained more thoroughly for greater clarity? ○ Is there a message or main idea? What in the text led me to this conclusion? ○ How does this sentence/passage fit into the text as a whole? • Author's craft, focusing questioning on ○ imagery, including comparisons using similes, metaphors, personification, figurative language, symbolism ○ word choice ○ tone and voice ○ sentence structure including short sentences, long sentences, sentence fragments, questions, and the importance of word order	○ Is there anything that could have been explained more thoroughly for greater clarity? ○ Is there a message or main idea? What in the ○ text led me to this conclusion? ○ How does this sentence/passage fit into the text as a whole? • Author's craft, focusing questioning on ○ imagery, including comparisons using similes, metaphors, personification, figurative language, symbolism ○ word choice ○ tone and voice ○ sentence structure including short sentences, long sentences, sentence fragments, questions, and the importance of word order
Close Reading Planning and Practice	Planning for Close Reading in the content areas may include these steps: • choosing complex texts that merit critical attention from students including ○ quantitative complexity such as readability levels and qualitative complexity such as knowledge demands, or educational purpose ○ determination, if the text is long, of the portion to address • planning the sequence of readings including determining the number of lessons to devote to the reading and who is responsible for each reading ○ planning text-dependent questions that require references to the text for evidence. (For example, what words/phrases does the author use to describe the main character?)	Planning for Close Reading in the content areas may include these steps: • choosing complex texts that merit critical attention from students including ○ quantitative complexity such as readability levels and qualitative complexity such as knowledge demands, or educational purpose ○ determination, if the text is long, of the portion to address • planning the sequence of readings including determining the number of lessons to devote to the reading and who is responsible for each reading ○ planning text-dependent questions that require references to the text for evidence. (For example, what words/phrases does the author use to describe the main character?)

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
	○ considering the increasing level of thought required by the text-dependent questions, with subsequent reading requiring deeper thinking, progressing from a general understanding of the text to understanding vocabulary, aspects of text structure, and the formation of opinions and arguments ○ avoiding frontloading information about the text so that students gather such information from the text on their own • planning how students will interact with the text including ○ text-dependent questions that can be answered as a whole class or in small groups, with annotations for support ○ written responses at the conclusion of the close reading that provide an assessment of student understanding • engaging students in close reading to include ○ anticipation of frustration/struggle with the text as essential information is gleaned, leading to deeper thinking and understanding by students • gradual promotion of the ability to read complex texts independently	○ considering the increasing level of thought required by the text-dependent questions, with subsequent reading requiring deeper thinking, progressing from a general understanding of the text to understanding vocabulary, aspects of text structure, and the formation of opinions and arguments ○ avoiding frontloading information about the text so that students gather such information from the text on their own • planning how students will interact with the text including ○ text-dependent questions that can be answered as a whole class or in small groups, with annotations for support ○ written responses at the conclusion of the close reading that provide an assessment of student understanding • engaging students in close reading to include ○ anticipation of frustration/struggle with the text as essential information is gleaned, leading to deeper thinking and understanding by students gradual promotion of the ability to read complex texts independently
Academic Vocabulary Instruction	Reading in the content areas includes attention to • specialized vocabulary for a specific content area • non-specialized academic vocabulary that can be found across content areas in multiple contexts	Reading in the content areas includes attention to • specialized vocabulary for a specific content area • non-specialized academic vocabulary that can be found across content areas in multiple contexts

Emphasis in ELA	6th – 8th Grade Suggested Actions	9th – 12th Grade Suggested Actions
	• words and phrases that describe how students are expected to demonstrate knowledge, such as clarify or summarize • steps for teaching academic vocabulary may include o initially providing a description, explanation, or example as opposed to a formal definition o students generating their own descriptions, explanations, or examples o students representing each term or phrase using a graphic, drawing, or picture o students keeping an academic vocabulary notebook o periodically reviewing terms and phrases o providing activities that add to the vocabulary knowledge base o use of graphics, interactive and/or sensory instructional supports (anchor charts, word walls, digital resources, graphic organizers)	• words and phrases that describe how students are expected to demonstrate knowledge, such as clarify or summarize • steps for teaching academic vocabulary may include o initially providing a description, explanation, or example as opposed to a formal definition o students generating their own descriptions, explanations, or examples o students representing each term or phrase using a graphic, drawing, or picture o students keeping an academic vocabulary notebook o periodically reviewing terms and phrases o providing activities that add to the vocabulary knowledge base o use of graphics, interactive and/or sensory instructional supports (anchor charts, word walls, digital resources, graphic organizers)

Appendix B:
What to Ask About Literacy Instruction

Appendix B: WHAT TO ASK ABOUT LITERACY INSTRUCTION

This is a tool for dialogue between administrators, literacy coaches, and classroom teachers. This can be used with teachers in Grades K-5.

Focus	Questions to Ask	Notes/Next Steps
Overall Organization of ELA Block	1) How would you describe your ELA block? 2) How much time do you focus on ELA instruction? 3) What components (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language) do you focus on daily? 4) What goals do you have for your students as you plan instruction in ELA? 5) How do you organize your ELA block to maximize student learning?	
Instructional Grouping	1) How do you group your students for reading instruction? 2) What data do you use to inform your grouping and instruction? 3) How often do you meet with each group of students? 4) Are your students able to move from group to group? 5) What do you base this on? 6) How often do you conference with individual students? Share with me what that conference might look like and sound like. 7) How much time do you spend teaching in whole group? Small group? Partner?	
Instructional Focus	1) What strategies and interventions have you used that are successful for your students? 2) How do you integrate comprehension strategies into content areas? 3) What strategies do you use to build students' comprehension skills? 4) How do you incorporate writing into your small group reading instruction? 5) What areas of reading instruction do you feel you need to focus on more?	

Focus	Questions to Ask	Notes/Next Steps
	6) In what areas do you feel you need more professional development?	
ELA Instruction	1) How do you support a student that is having difficulty with a skill or strategy? 2) What types of questions do you ask students during read alouds? Small group? 3) How do you determine when students are not progressing?	
Independent Student Activities	1) What does independent reading time look like? 2) What kids of reading/literacy learning experiences are students engaged in? 3) How do you monitor independent student experiences?	
Assessment Practices	1) What assessments and screeners do you use to assess students' reading and writing? 2) How often do you use those assessment tools? 3) How do you use the data to inform instruction? Group students? Monitor students' progress? Set goals?	
Classroom Environment	1) Share with me why you have your room arranged this way. 2) What works in your classroom environment? 3) What would you change about your classroom environment? 4) How do you use Literacy Stations?	
Collegial Collaboration	1) In what ways do you communicate and work with: • Parents/guardians? • Colleagues? • Support staff? • Special Education teachers? • Reading Coaches? 2) Have you collaborated with any civic, faith-based, community organizations, and businesses to promote reading proficiency?	

Appendix C:
90-Minute Literacy Block Examples

<table>
<tr><th colspan="8">Example: 90 minute Reading Block with Additional Time for Immediate Intensive Intervention (iii)</th></tr>
<tr><th>Instruction</th><th>Possible Time</th><th colspan="5">Class Configuration</th><th>Examples of Teacher-Led Instruction</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="7">90 minutes daily</td><td>20 - 30 minutes</td><td colspan="5">Whole Group</td><td>Implement Comprehensive Core Reading Program (CCRP)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="6">60 - 70 minutes</td><td colspan="5">Phonemic Awareness:
• Blending & Segmenting word parts & sounds in words
Phonics & Fluency:
• Letter-sound correspondence
• Blending words
• Choral reading decodable book
Vocabulary & Comprehension:
• Robust vocabulary instruction
• Pre-reading strategies
• During reading strategies
• Post reading strategies</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="5">Differentiated Instruction-
Small Groups
(Group 1 - 4**)</td><td>Implement CCRP resources and supplemental materials/programs</td></tr>
<tr><td>*15 minutes for each group</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>Th</td><td>F</td><td>Group 1: segment sounds with Elkonin boxes gradually adding letters representing those sounds throughout the week.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Session 1
(15 min)</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>Group 2: word building with letters & pocket chart, read decodable book including words built. Culminating with fluent reading of decodable text without teacher support.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Session 2
(15 min)</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>2</td><td>Group 3: read decodable book practicing blending words introduced in whole group, and fluent reading. Culminating with shared reading related to theme on the students' instructional level focusing on blending words, vocabulary, and use of comprehension strategies modeled in whole group.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Session 3
(15 min)</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>Group 4: shared reading related to theme with a book on the students' instructional level focusing on vocabulary and use of comprehension strategies modeled in whole group.</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Additional Reading Support</td><td rowspan="2">20 minutes</td><td colspan="5" rowspan="2">Immediate Intensive Intervention (iii):

Group 1 receives additional time, smaller group size, and very explicit instruction to meet their intensive intervention needs on a daily basis.</td><td>Supplemental and/or intensive intervention materials/programs</td></tr>
<tr><td>-Apply blending words previously taught in complete sentences that include known high frequency words.
-Apply blending strategies using decodable text gradually releasing teacher support.</td></tr>
</table>

Protected Literacy Block Guide

(Created by the DST Elementary Coaching Team)

Whole-Group Instruction (20-25 min)				
Text Focus:		*Strategy/Skill Focus:*		
M	**T**	**W**	**Th**	**F**

Small-Group Reading Instruction (20 min per group and rotate)			**Comprehension/Writing**
			Strategy/Skill Focus:
Leveled Text: *Strategy/Skill:* **M** **T** **W** **Th** **F**	*Leveled Text:* *Strategy/Skill:* **M** **T** **W** **Th** **F**	*Leveled Text:* *Strategy/Skill:* **M** **T** **W** **Th** **F**	**Fluency Focus:** **Vocabulary Focus:** **Phonics Application:** **Phonemic Awareness Application:**

Appendix D:
Glossary of Terms

Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

Benchmark Assessment	Short tests administered throughout the school year that give teachers immediate feedback on how students are meeting academic standards
Common Core State Standards	A set of educational standards to help teachers ensure their students have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful by providing clear goals for student learning
Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)	Opportunities provided to students by districts and schools for learning outside of the regular school day For example, afterschool tutoring sessions or Saturday School
End-of-Course Exams (EOCs)	Exams given to high school students in various subject areas to measure proficiency
End-of-Grade Tests (EOGs)	Tests given to students in Grades 3-8 to determine proficiency in reading, math, and science. Science end of grade tests are given to students in Grades 5 and 8
Education Value Added Assessment System (EVAAS)	A customized software system available to all North Carolina districts that provides North Carolina's teachers with tools to improve student learning, reflect on their teaching practice, and improve their own effectiveness
Essential Standards	A set of standards in content areas that provide clear goals for student learning
Excellent Public Schools Act (EPSA)	A budget act passed by the General Assembly in 2012 that includes legislation about reading proficiency for students in grades K-3 (EPSA)
Extended Content Standards	A set of alternate achievement standards that show a clear link to content standards for a particular grade, although grade level content may be reduced in complexity or modified to reflect pre-requisite skills
Formative Assessment	A process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve intended instructional outcomes
House Bill 950/S.L. 2012-142 Section 7A	The 2012-13 state budget bill which includes the Excellent Public Schools Act

HomeBase	HomeBase is a statewide, instructional improvement (IIS) and student information system (SIS) for teachers, students, parents and administrators.
Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs)	Public and private colleges and universities
Local Education Agency (LEAs)	Local school districts
mClass Reading 3D	A formative diagnostic reading assessment system adopted by the State Board of Education to facilitate early grades reading proficiency
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI)	State government agency that provides services and supports to LEAs, schools, IHEs, parents and community organizations to improve student achievement
North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCoS)	Set of standards (Common Core State Standards and the Essential Standards) used by teachers to provide clear goals for student learning
Personal Education Plan (PEP)	A personal learning plan for students that are reading and/or working below grade level in reading and math used to document weak skill areas, interventions, and parent contacts
Parent Teacher Organization/Association (PTO, PTA)	Parent groups that support schools
Progress Monitoring	An ongoing scientifically-based practice embedded in instruction to determine the effectiveness of teaching and learning
Read to Achieve (RtA)	A component of the Excellent Public Schools Act that focuses on early grades reading proficiency
Research-Based	A connection between research recommendations and instructional practice

Responsiveness to Instruction (RtI)	A problem solving model that integrates assessment and intervention within a three-tiered system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavior problems by identifying students at risk for poor learning outcomes, monitor student progress, provide evidence-based interventions and adjust the intensity and nature of those interventions depending on a student's responsiveness
Summative Assessment	Cumulative evaluations used to measure student growth after instruction, generally given at the end of a course in order to determine whether long term learning goals have been met

Appendix E:
K-3 Literacy Professional Development

K – 3 Literacy Professional Development Offerings

The K-3 Literacy Division offers the following professional development for North Carolina educators. We customize to address district or school requests. Please contact your Regional Consultant to schedule sessions and to answer questions about professional development options.

Literacy Instruction

Spiraling Standards

How do standards spiral up? How do we use them as the basis for everything we teach? Begin to understand how to use the standards to develop growth in students already reading at or above grade level.

Progress Monitoring IS Instruction

How do we embed progress monitoring into instruction? How should we analyze progress monitoring data to determine next steps for instruction? Begin to understand how progress monitoring is about changing instruction to meet a student at the point of need.

Intentional Planning

How do teachers use assessment data, formative and summative, to group children for reading and then plan small group instruction?

Visual Literacy and Anchor Charts

Why is visual literacy important? Learn how creating an anchor chart during instruction creates a visual link to the learning experience. The chart then serves as a trigger, helping the brain recall the strategy, procedure, genre, or skill taught in the lesson. This simple instructional aid fosters student independence and depth of knowledge.

MSV for Instruction

How should MSV guide instruction? Learn how analyzing reading errors can pinpoint instruction and turn error patterns into targeted teaching and learning to meet the specific needs of students.

Wondrous Words – Vocabulary

What does the research say about vocabulary instruction? Leading experts agree that there is a direct correlation between vocabulary and comprehension. Understand how morphology and vocabulary instruction based on literature and informational texts must be continuously integrated into instruction. Learn simple strategies for building vocabulary and increasing comprehension in spoken and written communication.

Vocabulary – Facts and Actions and Applications

Founded in the work of Dr. Elfrieda Hiebert, understand the science of vocabulary development and apply paradigm-shifting research to classroom practice. Explore rich open source resources at Dr. Hiebert's TextProject.org and discover how vocabulary is the key to comprehension and the acquisition of knowledge.

Read & Think Aloud: Writing Is Thinking with a Pencil

Through modeling, learn how to use Read Alouds and Think Alouds to teach children to respond to text. Effective read alouds in early childhood settings support language development, comprehension, vocabulary, and overall literacy development. Learn how to develop a read aloud to specifically support thinking and comprehension.

Responding to Text in Kindergarten and First Grade

How do we advance our youngest learners to higher levels of thinking on the continuum of comprehension? Tie retell, oral comprehension, and writing in response to text directly to vocabulary and comprehension instruction. Understand how oral language development leads to written response to text at the highest level of understanding. Confirm how to use read alouds and oral language to increase text complexity.

Written Response to Text

Why do we need to include writing in response to text in instruction? Why must writing in response to reading be explicitly taught? If the focus is only on fluency and accuracy, then comprehension, the purpose of reading, is left out. This is the MSV of written comprehension.

Differentiated Work Stations

Just what is differentiation? How does differentiation determine the content, the process for learning, and the ways students show what they've learned? Begin planning for differentiated literacy stations.

Using iPads for More than Assessing

Discover ideas and applications for incorporating digital learning into all levels of literacy instruction. Explore innovative methodology that increases student engagement, enhances learning, and joins technology and instruction for the 21st Century learner.

iPads in the Classroom

How do I choose the apps that best fit my students' needs as determined by data? How do I evaluate an app to determine the best fit for independent and guided practice in my literacy instruction? How do I move from print to digital versions of a book? Walk through the process for determining the right app for each child's needs.

Developing Deeper Thought

What is deeper thought? When and how do it occur? How do we cultivate depth of thought in our students? How is written response really an indication of deeper thought processes? Make connections and understand the relationship between deep thinking and written thought.

Creating Text Dependent Questions: Read Aloud and Beyond

What are text dependent questions? How do text dependent questions address the standards? Why is it important for students to learn to use both literal thinking and inferencing to demonstrate that knowledge is now their own? Take a deep dive into creating questions for close reading. Teach children to arrive at conclusions rather than copying answers from the text.

Thinking Made Visible for Our Youngest Writers

What is the importance of structured talk for young writers? What purpose can drawing serve in writing? Explore early writing development and the connection to oral language. Understand the value of read alouds for building and supporting young writers.

Building Comprehension Through the Use of Retell, Recount, and Summarize

How do the skills of retell, recount, and summarize develop as the standards progress through the grade levels? How are retell, recount, and summarize essential in the development of oral language, speaking, listening, and vocabulary skills? Learn how to support this critical development in instruction.

Growing Lovers of Words

What is word consciousness? How do we teach students to appreciate words? How is vocabulary learned? Learn strategies that lead to word consciousness. Explore strategies for teaching multiple meaning words and cementing new vocabulary use.

mClass:Reading 3D

R3D Basics for New Teachers

Are there new teachers in your building? Is a teacher moving from a higher grade to a K, 1, 2, or 3 classroom? In this overview session, make connections to the foundational skills of reading, practice administration procedures, and discuss the use of data to guide instruction. Explore related resources for each assessment as well as practical applications such as time management, organization, and materials for the classroom. For new teachers, this is designed as a 2-day training but can be customized for 1 day.

R3D Refresher

Has it been a while since you were trained in how to administer the Reading 3D diagnostic assessments? Consistency in scoring is vital to ensuring both growth and instructional focus. Review scoring rules and practice administering measures to build assessment fidelity. Explore related resources for each assessment and practical applications for the classroom.

Understanding Data

Just what does Reading 3D tell me about my students? Understand reports, analyze data, and learn how to jump back to instruct a child at the point of need.

Understanding Data for Guiding Reading

Struggling with determining small groups for reading? Learn how to use Reading 3D data to form instructional reading groups, begin to understand the structure of guiding readers, and create reading lessons based on data. Acquire resources to enhance learning in the reading block.

Understanding Data for Driving Instruction

I've got Reading 3D data. Now what should I do? Work with Reading 3D web reports to gain insight into students' strengths and weaknesses for instructional decisions. Develop an understanding for the Now What? Tools and how to effectively use them for communication with parents, working with small groups and identifying key areas of concern in various student probes.

Progress Monitoring Basics

What are the components of progress monitoring? How should they be connected with instruction? How do I begin to manage it all?

Instructional Management for Progress Monitoring: Give Me Five

Have you ever said 'I can't progress monitor because I just don't have enough time?' See how progress monitoring connects directly to instruction, and gain ideas for managing the process in the instructional day. Learn how to embed progress monitoring into instruction so that it is seamless and a natural part of classroom practice. Understand the roles of classroom management, behavior management, and instructional management in embedding progress monitoring.

Understanding MSV

What is MSV? Why is MSV important? Practice capturing reading errors in the running record and then code MSV with a device. Begin to see error patterns and identify instructional frameworks to support each child in becoming a more fluent and accurate reader.

Written Comprehension Scoring Fidelity

Why is written comprehension important? Work collaboratively to build consensus in scoring practice with student writing samples. Using writing as a tool to respond to reading,

Read to Achieve

Components of the RtA Legislation

What are the components of the RtA legislation? Understand RtA background and recent updates from the General Assembly. Use the RtA Guidebook for determining K-3 implementation.

90-Minute Block

What does the RtA legislation say about 90 minutes of literacy instruction? What are the components of a 90-minute block? Discover the relationship between academic growth, the right amount of instructional time, and the quality of instruction.

Read to Achieve, a Judge, and Guiding Instruction

How should all the components of Read to Achieve guide instruction? What does a judge have to say about teaching and learning? Understand portfolio passages as formative assessment.

Differentiating Instruction for Guided Reading Groups

How should data be used in determining small group reading instruction? How do I differentiate for reading levels of my students as well as for the skills they need? What does a reading level really mean? Gain a greater understanding of the characteristics of guided reading levels and how to organize and manage all the levels of readers for small group instruction.

Leadership

Understanding Reading 3D Data for Administrators

Which Reading 3D reports give me what information? How do I find school-wide, grade level, and teacher-specific data? Learn how to see data that a teacher sees and how understanding that data reveals instructional practices.

Instructional Leadership

Leaders use data to inform school decisions. What data should I use? What should an effective instructional leader do with data? Learn ways to use Reading 3D data to communicate with teachers and parents about specific student needs.

Digital Walk-Throughs

Develop procedures and purposes for walk-throughs using a touchscreen device. See how data from quick walk-throughs can determine a focus for PLCs and for PD. Create your own digital walk-through.

Appendix F:
References and Resources

Appendix F: References and Resources

NCDPI K-3 Literacy Division
Webpage: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/k-3literacy/
NC Read to Achieve Livebinder: http://www.livebinders.com/play/play?id=850102

NCDPI ELA Division
Webpage: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/
Livebinder: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/livebinders/

NC Common Core: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/core-explained/

North Carolina Standard Course of Study: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/

NC Read to Achieve Guidebook: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/k-3literacy/resources/guidebook.pdf

Excellent Public Schools Act: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/k-3literacy/resources/ps-act.pdf

Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education State Comprehensive Literacy Plan
http://www.dese.mo.gov/divimprove/curriculum/commarts/documents/cur-ela-state-literacy-plan-0712.pdf

Florida Department of Education, Just Read, Florida!: http://www.justreadflorida.com/

Florida Center for Reading Research: http://www.fcrr.org/for-researchers/reading.asp

SEDL: http://www.sedl.org/

District and School Transformation: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/schooltransformation/

NC State Literacy Plan: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/languagearts/

NC Teacher Standards: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/humanresources/district-personnel/evaluation/standardsteacher.pdf

NC Instructional Leader Standards: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/humanresources/district-personnel/evaluation/standardsadmin.pdf

Center on Instruction, Florida State University: http://www.centeroninstruction.org/bringing-literacy-strategies-into-content-instruction

NC State College of Education Research Briefs: http://www.ncpublicschools.org/

Ed Leadership – ASCD: http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership.aspx

SERVE CENTER at THE UNIVERSITY of NORTH CAROLINA at GREENSBORO

Read to Achieve Evaluation Year Two: An Evaluation of the Implementation of Read to Achieve Assessment and Reading Camp

Conducted for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

December 2015

Prepared by:
Jessica Anderson, M.P.P.
Bryan Hutchins, M.A.
Robin Howse, PhD
Lynn Amwake, B.S.
Kathleen Dufford-Melendez, M.A.
Lucy Wynn, M.A.
Robyn Pitts, MEdT
Senior Advisor: Randy Penfield, PhD

SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Gateway University Research Park - Dixon Building
5900 Summit Avenue
Browns Summit, NC 27214
(800) 755-3277
www.serve.org

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements and Introduction

The SERVE Center at UNCG would like to thank Ms. Carolyn Guthrie and the Regional Consultants in the K-3 Literacy Division for their continued assistance with our evaluation efforts. Additionally, we are indebted to all the LEAs, schools and teachers who agreed to participate in our evaluation work; without their cooperation, we would be unable to provide ongoing information and guidance on the implementation of the Read to Achieve Program.

Evaluation

Based on a request from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina Greensboro (SERVE) conducted a second year of evaluation services on the Read to Achieve Program, looking at three specific areas:

1) Implementation of progress monitoring and benchmarking with mCLASS:Reading 3D, the state-selected formative assessment tool; How long do these assessments take to administer, who is conducting these assessments and how, and how are the results being used?
2) Implementation, perceptions and outcomes of reading camps; How were camps different than the previous year, what were lessons learned, how many students were promoted after camp, and what makes camps different than regular school year instruction?
3) Alignment of alternative assessments with the end-of-grade exams (EOG); How many LEA-level alternative assessments (i.e., local alternative assessments) are aligned with the EOG, are there discrepancies between assessments and why?

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide information to NCDPI on specific areas of the program in order to guide future policy and programmatic decisions.

Overview of the Read to Achieve Program

The Read to Achieve Program is a part of the Excellent Public Schools Act, which became law in July 2012 and was applied to all schools at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year. The intent of the Act is to improve reading achievement in public schools, with a focus on implementing evidence-based instructional practices that help with reading development.

There are seven components of the NC Read to Achieve Legislation:

1. Comprehensive Plan for Reading Achievement
2. Developmental Screening and Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA)
3. Facilitating Early Grade Reading Proficiency

4. Elimination of Social Promotion
5. Successful Reading Development for Retained Students
6. Parent/Guardian Notification
7. Accountability Measures

Read to Achieve Implementation Background and Timeline Overview

The Read to Achieve Program, as part of the Excellent Public Schools Act, became law in July 2012. During the 2012-2013 school year, NCDPI purchased and distributed materials and began training approximately 23,000 teachers statewide on the requirements of the law and the implementation plan for the state. By the 2013-2014 school year, approximately 1,440 schools implemented mCLASS:Reading 3D, affecting about 477,000 students statewide. Shortly after initial implementation, NCDPI contracted with the SERVE Center to conduct focus groups with stakeholders across the state and report on initial thoughts, concerns, and promising aspects of the RtA legislation. The findings were reported to the Joint Legislation Education Oversight Committee last year. As a result of the 2014 report findings, NCDPI and the State Board of Education made adjustments, clarifications, and provided flexibility within the parameter of the law for the 2014-2015 school year. The Year 1 report can be accessed at http://www.serve.org/uploads/files/RtA%20_report_SERVE_9.5.14.pdf

One important finding from the Year One report was:

> *Unlike other components of Read to Achieve, many educators reported that [mCLASS: Reading 3D] has been sufficiently piloted in districts over multiple years resulting in a level of readiness for full implementation of this K-3 reading assessment system. There were, however, implementation challenges identified by respondents that need attention, mostly related to administering benchmarking and progress monitoring assessments and a perception that reading assessments are taking too much time from instruction.*

As a result of this finding, NCDPI again contracted with the SERVE Center to further examine teacher perceptions and assessment processes of mCLASS:Reading 3D in classrooms. It is the intent of this report to inform NCDPI of teacher perceptions on mCLASS:Reading 3D so that NCDPI may identify incongruences between perceptions and policy to better inform professional development. It is intended that discrepancies may be identified and addressed to improve Read to Achieve implementation. While this report documents the findings from data gathered in the beginning of 2015, NCDPI has continued to provide professional development over the following year. Therefore, some of these findings may have already been addressed through onsite visits, regional meetings, and continued professional development.

It is important to understand implementation of such a wide-scale reading program is a "complex and often drawn-out process that should not be thought of as a single event" (Greenhalgh, Glenn, Bate, Kyriakidou, Macfarlane, & Peacock (2004, p 11).[1] To best read the findings of this report, it is important to understand implementation science and the many stages and factors that influence success. According to the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), there are six stages of implementation, each with unique characteristics—(1) Exploration; (2) Installation; (3) Initial Implementation; (4) Full Implementation; (5) Innovation; and (6) Sustainability (NIRN, n.d.).[2] Read to Achieve is currently in stage four of the six stage process. Research suggests that the Full Implementation stage requires 2-4 years to complete (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, & Wallace, 2009).[3] RtA was fully implemented during the 2013-2014 school year, with data collection for this report occurring primarily in the winter of 2015, still in early part of Year 2 of implementation.

NCDPI continues to provide training and technical assistance to LEAs and schools across the state through Regional Consultants, as well as online tools and regular email updates for administrators and teachers. There are nine regional consultants, one assigned to each State Board of Education (SBE) defined district and one to charter schools. These Read to Achieve implementation experts work with LEA-level staff, as well as school-level personnel in all areas of the state, particularly those struggling with implementation and those who request assistance. Additionally, Ms. Carolyn Guthrie, Director of K-3 Literacy at NCDPI, works with LEAs and individuals from around the state who have questions about legislative requirements and reporting obligations, as well as any other technical assistance they may need, with a particular focus on low-performing schools and LEAs.

SERVE briefed the K-3 Literacy Division, as the information in this document was being gathered, on the initial findings as the 2014-15 school year was coming to a close. The K-3 team began concerted efforts to change the trajectory of the initial SERVE findings concerning

---

[1] Greenhalgh, T., Glenn, R., Bate, P. Kyriakidou, O., Macfarlane, F., & Peacock, R. (2004). *How to spread good ideas: A systematic review of the literature on diffusion, dissemination, and sustainability of innovations in health service delivery and organization.* Retrieved, December 17, 2015, from http://www.nets.nihr.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/82434/ES-08-1201-038.pdf.

[2] National Implementation Research Network. (n.d.). *Implementation states.* Learn implementation: Active implementation. Retrieved, December 17, 2015, from http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-stages.

[3] Fixsen, D. L, Blase, K. A, Naoom, S. F., & Wallace, F. (2009). Core implementation components. *Research on Social Work Practice, 19*(5), 531-540.

the time teachers were spending formatively and diagnostically assessing students. Since the data in this document were gathered, the K-3 team has addressed progress monitoring with significant professional development in all 8 regions of the State. Professional development has centered on progress monitoring as a tool for teachers to know in a timely manner if instruction is meeting the needs of students, to ensure that students are continuing to grow in reading comprehension and foundational reading skills, and to make adjustments to instruction if the results indicate no growth with the current instruction. The K-3 team has directed efforts toward helping teachers and administrators understand best practices for embedding progress monitoring in the instructional cycle so that minimal instructional time is lost. Even though progress monitoring professional development is customized to meet the needs of particular schools and districts, the central focus in all eight regions has involved showing teachers how to concentrate on a few students every day instead of following a strict calendar with specific progress monitoring days. Commonly called "Give Me 5," this professional development is intended to change the way teachers understand and use progress monitoring as a method to check on the effects of current instruction. In the 2015-2016 school year, teachers are receiving training on how to embed formative assessments into daily instruction by focusing on five or fewer students a day, as well as to value the importance of always knowing where all children are on the learning continuum and if they are making progress. K-3 Literacy Division staff hope that concerns about "time away from instruction" will dissipate among North Carolina teachers as they understand, implement, and embed progress monitoring into their daily formative instructional routine.

mCLASS:Reading 3D

As part of the Read to Achieve legislation, the state is required to facilitate early grade reading proficiency through the use of valid and reliable formative and diagnostic reading assessments in grades K-3. The state selected mCLASS:Reading 3D as the state-wide assessment system for all K-3 classroom teachers. There have been questions from educators and the SBE as to how long the assessments in mCLASS:Reading 3D are taking teachers and if students are losing too much instructional time or time spent on other educational activities. Additionally, there are questions about how the results of these formative assessments are used and whether they are being used to modify and tailor instruction for individual students' needs.

Reading Camp

All 3rd grade students who are not promoted to the 4th grade under the RtA legislation are eligible to participate in a reading camp administered at the LEA level. These camps usually occur during the summer, except for year-round schools, where these camps are held during intercessions. Students are given intensive reading instruction for at least 72 hours for no fewer

than three weeks if attending schools with a traditional calendar. It is of interest whether students who attend reading camp are being promoted to 4th grade and/or are making gains in reading.

Local Alternative Assessments

As part of the Read to Achieve legislation, all students are required to demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade in order to be promoted to 4th grade. Students must demonstrate reading proficiency by taking and passing a state-approved standardized test of reading comprehension. The Read to Achieve legislation gives the SBE authority to approve local alternative assessments that 3rd grade students can take if they do not pass state assessments. In order for a local alternative assessment to be considered for approval by the SBE, each LEA that wants to use a local alternative assessment has to request formal approval from the SBE. In the 2013-2014 school year, the local board of education had to submit a statement indicating that the selected local alternative assessment generates valid and reliable scores that can be used to draw an accurate inference of whether a student is reading at or above 3rd grade level. After the 2013-2014 school year, the legislation changed and the State Board approved the achievement levels for each of the approved alternative assessments.

There have been concerns from educators and the SBE regarding the alignment of these local alternative assessments and the state assessments and whether the local alternative assessments provide an equitable pathway for promotion to 4th grade.

Part I: mCLASS:Reading 3D

Introduction

During the 2014-2015 school year, the SERVE Center at UNCG collected information on mCLASS:Reading 3D benchmarking and progress monitoring as a part of the overall evaluation. This evaluation was an extension of our inquiry into educators' perceptions of mCLASS:Reading 3D from the year 1 evaluation. It should be noted that superintendents, elementary supervisors, and teachers all indicated in year 1 of the evaluation that, despite complaints they may have about mCLASS:Reading 3D, they did not want the state to change assessments, as they would rather learn and get used to this assessment without having to start from square one again.

The SERVE Center employed various methods to collect information on the benchmarking and progress monitoring process—teacher logs, observations/interviews, and a teacher survey. Individual, detailed reports for each of the data collection methods are available in the Appendices.

Teacher logs. A group of teachers selected for observations were asked to record the number of minutes per day they spent conducting mCLASS:Reading 3D assessments over a four-week period. They were asked to record for two weeks during the benchmarking window and two weeks after the window closed if possible, but not all teachers were able to record during those windows (See Appendix A).

Observations/Interviews. During the MOY benchmarking window, classrooms and teachers were observed and interviewed to gain insight into the process for assessing students and to observe classroom activities while teachers were assessing students, as well as to understand teachers' perceptions of and attitudes toward mCLASS:Reading 3D. Shortly after the benchmarking window closed, a subsample of classrooms was visited again to observe the progress monitoring process and classroom activities while assessments took place (See Appendices B, C, and D).

Teacher survey. Almost 1,000 teachers across the state were surveyed (N=953) to better understand multiple aspects of the implementation of Read to Achieve and its effects on classrooms and teachers, including the benchmarking and progress monitoring process (See Appendix F).

While data collected from each method are similar, each one garnered slightly varied information that provided for greater understanding of the assessment process. What follows is a *summary* of the major findings related to benchmarking and progress monitoring. Findings are grouped into three areas of interest—(1) time required to administer mCLASS:Reading 3D during benchmarking and progress monitoring; (2) the environment in which mCLASS:Reading 3D assessments are conducted; and (3) how results from mCLASS:Reading 3D assessment are utilized. It is important to note that while the focus of our evaluation efforts was around understanding the implementation of mCLASS:Reading 3D, one of the findings of this evaluation is that teachers are often required to administer other assessments as part of the Read to Achieve Legislation (e.g., local alternative assessments), assessments for other disciplines (e.g., math), and assessments for district-level reading initiatives that are unrelated to Read to Achieve. As such, every effort was made to remind teachers that SERVE's evaluation focused on mCLASS:Reading 3D, but it is possible that some of the perceptions among teachers reported in this evaluation may be influenced by assessment experiences beyond mCLASS:Reading 3D.

Methodology

SERVE developed all protocols, interviews, logs, and surveys for each data collection effort. All data collection instruments were reviewed by teachers, administrators, reading specialists, and research and evaluation specialists. In addition, all data collection instruments were pilot tested by a small group of K-3 teachers. Finally, all instruments were submitted to NCDPI for final approval. These efforts led to modifications of items to improve interpretability as well as the addition/deletion of items to better address the evaluation questions.

We used two sampling strategies to select schools for this report. For the teacher interviews, observations, and time log collection our goal was to collect information from approximately 100 teachers from across the eight SBE regions who differed in their years of experience using mCLASS Reading 3D. To accomplish this, NCDPI provided us with a list from Amplify that contained three cohorts of schools that implemented mCLASS:Reading 3D between 2011-12 (cohort 1), 2012-2013 (cohort 2), and 2013-14 (cohort 3). Using this list and information from the North Carolina Report Card data for 2013-14, we randomly selected 45 elementary schools[4] from across the eight SBE regions and three cohorts of implementation. In total, we visited 37 of the randomly selected schools. In addition, NCDPI recommended that we visit 6 additional schools that NCDPI personnel felt were exemplars for implementing mCLASS:Reading 3D in the classroom.

[4] Elementary school must have at least one classroom at the K – 3 level to be included in the analytic sample.

Because the interviews, observations, and teacher logs involved the collection of qualitative information we used qualitative sampling methods to select teachers for this portion of the evaluation. The goal of sampling within a qualitative framework is rarely to establish that the selected sample is representative of the population. Most qualitative studies use a purposeful sampling design in which the goal is to understand the phenomenon of interest from the perspective of those under investigation. For our investigation we used maximum variation purposeful sampling. The goal of maximum variation sampling is to capture the heterogeneity of experiences by exploring how different people, in different settings, and at different times, experience a phenomenon. For this evaluation we sought to maximize variation by selecting schools across each of the eight SBE regions. In addition, because we believed that experience with implementing mCLASS:Reading 3D may vary as a function of how long schools have been implementing this assessment tool we also selected schools that implemented mCLASS:Reading 3D in different school years to look for differences between teachers with more or less experience using mCLASS:Reading 3D. In our selection of the 45 site visit schools we attempted to recruit 5-6 schools from each SBE region where at least one school was an early implementer of mCLASS:Reading 3D and one school implemented when the state fully adopted mCLASS:Reading 3D, thus increasing the variation of the recruited schools by SBE region and time of implementation.

Within each school we asked administrators to identity 2-3 teachers who would be willing to work with us for the duration of the observations and interviews and would be willing to complete the time logs. In addition, we asked administrators to select teachers who displayed varying levels of success in implementing mCLASS:Reading 3D in the classroom. Our goal was to include around 100 teachers. This number was selected based on SERVE's capacity to conduct in-depth and meaningful qualitative data collection. At the outset of the evaluation, project staff agreed to allocate resources to additional interviews and observations if our effort did not reach saturation (i.e., the point at which no new information is generated with additional interviews and observations). However, we felt that the targeted number of observations resulted in robust findings with little need for additional observations.

Table 1 provides information on characteristics of the schools who participated in our evaluation site visits. In general, the schools that participated in site visits tended to be less urban than other elementary schools across the state. In addition, these schools had slightly fewer students who qualify for free/reduced lunch, and slightly more students who were proficient on the EOG reading assessment.

For the online survey we selected a simple random sample of 100 elementary schools from across the state. The decision to randomly select a sample of elementary schools was made in order to reduce survey burden on teachers and to allow SERVE staff to more closely

monitor survey progress. In order for a school to be considered in our analytic sample it had to be a public elementary school that served at least one of the grades that was the focus of our evaluation (K–3). Using these criteria, we selected 100 schools from across 1,376 elementary schools. Before a school was contacted, we notified Superintendents that at least one school in their district had been randomly selected to participate and asked for their permission to reach out to the principals at selected schools to distribute the survey to their teachers. From there we contacted principals at each selected school and asked if they would be willing to distribute the survey to their K-3 teachers using the survey link that SERVE provided.

Of the 100 randomly selected schools, 83 schools participated in the survey.[5] In order to calculate a teacher participation rate, we asked the principal at each school to verify the number of K-3 teachers at their schools. Across all 100 randomly selected schools there were 1,631 K-3 teachers, 953[6] of which took the survey for a participation rate of 61.0%.

Table 1 provides information on characteristics of schools that took the online survey. In general, the 83 schools that took the online survey closely resembled elementary schools across the state. However, the survey schools were more likely to be rural compared to elementary schools across the state.

Table 1. *Characteristics of mCLASS:Reading 3D Site Visit and Survey Schools*

Characteristics	State (public elementary)	Site Visit Schools	Survey Participating Schools
	(n = 1376)	(n = 43)	(n = 83)
SBE District			
1 and 2	15.1	16.7	16.9
3 and 4	29.4	33.3	27.7
5 and 6	35.2	28.6	31.3
7 and 8	20.3	21.4	24.1
Locale			
City	33.8	19	26.5
Suburb	7.9	9.5	6
Town	7.9	16.7	9.6
Rural	50.4	54.8	57.8
Traditional Calendar (%)	94	97.6	97.6

[5] One school declined to participate, one district requested that we not contact their schools (n=5) and the remaining 11 schools principals distributed the survey to staff, but no staff members completed the survey. Also, it should be noted that 3 of the randomly selected schools also participated in the site visits.

[6] This number includes 208 teachers who started, but did not fully complete the survey.

Characteristics	State (public elementary)	Site Visit Schools	Survey Participating Schools
Student Enrollment	492.8	497.5	508.1
Students Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch (%)	65.9	61.3	65.9
3rd Grade Students Proficient in Reading (%)	42.8	47.8	40.4

Time

The SERVE Center examined the time required to administer mCLASS:Reading 3D during benchmarking and progress monitoring. It proved difficult to get per-child time for assessment, as time varied by grade level, student performance, testing environment, the person conducting the assessment, etc. Further, each data collection method provided variations in the amount of recorded time to administer benchmark and progress monitoring assessments. We used three different methods—(1) teacher logs; (2) interviews; and (3) a survey--to determine the amount of time teachers spent benchmarking and progress monitoring throughout the year. Although the logs are not comparable to the interviews and surveys, all sources of information were informative for this evaluation. It should be noted that when we discuss teacher perceptions on whether the amount of time that mCLASS: Reading 3D takes is appropriate, it is hard to determine whether their feelings are influenced or not by the time burden presented by other assessments they must give to their students, not only for other subjects beyond reading, but also for LEA-mandated reading assessments that are beyond the scope of the RtA legislation. It should also be noted that, although teachers must spend time conducting assessments via mCLASS:Reading 3D, asking teachers to engage in some form of formative assessment is not a new activity for most teachers as most reported having to conduct some form of assessment prior to using mCLASS Reading 3D. Additionally, among those teachers who reported using formative assessments prior to mCLASS Reading 3D, approximately two-thirds reported using this information to guide instructional practices frequently in the classroom.

Of the 749 teachers who answered questions related to progress monitoring, 74% surveyed felt progress monitoring takes up too much instructional time, but 55% believe that analyzing data and determining how to use it is a meaningful use of their time. Ninety-one percent of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that benchmarking provides useful information about students' reading skills and abilities in general. However, only 37% agreed or strongly agreed that they would be unable to support their students' instructional needs in reading without benchmarking. In general, teachers reported that they like the data, but did not feel it

was worth the time spent assessing and away from instruction. When we asked teachers how they would prefer to spend the time currently devoted to mCLASS:Reading 3D assessments, 42% percent told us they would use the time for guided reading and/or small group instruction, and 38% said more or higher quality instruction. Interestingly, while many teachers commented on the difficulty of the writing component of mCLASS:Reading 3D, only 2% indicated they would spend additional time on writing. Possibly, teachers considered writing an integral part of good instruction and so did not mention it separately.

Each method provided a different way of reporting time spent on assessment, and some variation in results by method was noted. The teacher logs are not comparable to the interviews or survey, as the logs are intended to capture a snapshot of a discrete time period, which included both benchmarking (1 -2 weeks at the end of the three-week MOY benchmarking window) and progress monitoring. The teacher interviews and survey were designed to understand time requirements across the entire academic year. In addition, the interviews and surveys asked teachers to provide a retrospective estimate on the amount of time that they benchmarked and progress monitored while the logs required teachers to document actual time spent progress monitoring and benchmarking.

Overall, 74 teachers completed logs recording the amount of time they spent benchmarking and progress monitoring over a four-week period towards the end of MOY benchmarking. The interviews were conducted with 91 teachers who we also observed in order to get more information on their daily routines beyond what we could observe on a given day. The teachers who completed the online survey were asked a variety of questions about progress monitoring and benchmarking, including estimated time spent on preparation and execution of these formative assessments.

There are three benchmarking windows—at beginning of the year (BOY), middle of the year (MOY), and end of the year (EOY). Each district establishes a schedule for their schools within each benchmarking window to ensure all K-3 students are assessed. The data were fairly consistent between the teacher interview and the teacher survey. Interviewed teachers indicated they spent 24 hours on average assessing students per benchmarking window. Results from the survey were similar with K-2 teachers and 3rd grade teachers reporting spending on average 26 and 28 hours, respectively, assessing students at each benchmarking period. Each benchmarking window is a 15-day period, with additional days approved for many districts and schools who requested additional time from the state. NCDPI recommended that teachers only benchmark 2 students per day, with a maximum of 30 minutes per child, or 1 hour per day.

Progress monitoring, unlike benchmarking, is ongoing throughout the year. According to the interview data, teachers spent on average 30 minutes per day progress monitoring. The survey provided more detail, indicating overall, 42% of teachers reported that they progress monitored infrequently (once a month or less), 35% reported progress monitoring once a week, and 22% reported progress monitoring at least 2 – 3 times per week or more. In addition, teachers were asked about the number of hours that they progress monitored during a typical week when they progress monitored. The majority of teachers (51%) reported spending 1 – 2 hours per week progress monitoring, whereas 21% reported spending less than an hour progress monitoring and 22% reported spending 3 – 5 hours progress monitoring per week. We were interested in whether teachers who reported progress monitoring less frequently did so because they devoted more hours per week assessing students when they did progress monitoring. However, we found that the opposite was true. Teachers who reported that they progress monitored 2 – 3 times per week or daily were more likely to report spending more than 3 hours a day progress monitoring compared to teachers who reported progress monitoring once a week or once a month.

Open-ended interview and survey questions indicate that teachers were concerned with the frequency with which they were required to assess students leveled at “yellow” and “red.” Students at these low-performing levels are required to be progress monitored every 10 to 20 days. Teachers with a greater proportion of low-performing students in their classes felt they were assessing much more often than those teachers with higher performing students (i.e., students who score in the “green” and “blue” levels). This may account for the high frequency and longer hours for each sitting some teachers reported. Further, teachers felt the frequency of assessing students who score in the “red” and “yellow” did not allow for sufficient time to teach the deficit skills in order to make improvement before the next progress monitoring period for these struggling students.

Teacher logs indicated assessment time varied by *grade level*; benchmarking appeared to take more time for older grades, such as 3rd grade, but progress monitoring requires less time for 3rd graders than for K-2. However, teacher interviews and surveys indicated the amount of time spent assessing at benchmarking and progress monitoring varied by student *skill level* and assessment administered. Teachers were split when asked if it took longer to assess low-performing readers or high-performing readers. It appears clear to us why lower-performing students took longer, as teachers stated these students take longer to read. What is less clear is why teachers said high-performing students took longer to assess; many stated higher performing students read more books before their assessment is complete. Based on our informal conversations, observations, and interviews, we can speculate that this may be due to multiple factors, including higher performing students giving more elaborate verbal

answers and writing more, teachers starting the benchmarking level too low for these readers, the amount of student skill level and growth between benchmarking periods, and/or how the books are leveled.

When asked if teachers or schools employed a specific strategy to decrease the amount of time to assess students, 66% of teachers or schools indicated they had an identified strategy. The strategies mentioned included: deploying a "sweep team" to come in and assess students all at once, creating a preplanned list of students to assess, and/or other planned activities to limit amount of time assessing students. An important time related aspect of mCLASS:Reading 3D is the recommendation that assessment be embedded into instruction to minimize loss of instructional time, meaning teachers do not stop instruction to administer the assessment, but work it into the regular activities or grab students for a quick assessment during breaks or transitions. When we asked teachers about this, many said they were not aware of this expectation, and other said they did not know what it meant to embed progress monitoring into instruction. Of those who were aware of the concept of embedding, few actually incorporated it effectively into their classroom routines. We can speculate that effective use of this practice might have a positive impact on teachers' perception of the amount of classroom time mCLASS:Reading 3D takes. Additionally, regional consultants have been working across the state with practitioners to understand and implement embedding since these data were collected towards the beginning of 2015.

Testing Environment

We wondered if teachers' use of the program, as well as their confidence in using it, might change as they gained experience with it. Sixty-nine percent of teachers reported using mCLASS:Reading 3D for one to three years and 31% for four or more years. We asked teachers whether their comfort level had changed after using mCLASS:Reading 3D and also if they had changed how they use it as they gained experience. We found that teachers' comfort level did increase with use—88% of teachers told us that over time they had become more comfortable using mCLASS:Reading 3D, and the large majority (81.5%) rated it at least "good" as a diagnostic tool. Teachers also changed how they use mCLASS:Reading 3D with experience. Nearly 24% of teachers felt better prepared for instruction than before using mCLASS:Reading 3D, 17% said they were more efficient with administration of the assessments and 17% reported that they understood the data better than initially. However, 25% reported no change, and some teachers indicated that they need additional training to make best use of this resource. This need for additional training may be at least partly explained by new and beginning teachers entering the field each year who are new to the reading and formative assessment process.

Testing environments differed by benchmarking and progress monitoring with more variance found during the benchmarking process. Five benchmarking assessment situations were observed, in order of most to least commonly observed:

1. Teacher conducts the assessment within his/her own classroom and continues to have sole responsibility of management of their classroom while conducting the benchmarking assessments (34% of observations)
2. The teacher conducts the benchmarking assessment outside of the classroom and the teacher has someone else manage their classroom (32%)
3. Teacher conducts the assessment within his/her own classroom with at least one other adult present in the classroom. Teacher conducts the benchmarking assessments as well as has shared responsibility of classroom management (27%)
4. Someone other than the classroom teacher conducts the assessment within a child's regular classroom. For example, a reading specialist in the child's classroom pulling individual children to a testing assessment table while the teacher continues with the regular lessons. (4%)
5. Assessment done by a non-classroom teacher conducted outside of the child's regular classroom (i.e., a reading specialist in an office or empty classroom) (3%)

Who conducted the benchmarking changed as the year progressed. Typically, the teacher of record (TOR) administered the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) on their own students throughout the year, with a slight decrease toward the end of the year. About eighty-six percent of K-2 teachers and 74% of 3rd grade teachers administered DIBELS to their own students. By the end of the year, those numbers dropped to 68% and 55%, respectively. However, the Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) portion of mCLASS:Reading 3D proved a greater decline of TOR administering the assessment to their own students, with 78% of K-2 teachers assessing their own students at BOY to only 1% at EOY. For 3rd grade teachers, 67% started the year assessing their own students to only 13% at the end of the year. Results should be interpreted with caution because of problematic wording in the question that was not detected until after our survey was deployed. Teachers should have been asked "who assesses your students" followed by a checklist where they could select themselves and other adults at the school (e.g., "another teacher from the same grade"). However, teachers were asked "which students do you assess", which does not align well with response options other than "I assess my own students."

Unlike benchmarking, most teachers assessed their own students during progress monitoring. Almost half of teachers had no teaching assistant to help during progress monitoring. Other teachers either had a teaching assistant full time in the classroom or had a "floating" assistant to help during assessments. Some teachers reported that they preferred to

assess their own students so they could see progress first-hand, while others preferred to have someone else assess their students to save time and in the interests of fairness and validity.

Distractions, interruptions, and/or noise levels can affect assessment outcomes. Because many students are assessed in the classroom while other classroom activities are ongoing, it is important to discuss the assessment environment we observed. During both progress monitoring and benchmarking, teachers appeared to have strong classroom management skills, with little disruption during assessment. In fact, 66 of teachers reported feeling comfortable with their classroom management skills. Most teachers and students did not appear to be distracted during benchmark observations, but it is important to note that 18% of students seemed to be somewhat distracted while they were being assessed and 22% of teachers appeared to be somewhat distracted by activities in the testing environment. It was rare to have either students or teachers to be very distracted— only 4% of students and 7% of teachers were observed to be very distracted. Similarly, during progress monitoring, 92% of teachers and 88% of students were not distracted by classroom activities near the testing area.

We also examined what classroom students were doing while others were being assessed. Teachers expressed concern about the quality of instruction students received while teachers were assessing, especially during the benchmarking. In fact, almost half (48%) of teachers reported feeling that their students were not receiving high quality instruction. When asked why they felt that way, many stated that students were not being taught by them or another certified teacher. They felt in many cases, the work was “busy” work and they could not help students with individual questions, or spend time on instruction.

Information gleaned from both observations/interviews and the teacher survey revealed that while teachers were assessing, the majority of students were completing individual work, independent reading, paired work, and small group activities. Only 10% of benchmarking observers noted a large group activity, and no large group work was reported for progress monitoring observations. During progress monitoring, teachers more often employed centers or stations, but other activities included individual work, and pull out groups with the help of a teaching assistant. The majority of students were also reported to be on-task most or all of the time.

Teachers were asked how activities employed to engage learners while assessing individual students differed from those used during small reading group work. Almost a quarter of teachers felt there was no difference between the activities. Others said it differed because they were able to work with individuals or small groups during the times they would otherwise be assessing. Some teachers may need additional training on the purpose of progress

monitoring, as the intention is to work with individuals or small groups to assess the effectiveness of instruction and give immediate feedback.

In general, teachers responded positively toward the training they received on mCLASS:Reading 3D. According to the interviews conducted, 22% of responding teachers stated they were trained at the school site; 17% were trained by a colleague in a train-the-trainer model; and 14% were trained by DPI, district staff, or someone other than a school colleague. Eleven percent reported being the trainer at their school, and about 7% received training on the use of mCLASS:Reading 3D during a college course or internship. Only 3% reported having no training. Most often (25%), teachers reported using demos and hands-on practice as most helpful in learning to use mCLASS:Reading 3D. Talking to other teachers (13%) and learning by doing (11%) were also mentioned. Least effective methods, according to interviewed teachers, included: watching videos (3%), modeling (4%), leader/advanced training (2%), and refresher courses (2%). Although, it may be that not all teachers were offered leader/advanced training or refresher courses, which could account for the lower percentages.

Survey responses provide more detail about teacher experiences with training in a much larger sample. Sixty-eight percent reported being trained by a reading/literacy specialist, 49% were trained by another teacher, and 41% were trained by a curriculum specialist. Eighty-two percent reported being trained at the school level, and 37% reported training also took place at the district level. This would indicate multiple sessions conducted by various role-types and locations.

Overwhelmingly, surveyed teachers were satisfied with training. Ninety-one percent were satisfied or very satisfied with the training received by the reading/literacy specialist, 90% by those trained by another teacher, and 93% by the curriculum specialist. Interview remarks indicate teachers who were trained by someone who was not at their school, were trained as part of a college/internship, or who were trainers themselves were more likely to report they had received adequate training than those who were trained at the school and/or who were trained by a trainer. Further, of those interviewed, 34% felt the need for additional training.

Open-ended questions from the survey indicated teachers would like additional training, specifically to promote uniformity in test administration and scoring. Teachers also preferred being trained in all grade levels, given the skill variance among students within the same grade. Finally, teachers expressed some concern over LEA-level changes made to the testing process and/or scoring and expressed a need for “refresher” training courses after any changes have been made. In summary, eighty percent of those surveyed felt they were sufficiently trained to

use mCLASS:Reading 3D, and the majority felt they had resources at hand should they have questions. Yet, 44% felt they could use additional training.

Utilizing Results

The SERVE Center examined how results from mCLASS:Reading 3D assessments are utilized by teachers. Interestingly, about one-third of teachers (31%) reported using mCLASS:Reading 3D data to inform instruction 30 or more minutes a week. According to benchmark interviews, teachers' time to interpret data for instruction ranged from 8 minutes to 210 minutes after the benchmark window closed, with an average time of about an hour. About 30% reported using the data "a little," meaning once a semester. Seventeen percent reported using it "somewhat" or about two times per month.

Teachers were asked open-ended questions about how and where they looked at their data. Because most of these were open-ended, teachers' answers may not have included all the ways that they look at their data. It is possible that more teachers are looking at data then these numbers suggest.

Data were most often discussed in teacher meetings and/or with colleagues—with 45% of teachers reporting examining data in PLCs and 17% with their professional peers. About 20% discussed mCLASS:Reading 3D data with their principal or another administrator.

We asked teachers who did not do their own assessment if they reviewed the data later. Sixty-one teachers provided a response. The large majority of teachers did review the data, simply indicating "yes (35)." Another 19 indicated they reviewed the data on their computers, and 6 looked at the data with their peers in team meetings. Five said they received students' written responses. Interestingly, three indicated they could see the data or the full data if they do not do the assessment themselves. A follow up question asked about other ways to review the data if not in formal meetings, with most teachers indicating they informally spoke with the person who assessed their students.

Teachers were asked if their schools set time aside for them to speak with the person giving the assessments. Fifty-six teachers provided responses—45% said no time was specifically set aside by their school, and 55% said time was set aside by their school to speak with the person giving the assessments.

During interviews about benchmarking some teachers reported using mCLASS:Reading 3D data for forming reading groups (40%), individual instruction (25%), parent information sharing (12%) and identification for reading intervention (7%). Survey responses supported

these findings with 67% of teachers using the data for lesson plans. Additional survey responses included using data to inform reading groups and individual instruction. Surveyed teachers were more favorable of the data received from benchmarking than from progress monitoring. Ninety-one percent of teachers felt the benchmark data were useful and 65% stated the information was valid. In contrast, only 67% of teachers felt the progress monitoring data were useful and 58% thought the data were valid. Teachers also responded favorably to the *Now What?* tools and other reports generated by the Reading 3D system to help them determine instructional strategies and to help communicate with parents. In fact, survey results indicate that 65% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that *Now What?* is useful, and 46% agreed the LiveBinder materials, a real-time resource developed by NC DPI to inform and update educators on RtA, were helpful.

Our results indicate that overall teachers felt that the information resulting from mCLASS:Reading 3D was useful, but a large percentage of teachers also felt they could support student instructional needs without it. While many teachers find the data useful and use it for a variety of purposes, a few teachers (8.9%) said that they believe mCLASS:Reading 3D is not the most effective way to get information. These teachers pointed out that formative assessment is not new, nor is using it for instruction. Teachers used many different measures to assess students prior to the introduction of mCLASS:Reading 3D, and 96% of teachers indicated that they used formative assessment to inform instruction before mCLASS:Reading 3D. Twenty-nine percent previously used formative assessments at least once a month, and 67% between daily and once a week. Of the teachers who offered information, 50% reported spending one to two hours weekly on formative assessment before mCLASS:Reading 3D, 18% reported three or more hours, and 32% less than one hour.

Forty-seven of the 91 teachers provided some insight on the differences between previous formative assessments and mCLASS:Reading 3D. Five felt the tests took the same amount of time to administer, with an addition 6 teachers said mCLASS:Reading 3D takes more time but provided more detail in student reading skills. Three teachers said the assessments took the same amount of time, but they had reading specialists and/or teaching assistants to help with administering them. Twelve teachers stated that the previous tests were easier to integrate into reading groups. With relation to technology, two teachers said the technology issues with mCLASS:Reading 3D increased the time required to assess students, while three felt the iPADs lessened the time to administer the reading assessments, saying the old paper and pencil took longer. Five teachers felt they had more control of when and how reading assessments were administered in the previous reading assessments as compared to how mCLASS:Reading 3D is currently administered. Other comments in favor of previous reading assessments include: there was no written component (6); did not have to keep assessing until student was unable to continue (2); students were able to complete the assessments

independently (1); and there was no DIBELS (1). Only 1 teachers said they did not like the data provided by mCLASS:Reading 3D.

The survey also asked teachers about the value of the data from mCLASS:Reading 3D. Seventy-nine percent of teachers indicated that benchmarking adds value to their reading instruction, and 72% agreed that benchmarking data empowers them to be a better teacher. Also, the majority of teachers (86%) reported using benchmarking data for lesson and curriculum planning. Twenty-five percent of teachers felt the data from progress monitoring were more than they could use, and 35% felt the data from benchmarking were more than they could use. Most felt they know how to use the data from progress monitoring and benchmarking, 78% and 74% respectively. In addition, many teachers reported having insufficient time to use the data as desired due to other work-related obligations, with 52% of teachers feeling this way about data from benchmarking and 46% from progress monitoring. Put simply, some teachers felt the data they received from mCLASS:Reading 3D was either too much data or data they did not know how to use. However, for many teachers, they simply did not have the time to utilize the data effectively due to work obligations determined at the individual school level.

Overall, 72% of surveyed teachers agreed or strongly agreed that spending time analyzing benchmarking data is a meaningful use of time. However, 89% indicated that assessing took up too much instructional time, and 64% reported the information gained was not worth the loss of instructional time. In sum, the data from mCLASS:Reading 3D are useful and inform instruction, but teachers are concerned with the time taken from providing quality instruction to students that improve reading skills. This question was not asked in relation to the amount of time teachers took for assessment before RtA and level of comfort with benchmarking and progress monitoring may have increased in the 2015-2016 school year since this data was collected.

Part II: Read to Achieve Reading Camps

Evaluation Overview

To gain a better understanding of Read to Achieve reading camp, SERVE staff conducted interviews for both the 2014 and 2015 school years. Personnel in 20 districts were interviewed via telephone regarding the 2014 summer reading camps. In the summer of 2015, we performed a more in-depth investigation of the reading camps by interviewing 35 reading camp personnel from 28 districts. Interviewees were educators from both the district and school level. Additionally, observations of reading camp programs were conducted in 18 districts.

In both 2014 and 2015 districts offered reading camps for students who were not proficient in reading at the end of 3rd grade. Although the 2014 and 2015 reading camps were similar in many ways, our study of the reading camps showed that many districts made slight but significant changes between 2014 and 2015. It could be presumed the differences resulted from an increased planning time for the 2015 reading camps and the lessons learned from the 2014 camps. Read to Achieve legislation was enacted in 2012 and districts were apprised of the RtA requirements, including the reading camps. However, as the 2014 summer reading camps began the legislature decided to allow all LEAs to shorten the camps. At the end of the 2013-2014 school year educators still expressed some uncertainty about the camps and a feeling that there was little time to plan for the 2014 camps. In contrast, requirements were more defined by 2015, and districts had more experience with program requirements and execution. Despite the differences, all interviews and observations indicated an overall positive experience for students during both years.

Summer 2014 was the first year of RtA reading camps. Staff felt there was a lot of confusion around how camp would work and the assessment of students. Still, 80% of those interviewed responded that the academic experience of reading camp was “mostly positive” for students. In general, respondents reported that students learned or improved needed literacy skills, made academic gains, grew as confident readers, and formed more supportive relationships with teachers. Parents also viewed the camps positively. One parent reported that there was a camp atmosphere (as opposed to a school atmosphere) and other parents requested that their student be allowed to attend again next year. In fact, 72% of the districts interviewed received positive feedback from parents after the first year. Although parents still expressed concerns about testing and how it would affect their children if they did not pass, they felt their children made academic gains and had fun.

Although we were unable to get information from all districts on the 2014 summer promotion rates, 32% of students who attended reading camp were promoted at the end of camp. It is interesting to note that the range of promotion rate varied widely—in one district, 91% of students were promoted at the end of camp, while in another, only 4%. Students passed either by portfolio passages or the RtA assessment. Because the 2015 interviews and observations were conducted during reading camp, promotion rates were not yet available. At the time of data collection, the feedback from parents and students was positive, with many parents requesting their children be invited to attend.

The number of students in attendance did not vary much from 2014 to 2015. According to our interviews, in 2014, the number of students attending reading camp in each district ranged from 7 and 422. For 2015, the attendance in each district ranged from 10 – 450. The number of sites per district varied as well, based on the number of students needing to attend camp and the proximity of students' homes to the reading camp locations. In 2015, the number of sites in each district ranged from 1 to 10 with 1 being the most common. Each site ran 1-14 classrooms, with 6 classrooms at each site the most commonly observed. A number of school sites ran other summer programs at the same location; However, RtA funds were used only for the RtA reading camps. In 2015, five districts accepted students who were not required to attend—these were either students who had recently been approved for a Good Cause Exemption, had individual education plans (IEPs), or students who completed portfolios and chose to remain at the camp for the duration of the program.

After 2014, districts identified some basic changes planned for 2015 reading camp, including starting later in the summer so students and teachers could have a break between the end of the school year and reading camp and increasing preparation time for reading camp. Overall, the goals for the 2015 reading camp were to increase student reading proficiency, develop more confident readers, and attend to student social/emotional growth. When asked in 2015 about the changes they made, districts reported increased planning and preparation time for reading camp and lower student-teacher ratios as most districts felt these were the reason for their success the previous year.

Curriculum and Instruction

In both years of reading camp, the curriculum and instructional approach were similar. Many districts chose packaged curricula, such as Seeds of Science, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and i-Ready in both years. Others chose a locally-developed curriculum or one that was already available in the district. When asked how curriculum was chosen, districts responded most often that it was selected by a group chosen to work on summer curriculum

(39%) or by a district elementary education/curriculum director (18%). However, some districts left the decision up to the school level personnel—the teachers (11%), literacy specialists (7%), or other school level staff (11%).

Whatever the curriculum chosen, most districts reported a focus on literacy and reading skills. Sixty-one percent of the 2015 interviewees indicated the curriculum included a focus on reading only with no additional subjects, and 29% included science with a heavy literacy focus. Sixteen percent of the sites observed included some science and/or math programming, and one district incorporated art and PE. A few districts explicitly stated they included writing. In fact, we observed that 39% of summer reading programs incorporated writing into their instructional activities. This is not surprising, considering the concern expressed by teachers for student writing skills, and given that fact that writing in response to text is assessed by mCLASS: Reading 3D in order to measure comprehension. Interviewed staff felt the curricula were more effective due to the change in programming and the focused time on reading instruction.

Daily routines varied between districts each year. Most programs ran 4-5 hours each day, and in most reading camps, breakfast and lunch were served. However, that is where the similarities end. How students rotated throughout the day varied between programs—in some, teachers moved between classrooms and in others, students switched classes. Identified times for whole group instruction, small group instruction, and individual/independent work varied by program and even site.

Without exception, one of the most positive aspects of the summer reading camps was their low ratios and highly-qualified teaching staff. Districts felt this was the key to the success of the camps. In both 2014 and 2015, a mixture of small group instruction and whole group instruction was utilized, with small group instruction being the most common. In 2015, students were grouped by general reading level (57%) or matched by TRC levels (32%). Only two respondents said students were grouped by mixed reading levels. No matter the grouping, districts appeared to keep student-teacher ratios low. Interviews conducted in 2015 indicated a range of 1:3-12 with an average of 1:8 and a median of 1:9. The observed ratios were slightly lower with a range of 1:3-11, an average of 1:6, and a median of 1:5.

In 2015 district staff were asked about the level of autonomy teachers had in the reading camp classrooms. Interestingly, there was a fairly even distribution with 25% saying more autonomy than structure but some structure was provided to teachers; 25% felt there was an even mix of autonomy and structure; and 25% stated teachers were provided more structure but some autonomy. Eleven percent stated teachers had total autonomy, and 3% said instruction was totally structured.

Staff and Staff Training

While districts hired certified teachers for both years of reading camp, it appeared the additional planning time in 2015 allowed for more highly effective teachers and/or those with a proven track record to be hired. Districts did not uniformly hire 3rd grade teachers. As required by the RtA legislation, teachers were often selected based on a record of evidence that students they taught made learning gains. While the 2014 interviews indicated a number of sites included specialty teachers, such as teachers who work with students who are ELLs, Title I, literacy specialists, and even a librarian, most sites expressed a need for additional support through teaching assistants. Indeed, the 2015 districts repeatedly expressed a need for teaching assistants to lower student-teacher ratios and support instruction. Interestingly some districts reported having success due to the use of teaching assistants and other districts reported that they were not allowed to hire teaching assistants. Additionally, some stated a need for more administrative and literacy specialists.

Because many teachers were considered "highly effective," a few districts stated there was no need for training prior to reading camp in 2014 and again in 2015. However, the large majority (85%) of districts interviewed for the 2014 reading camps indicated they provided some form of training. Topics included orientation, curriculum/materials, and/or RtA portfolios. Training typically lasted between 1-2 days. Similarly, in preparation for the 2015 reading camps, district trainings ranged from one-half day to two days with a focus on orientation and curriculum/material overviews.

Budget

SERVE staff conducted focus groups prior to the 2014 reading camp. Additionally, staff attended RtA training sessions throughout the 2014-2015 school year. Many staff who attended these meetings expressed a concern over budget, especially as related to reading camps. Those interviewed for the 2014 summer camps felt the budget covered the basic requirements to fulfill the Read to Achieve legislation. Forty percent supplemented RtA budgets with local funding. One of the twenty respondents expressed a need to supplement the budget but did not have the funds locally. In 2015, again, respondents felt the budget covered the basic aspects of reading camp, and a few supplemented with local funds. Most reported transportation as their highest cost.

Districts expressed concern that this year's budget was based on last year's student numbers. SERVE staff asked them how it should be structured. Suggestions ranged from looking at BOY or BOG scores; using an average of the numbers of students who are qualified for

reading camp over the past two years and projecting for next year; and monitoring mCLASS: Reading 3D scores throughout the year. There was agreement that projecting the current budget with data from a separate group of students was not the best strategy since classes can be very different from year to year.

In summary, although varying widely in curriculum, routines, and student grouping, reading camps proved to be successful overall in both 2014 and 2015. Students observed in 2015 appeared engaged and happy. Further, virtually all students were observed to be on-task all or almost all of the time. The feedback from parents was positive. The main request for future reading camps is additional support through teaching assistants, reading specialists, and administration. Still, districts felt students made academic gains, became more confident as readers, and had fun. Overall, the small groups, engaging materials, and a focus on literacy instruction were reported by interviewed staff as a key to academic gain.

Part III: Alternative Assessment

Introduction

This report summarizes the results of SERVE's analysis of the alignment between SBE approved Local Alternative Assessments (LAA) and NCDPI's End of Grade (EOG) assessment in English Language Arts/Reading. The full report can be found in Appendix G. NCDPI asked SERVE to investigate the alignment between the SBE approved LAAs and the EOG to ensure that the local alternative assessments are aligned with the EOG and thus provide an equitable pathway for promotion to 4th grade for all students across the state.

For this report we used state-administered assessment data provided to us by NCDPI for all students in 3rd grade during the 2013-14 school year as well as student-level LAA data from 19 LEAs who voluntarily provided data for this report. Because LEAs are not required to submit LAA assessment scores to NCDPI, we contacted all LEAs across the state and asked each LEA representative if the district would be willing to share any LAA data collected on students in 3rd grade during Spring 2014. If multiple spring assessments were available we asked for data from the administration given closest to the EOG.

Because LEAs could use a variety of local alternative assessments that were approved by the SBE, we limited our analyses to the eight assessments that were approved in 2013-14 and are still in use in 2015-16. These include *Northwest Evaluation System – Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)*, *Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)*, *STAR Reading*, *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*, *i-Station Benchmarks*, *i-Ready*, *CASE21*, and *Discovery Education Grade 3 Summative Assessment*. Also, because mCLASS:Reading 3D was approved as an LAA in 2013-14, we explored the alignment between mCLASS:Reading 3D (more specifically the Rigby Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) assessment) and the EOG.[7]

Across the 115 LEAs that we contacted, we obtained LAA assessment data for six of the eight LAAs[8] from 23 LEAs. We were able to successfully merge student assessment data from 19 of the 23 districts into the files provided by NCDPI. In total, we used data from 19 LEAs who provided us with assessment data for 19,298 students. Third grade student enrollment across these 19 districts was 22,423 students, giving us LAA data for 86.1% of students in these districts. Of the 92 districts for which we did not obtain data, 61 did not use one of the eight

[7] It should be noted that we excluded from our analysis LAAs that were created by LEAs (using test bank items from ClassScape/SchoolNet) and approved for use in 2013-14 as these LAAs would be district specific, making analysis and generalizability of results problematic.

[8] We were unable to obtain student-level assessment data on the Scholastic Reading Inventory or i-Station Benchmarks.

approved LAAs, 11 used an approved LAA, but were unable to provide the data, 8 districts had not made a determination regarding data sharing by the time we undertook our analysis, 7 refused to provide the data, and 5 districts agreed to provide data, but did not follow through on providing data by the time analysis began.

In addition to requesting LAA data from individual LEAs, we requested test specification information for each of the eight assessments from districts that provided SERVE with student assessment data to help understand the alignment between the LAAs and EOG. Unfortunately, the districts that we contacted were unable to provide the requested information. As a result we reached out to NCDPI as well as the test developers directly. We were unable to obtain test specification information from NCDPI as NCDPI does not administer the LAAs. Also, many of the test developers were unwilling to share test specification information. Thus, much of the information used to evaluate our findings came from publically available information that SERVE staff obtained through literature searches.

Summary of Findings

We present a summary of our findings in two sections. First, we report on our general findings of how LEAs implemented the LAA portion of Read to Achieve. This information comes from public sources of information (e.g., school report card data), student record data provided by NCDPI, as well as findings from our conversations with LEA representatives as part of our data collection efforts. Second, we provide a brief summary of our findings regarding the alignment between the TRC and EOG as well as each of the six LAAs for which data were obtained. In reviewing this summary, it should be noted that some districts used the LAA information obtained for this analysis for district-level reading initiatives and not for the purpose of meeting Read to Achieve promotion requirements. As such, the reader should not assume that the LAA assessment data presented here were used for promotion considerations for students in this sample.

LEA Implementation of Local Alternative Assessments

In 2013-14, LEAs sought and received approval from the SBE to use a variety of assessments as an alternative to the state assessments. Individual LEAs could seek approval for more than one LAA. It is important to note that in 2013-14, individual LEAs could seek approval from a list of approved LAAs, but that the LEAs selected the achievement level needed to pass the approved LAA. After 2013-14, the SBE approved the achievement level needed for passing the approved LAA.

Most LEAs (83.5%; see Table 2) were approved to use mCLASS:Reading 3D as an LAA. This may result from the fact that all LEAs were already required to use mCLASS:Reading 3D for progress monitoring and benchmarking so using mCLASS:Reading 3D results would not create additional student-assessment burden nor result in additional cost to the LEAs. Nearly half of LEAs (46.1%) were approved to use an LAA other than mCLASS or the other eight assessments that are the focus of this evaluation. In most of these cases LEAs used assessment questions from the SchoolNet and/or ClassScape assessment bank to develop their own LEA generated assessment. It is our understanding that districts were not allowed to develop their own LAAs beyond the 2013-14 school year. After mCLASS Reading 3D and the locally created LAAs, STAR was approved for nearly one-third (28.7%) of all LEAs, more than any other assessment.

It should also be noted that although all but nine districts sought approval for at least one LAA (see Table 2 below), approximately 25% of districts that were approved for one of the eight LAAs that is the focus of this evaluation did not end up using one of these assessments. It is also important to note that in our discussions with several LEA representatives around collecting LAA data we found that many of the districts that we contacted used an LAA on all or most students to inform district reading initiatives, but not for the purpose of meeting Read to Achieve promotion requirements. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that we obtained LAA data for 86.1% of students across the 19 districts that provided LAA assessment data (which did not include mCLASS:Reading 3D data). This finding is important and suggests that some districts are using alternative assessments for district initiatives and that this use of alternative assessments may be adding to students' assessment burden. It is also important to note that while one goal of this evaluation is to explore teachers' use of mCLASS:Reading 3D, some of the frustration that we observed among teachers around assessment burden may be explained by district and school-level assessment requirements that are not part of Read to Achieve or mCLASS:Reading 3D.

Table 2. *Number of Approved LAAs in 2013-14*

Assessment	Number of LEAs Approved	Percentage of LEAs Approved
mCLASS	96	83.5%
Other	53	46.1%
STAR	33	28.7%
CASE	11	9.6%
ITBS	9	7.8%
None	9	7.8%
NWEA MAP	8	7.0%
Discovery Education	6	5.2%
I-Station	3	2.6%
SRI	2	1.7%
I-Ready	1	0.9%

Source: "OCR Local Alternative Assessment Document.2013-14.xlsx" file provided by NCDPI. Also, verified by contacting LEAs.

In 2013-14, 14,604 students in 3rd grade (12.6%) were promoted to 4th grade as a result of successfully passing an approved LAA.[9] An additional 44,193 students (38.0%) passed a local alternative assessment, but this was not the primary factor that led to their promotion to 4th grade.[10] In total, LEAs reported to NCDPI that 58,797 (50.6%) 3rd grade students passed a local alternative assessment in 2013-14. Because LEAs are not required to report to NCDPI which LAA a student took and passed when multiple LAAs were approved within the LEA or why a student took an LAA when he or she demonstrated proficiency on other state assessments, it is unclear why so many students were recorded as having passed an LAA. It could be the case that when a student achieved proficiency on mCLASS:Reading 3D as part of benchmarking this was also recorded by the LEA as passing the LAA to meet the promotion requirement as mCLASS:Reading 3D is also an approved LAA.

Alignment of Local Alternative Assessments to End of Grade Reading Assessment

Below we present a summary of results for six of the eight LAAs where SERVE was able to obtain student assessment information that could be linked to NCDPI records. For each assessment we present a brief description of the assessment, descriptives on the analytic sample, bivariate correlations between the LAA and EOG, as well as a chart with the pass rate on the LAA and EOG as a function of students' reading comprehension levels using Rigby Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) proficiency levels (Far Below, Below, Proficient, and Above)

[9] Source. 'read-to-achieve.xlsx' table of the 2013-14 NC School Report Card Data.
[10] Source. Student level 'rtaaudit' file provided by NCDPI.

assessed at the End of Year (EOY) benchmark period. This last chart is presented in order to descriptively explore the degree to which pass rates on each assessment differ for students having the same level of reading comprehension in the spring, as assessed using the TRC. Because students in the same TRC proficiency level can be assumed to have a similar level of reading proficiency, any sizable difference in pass rates for a particular LAA from that of the EOG for students in the same TRC proficiency level provides evidence that the level of proficiency required to pass the LAA is inconsistent with that required to pass that EOG. We used results from the EOY TRC assessment because students' classroom performance (e.g., grades) was not available from NCDPI and most districts were unable to provide this information for our evaluation. NCDPI provided us with TRC assessment information for all 3rd grade students in 2013-14. We begin by reporting our findings on the alignment between the TRC assessment from mCLASS:Reading 3D and the EOG.

Text Reading and Comprehension. The Rigby Text and Reading Comprehension (TRC) Assessment by Amplify is implemented in North Carolina for benchmarking (3 times per year) and progress monitoring (a variable number of times per year). The TRC is formative in nature and assesses retell, oral, and reading comprehension using a set of calibrated benchmark books. To complete this assessment, the student reads a leveled book to the teacher while the teacher records any reading mistakes. After reading the book, the student is asked a series of standardized questions to assess reading comprehension.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the TRC analysis includes 98,498 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the TRC at EOY. The Pearson correlation between TRC text levels[11] and EOG scale score was strong ($r = 0.69$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as TRC Text Levels increase so does performance on the EOG.

Table 3 provides the frequency with which students in each TRC proficiency level achieve scores within each performance level on the EOG (Limited Command (1), Partial Command (2), Sufficient Command (3), Solid Command (4), and Superior Command (5)). Inspection of the frequencies indicates that 77.6% of students who were proficient or non-proficient on the TRC assessment were also proficient or non-proficient on the EOG, respectively. In addition, 9.1% of students who scored Below or Far Below Proficient on the TRC were proficient on the EOG (i.e., scored at EOG Level 3 or higher) and 13.4% of students who scored at Proficient or Above Proficient on the TRC were non-proficient on the EOG (i.e., scored at EOG Level 1 or 2).

[11] TRC text levels differ from proficiency levels. Although students are classified into one of four proficiency levels these proficiency levels are established in part by the text level of the book that a reader completes as part of the assessment. Text levels of the assessment books were converted to numeric values to all for statistical analysis.

Table 3. *Distribution of EOG Performance Levels by TRC Performance Levels*

	EOG					
TRC	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Far Below	10118 (10.3%)	5024 (5.1%)	1719 (1.7%)	1593 (1.6%)	67 (0.1%)	**18521 (18.8%)**
Below	3242 (3.3%)	4239 (4.3%)	2261 (2.3%)	3102 (3.1%)	232 (0.2%)	**13076 (13.3%)**
Proficient	2575 (2.6%)	6269 (6.4%)	4666 (4.7%)	9643 (9.8%)	1191 (1.2%)	**24344 (24.7%)**
Above	789 (0.8%)	3528 (3.6%)	4572 (4.6%)	23209 (23.6%)	10459 (10.6%)	**42557 (43.2%)**
Total	**16724 (17.0%)**	**19060 (19.4%)**	**13218 (13.4%)**	**37547 (38.1%)**	**11949 (12.1%)**	**98498 (100.0%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes.

Summary of findings. Results from this descriptive analysis suggests that overall, there is alignment of outcomes on the TRC and EOG. This is evidenced by the strong positive correlation (r = 0.69) between both assessments and the level of congruence between students' proficiency levels on both assessments (77.6%). These findings are similar to findings published by Amplify using results from the 2012-13 administration of the EOG.[12]

NWEA MAP. The Northwest Evaluation Association - Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) is a computer-adaptive formative assessment designed to improve instruction, plan school improvement, measure growth, and predict summative assessment results. The assessment is untimed and the score results appear immediately on the screen at the end of the assessment. In addition, state standards are identified (through a tool called "DesCartes: A Continuum of Learning") so that teachers are aware of learning that could be targeted to improve the student's performance on future assessments.

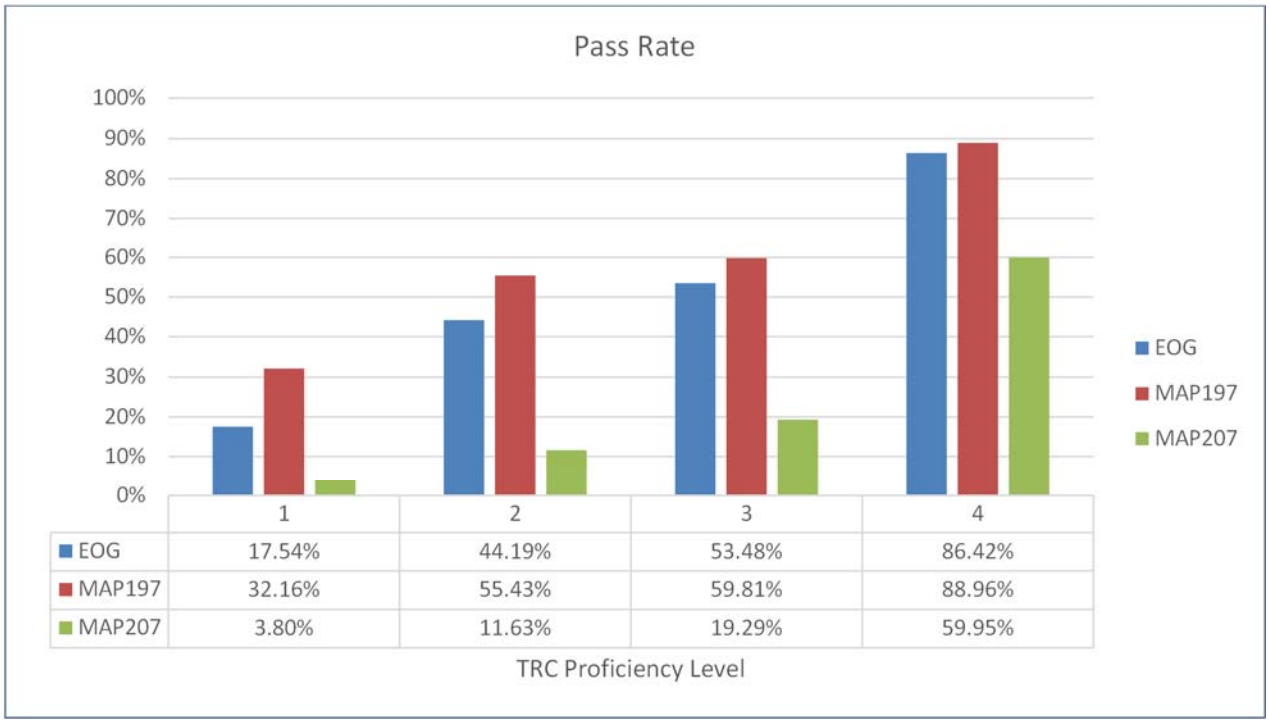
Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the NWEA MAP analysis includes 2,769 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the NWEA MAP. The Pearson correlation between the NWEA MAP and EOG was strong (r = 0.79, p < .01), indicating that in general, as the NWEA MAP scores increase so does performance on the EOG.

[12] "Validity Evidence for mCLASS Reading 3D and Student Performance on the 2012-13 North Carolina End of Grade Reading Comprehension Test" found on NCDPI LiveBinder.

Chart 1 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the NWEA MAP by proficiency levels on the TRC. In the below chart "MAP197" represents 2013-14 achievement level of a scale score of 197 or greater that most LEAs adopted whereas "MAP207" represents 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level of a scale score of 207 or greater.

Inspection of results by TRC proficiency levels suggests that students in this sample who performed Far Below Proficient (level 1) on the TRC were nearly twice as likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG (32.2% vs. 17.5%, respectively) using the 2013-14 achievement level of 197. Students who performed Below Proficient (level 2) on the TRC were also slightly more likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG (55.4% vs. 44.2%, respectively). Chart 1 also indicates that students across all TRC proficiency groups were less likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG with an achievement level of 207, with the discrepancy in proficiency levels being greatest for students with the lowest proficiency levels on the TRC.

Chart 1. *Pass Rates on the EOG and NWEA MAP by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	17.54%	44.19%	53.48%	86.42%
MAP197	32.16%	55.43%	59.81%	88.96%
MAP207	3.80%	11.63%	19.29%	59.95%

Summary of findings. Results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the NWEA MAP are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the NWEA MAP and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the NWEA MAP and

EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 197 or higher that was adopted by most LEAs most likely resulted in the NWEA MAP being easier for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. The fact that the achievement level for the NWEA MAP was raised to 207 in 2015-16 by the SBE suggests that steps were taken to correct this problem. However, results of this analysis suggest that an achievement level of 207 or higher may be too high, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

STAR. The STAR Reading Assessment, published by Renaissance Learning, is a computer-adaptive test. Students are presented with 25 vocabulary-in-context items in the first section. In section two, they read a passage and answer five comprehension questions. Overall, the test takes about ten minutes to complete. The purposes of the STAR assessment are (1) quick and accurate estimation of reading comprehension using instructional reading levels for each student, (2) the assessment of reading achievement relative to national norms, (3) the tracking of growth in a consistent and longitudinal manner, and (4) the evaluation of the effectiveness of reading programs and interventions.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the STAR analysis includes 2,257 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and STAR assessment. The Pearson correlation between the STAR and EOG was strong ($r = 0.73$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as STAR scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

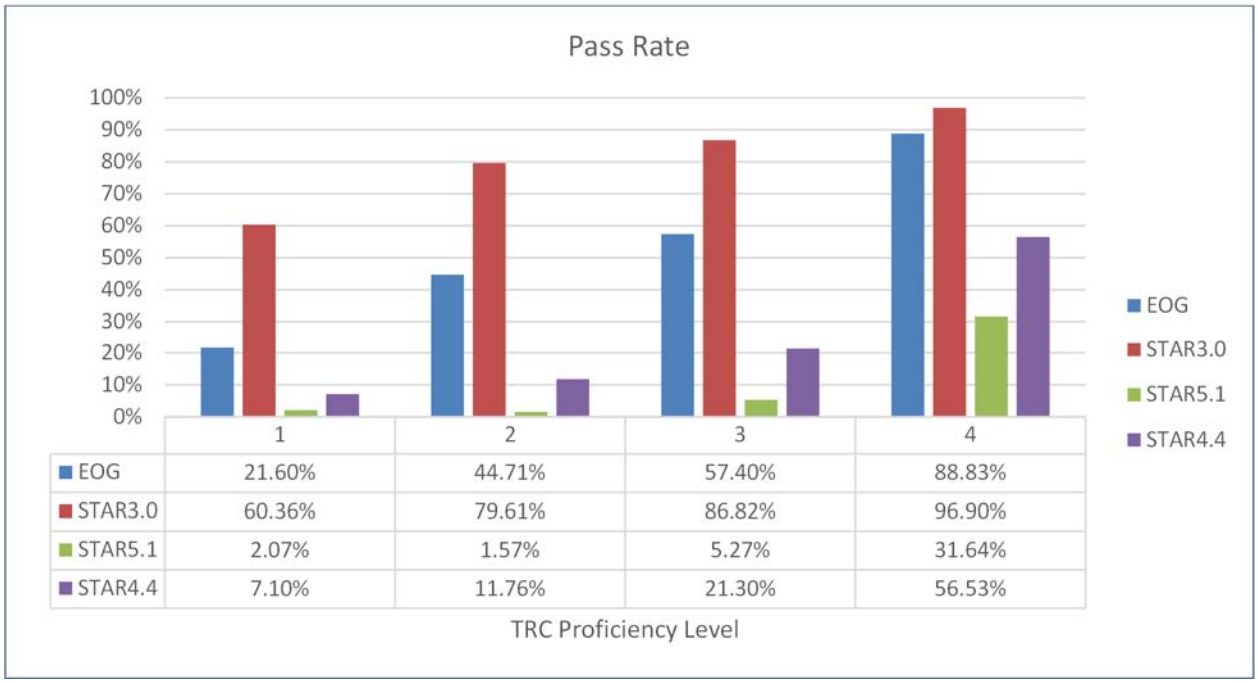
Chart 2 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the STAR by proficiency levels on the TRC. The STAR assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed to pass the assessment has changed. As such, "STAR3.0" in the chart below represents the 2013-14 approved achievement level that most LEAs adopted, "STAR5.1" represents the 2014-15 SBE approved achievement level, and "STAR4.4" represents the 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level.[13]

In general, these results suggest that students in the three lowest TRC proficiency levels were much more likely to be proficient on the STAR than the EOG using the 2013-14 achievement level of 3.0. However, applying 2014-15 and 2015-16 achievement levels suggests

[13] It should be noted that the SBE approved achievement level for the STAR in 2015-16 is actually a scale score of 537 or higher. For ease of interpretability with previous SBE approved achievement levels we report the achievement level as an IRL of 4.4 here because the scale score of 537 falls within the upper end of the IRL score of 4.4. The scale score of 537 or higher was used in the analysis.

that students in the analytic sample were much more likely to be proficient on the EOG than the STAR assessment when matched on TRC proficiency level.

Chart 2. *Pass Rates on the EOG and STAR by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	21.60%	44.71%	57.40%	88.83%
STAR3.0	60.36%	79.61%	86.82%	96.90%
STAR5.1	2.07%	1.57%	5.27%	31.64%
STAR4.4	7.10%	11.76%	21.30%	56.53%

Summary of findings. Results suggest that scores obtained on the STAR are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the STAR and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the STAR and EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of IRL of 3.0 or higher that most LEAs adopted, most likely resulted in the STAR being considerably easier for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. The fact that the achievement level for the STAR was raised to an IRL of 5.1 in 2014-15 by the SBE suggests that steps were taken to correct this problem. However, these results suggest that an achievement level of 5.1 or higher is much higher than the proficiency levels used for the EOG, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the STAR compared to the EOG. In 2015-16, the achievement level was lowered to an IRL of 4.4, suggesting that steps were taken to correct the fact that the STAR proficiency levels were much harder. However, results of this analysis suggest that the 2015-16 achievement levels may still be too high compared to EOG proficiency levels.

ITBS. The Iowa Assessment for Reading: Level 9[14] developed by the Iowa Testing Programs and published by Riverside Publishing is administered through a paper and pencil test that targets the measurement of vocabulary, reading, and comprehension. The reading test is broken into two subtests that last 25 and 30 minutes and include up to 41 items. Scores are reported as norm-referenced percentiles. The test forms currently being used (Forms E and F) are transitional forms that measure both Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and state standards.

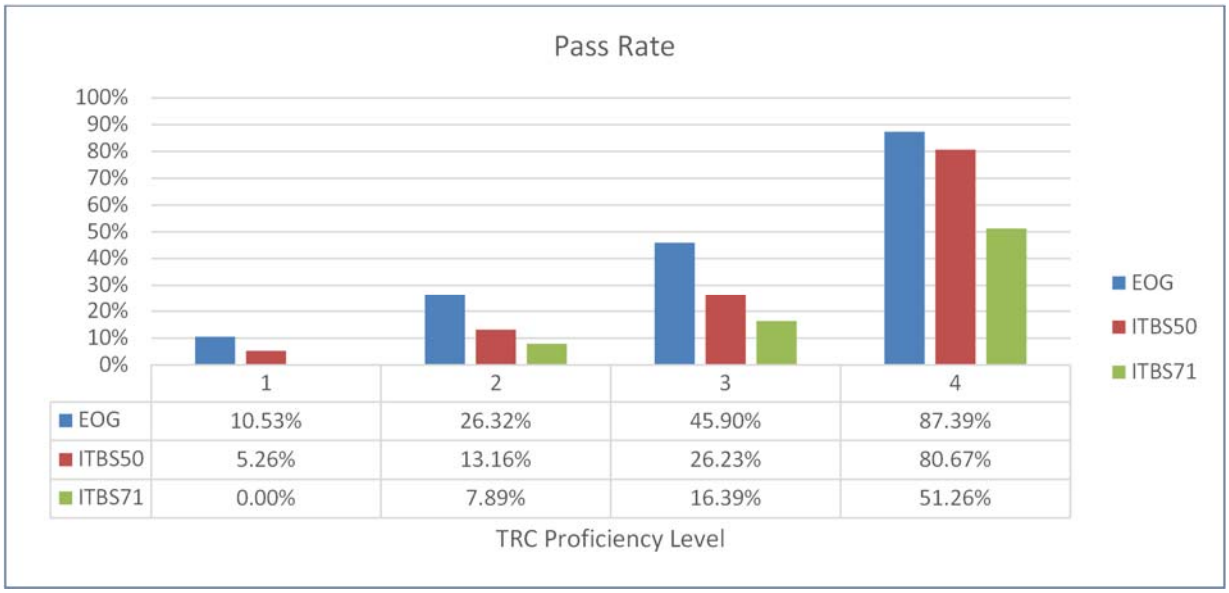
Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the ITBS analysis includes 258 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and ITBS. Please note, given the small sample size for the ITBS, all results for this assessment should be interpreted with caution. The Pearson correlation between the ITBS and EOG was strong ($r = 0.80$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as ITBS scores increase so does performance on the EOG.

Chart 3 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the ITBS by proficiency levels on the TRC. The ITBS assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed to pass the assessment has changed. As such, "ITBS50" in the chart below represents the 2013-14 approved achievement level of 50% correct responses on the assessment which is what most LEAs adopted, whereas "ITBS71" represents the 2014-15 SBE approved achievement level of 71% correct responses.

In general, these results suggest that students in the three lowest TRC proficiency levels were much less likely to be proficient on the ITBS than the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level using both 2013-14 and 2014-15 ITBS achievement levels. Students who were Above Proficient on the TRC (level 4) achieved similar proficiency rates on the ITBS and EOG using 2013-14 achievement level, but the proficiency rate dropped for this group as well using the 2014-15 achievement level.

Chart 3. *Pass Rates on the EOG and ITBS by TRC Proficiency Levels*

[14] The Level 9 test refers not to the grade level being tested but to the average age of students taking the test (with 3rd graders being about nine years old).



	1	2	3	4
EOG	10.53%	26.32%	45.90%	87.39%
ITBS50	5.26%	13.16%	26.23%	80.67%
ITBS71	0.00%	7.89%	16.39%	51.26%

Note. Given small sample size (n = 258) this chart should be interpreted with caution

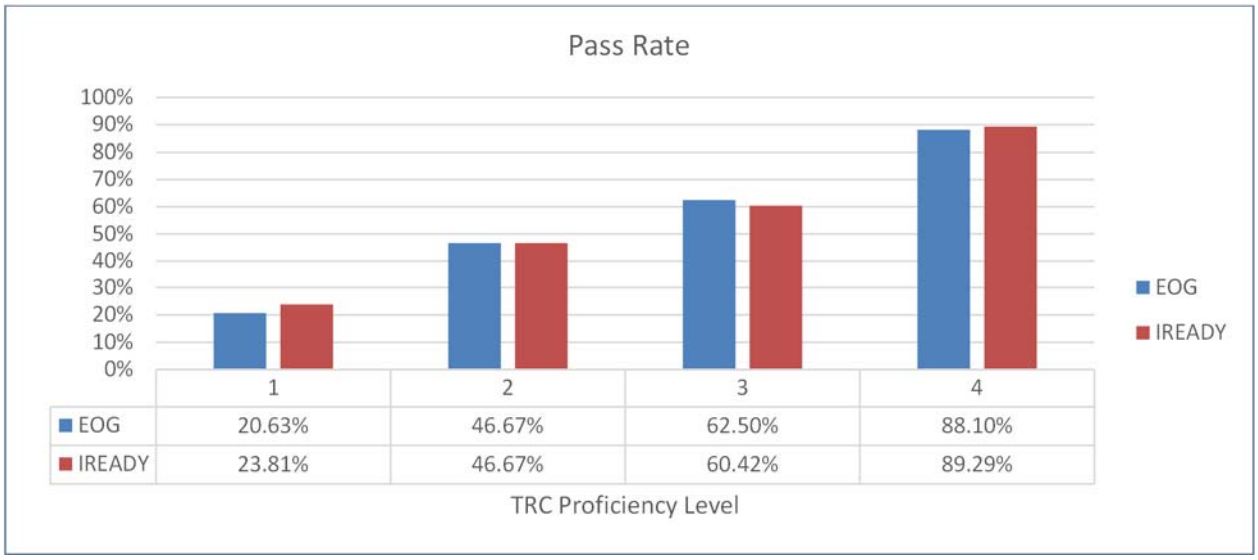
Summary of findings. Results suggest that scores obtained on the ITBS are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the ITBS and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results also suggest that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the ITBS and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 50% correct answers or higher that most LEAS adopted on the ITBS most likely resulted in the ITBS being more difficult for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. In 2014-15, the achievement level of the ITBS was raised to 71% correct items, making this assessment even more difficult for 3rd grade students to reach proficiency compared to the EOG.

i-Ready. The i-Ready, developed by Curriculum Associates, LLC, can be used[15] to measure Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (comprehension of literature and information), vocabulary, phonological awareness placements, high frequency words and phonics. Scores are reported at the student, class, and school levels; student-level reports of CCSS proficiency are also available. All scores are reported on an 800-point scale, including scores for subscales. Because we were unable to obtain information on this assessment from the developers we are unable to provide any information on how the assessment is administered. Given SERVE's inability to obtain specific information on this assessment, these statements may not be entirely accurate for this assessment.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the i-Ready analysis includes 250 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and i-Ready.[16] Please note, given the small sample size for the i-Ready, all results for this assessment should be interpreted with caution. The Pearson correlation between the i-Ready and EOG was strong ($r = 0.78$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as i-READY scores increase so does performance on the EOG.

Chart 4 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the i-Ready by proficiency levels on the TRC. These results indicate that proficiency rates on the EOG and i-Ready are similar across all TRC reading levels.

Chart 4. *Pass Rates on the EOG and i-Ready by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	20.63%	46.67%	62.50%	88.10%
IREADY	23.81%	46.67%	60.42%	89.29%

Note. Given small sample size (n = 250) this chart should be interpreted with caution

Summary of findings. Results suggest that both assessments may be measuring similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. This is evidenced by the strong positive correlation ($r = 0.78$) between both assessments and the level of congruence between students' proficiency levels on both assessments,[17] and similar patterns of proficiency rates by TRC proficiency levels. Finally, it appears that the achievement levels adopted by the SBE for the i-Ready result in similar outcomes for students who take the i-Ready and EOG.

[16] It should be noted that only one LEA was approved to use the i-Ready assessment in 2013-14. Because SERVE agreed to protect the anonymity of any LEA that provided LAA data we sought and received permission from the LEA that provided i-Ready data to include their results in this report with the knowledge that anonymity could not be guaranteed.

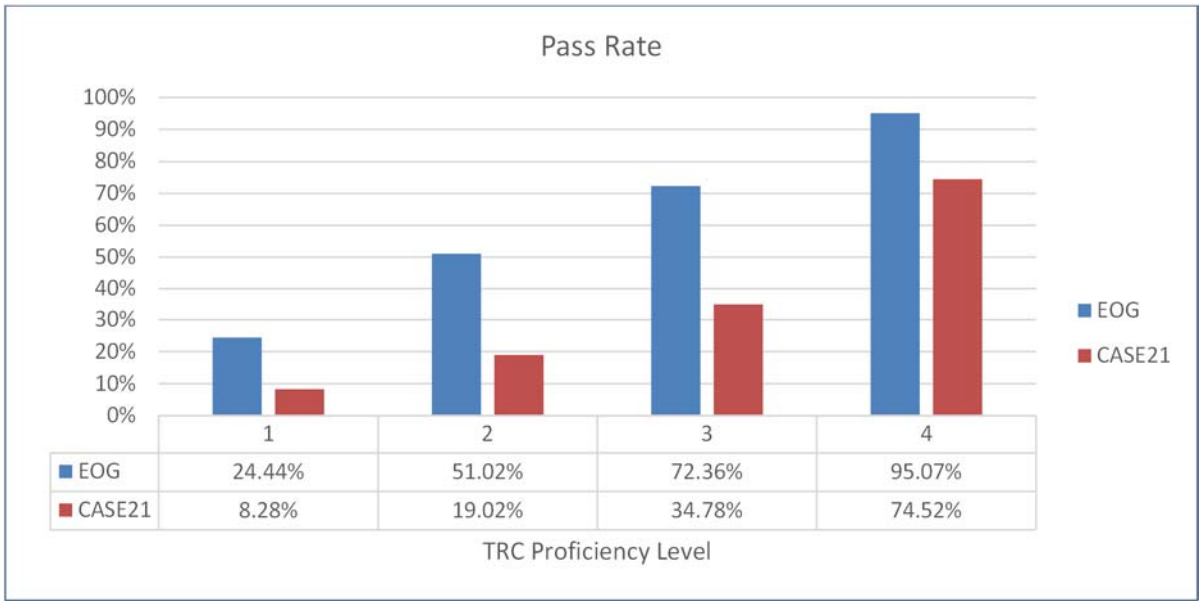
[17] Found in the full report.

CASE21. The CASE21 assessment, developed by Case Associates, is designed primarily for formative purposes, though comprehensive exams are available for summative purposes. Scores are reported as a percent-correct measure along with a projected achievement level that may be related to the NC achievement levels.[18] Benchmark tests can be administered in "a single class period" though comprehensive assessments may take longer. Benchmark 2 contains 30-35 items and 5 passages while benchmark 3 contains 45 items and 6 passages. Benchmarks may be taken as nine-week tests, midyear or final comprehensive tests prior to the administration of the state test.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the CASE21 analysis includes 10,115 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and CASE21. The Pearson correlation between the CASE21 and EOG was strong ($r = 0.79$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as CASE21 scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 5 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the CASE21 when matched on TRC proficiency level. In general, these results suggest that students were much less likely to be proficient on the CASE21 than the EOG across all reading levels, but this was particularly so for students in the lowest three reading levels.

Chart 5. *Pass Rates on the EOG and CASE21 by TRC Proficiency Levels*



[18] It should be noted that we were limited in the public information that we could find for the CASE21.

Summary of findings. Results of this study suggest that scores obtained on the CASE21 are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the CASE21 and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results of this study also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the CASE21 and EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. Results of this analysis suggest that an achievement level of 3 or higher on the CASE21 may be too high, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the CASE21 compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

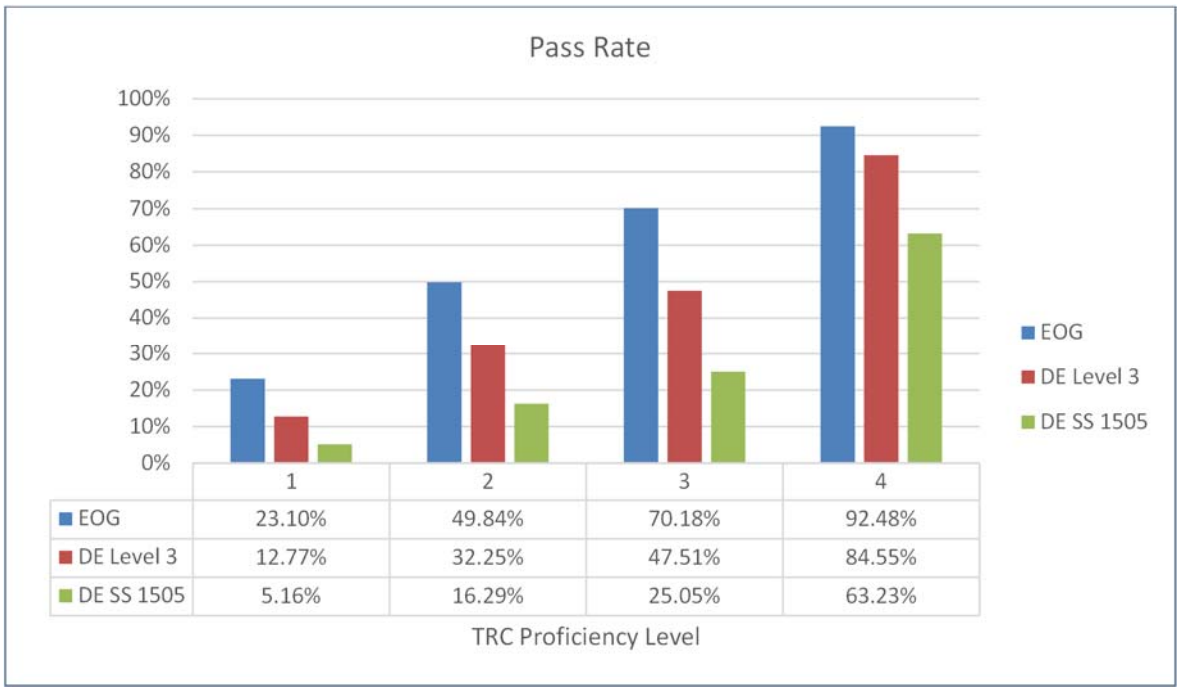
Discovery Education. Grade 3 reading benchmarks published by Discovery Education can be taken up to four times per year with the results of each assessment offering a prediction of future performance on the EOG. As such, these benchmark assessments serve formative and predictive purposes. The assessments are aligned to NCSCOS. It appears as though the reading benchmarks contain around 35 items. However, because we were unable to obtain specific information on this assessment, additional information about this assessment is limited (please see the full report).

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the Discovery Education analysis includes 2,162 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the Discovery Education assessment. The Pearson correlation between the Discovery Education and EOG was strong ($r = 0.77$, $p < .01$), indicating that in general, as Discovery Education scores increase so does performance on the EOG.

Chart 6 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to Discovery Education by proficiency levels on the TRC. The Discovery Education assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed to pass the assessment has changed. As such, “DE Level 3” in the chart below represents the 2013-14 achievement level of level 3 or 4 that most LEAs adopted on the assessment, whereas “DE SS 1505” represents the 2014-15 SBE approved achievement level of a scale score of 1505 (which falls within level 3).

In general, these results suggest that students were less likely to be proficient on the Discover Education assessment than the EOG across all reading levels, but this was particularly so for students in the lowest three reading levels.

Chart 6. *Pass Rates on the EOG and Discovery Education by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	23.10%	49.84%	70.18%	92.48%
DE Level 3	12.77%	32.25%	47.51%	84.55%
DE SS 1505	5.16%	16.29%	25.05%	63.23%

Summary of findings. Results suggest that scores obtained on the Discovery Education are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the Discovery Education assessment and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results also suggest that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the Discovery Education assessment and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 3 or higher that most LEAs adopted most likely resulted in the Discovery Education being more difficult for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. In 2014-15, the achievement level was raised to a scale score of 1505, making this assessment even more difficult for 3rd grade students to reach proficiency compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

Appendix A: Teacher Logs of Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring

Read to Achieve Tracking Logs

Teachers in the Middle of Year (MOY) observation sample were asked to complete a log of the time they spent conducting benchmarking and progress monitoring. Participants were asked to record daily minutes spent conducting mCLASS:Reading 3D assessments over a four-week span. Because some teachers completed logs during the MOY benchmarking window and others did not, teachers were asked to report time spent on three different aspects of benchmarking and progress monitoring by recording the number of minutes per day that they engaged in the following assessment activities:

1. Benchmarking
2. Progress monitoring during the benchmarking window. Although NCDPI does not require teachers to progress monitor during the benchmarking windows it was reported by a few teachers.
3. Progress monitoring after the benchmarking window closed
   Seventy-four classroom teachers returned the completed logs with a return rate of 70%.

Table 1 displays the grade levels of teachers that completed an assessment log.

Table 1. *Teacher Grade Level for Returned Logs*

Teacher Grade Level	# of Logs Completed
Kindergarten	8
1st Grade	24
2nd Grade	18
3rd Grade	24

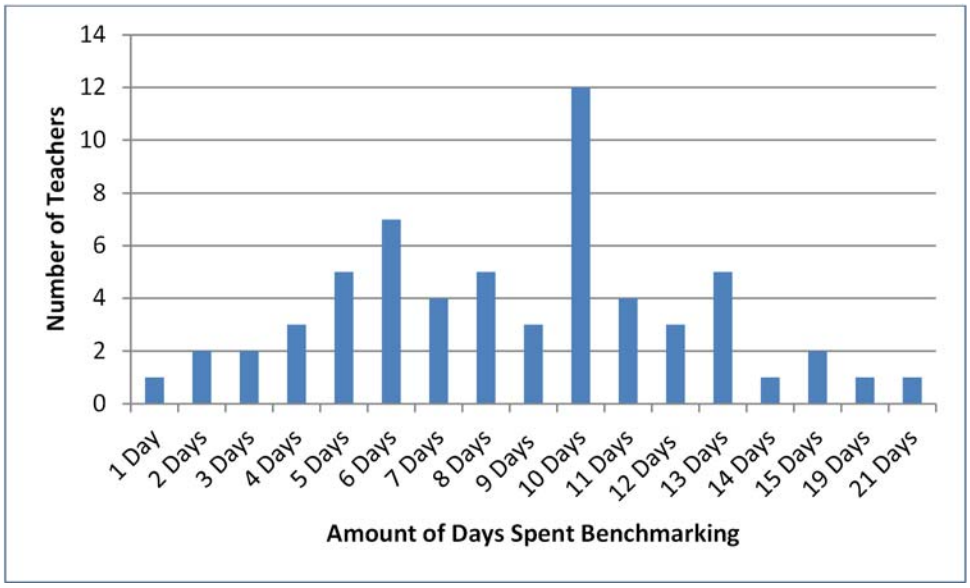
Benchmarking

Of the 74 teachers who returned their logs, 13 did not report any benchmarking minutes. We know from observations and interviews that 4 of these teachers are not responsible for benchmarking, their students are benchmarked by non-classroom teachers such as the reading specialist or the curriculum director. The other nine teachers began logging after benchmarking was completed.

For the 61 teachers who reported time benchmarking, the number of days tracked ranged from 1 day to 21 days. The average number of days logged for benchmarking was 8.75 days. A few teachers who reported a low number of days benchmarking reported that they

were only responsible for administering the DIBELS to their students and that other non-classroom teachers assisted by administering the TRC. The most frequently reported number of days benchmarking was 10 which 12 teachers reported. Chart 1 displays the number of days benchmarking and the number of teachers who logged the amount of days spent.

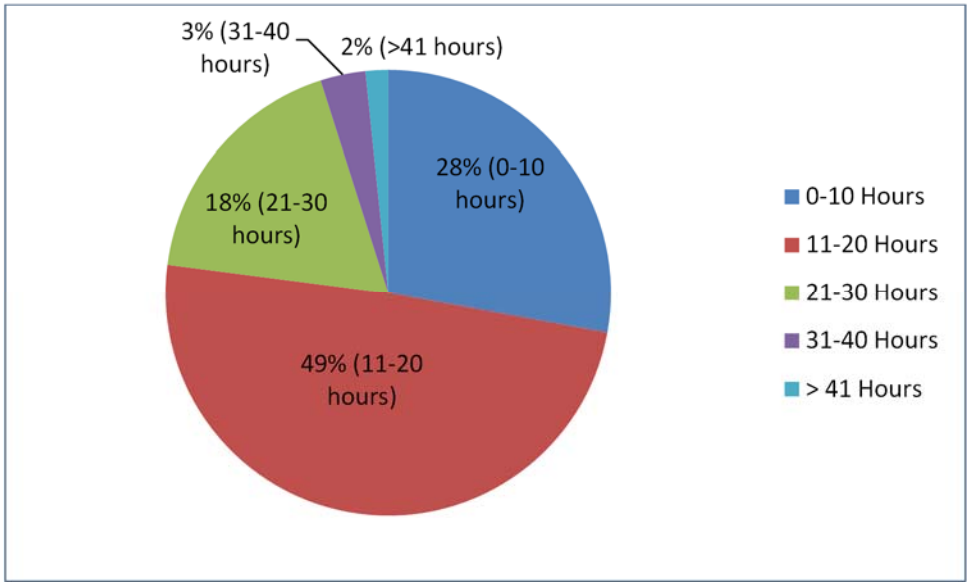
Chart 1. *Number of Days Benchmarking and Number of Teachers*



The total amount of time spent benchmarking by a classroom teacher varied from 2 hours to 55 hours during the four-week period. As with the number of days logged, teachers who are only responsible for a portion of the benchmarking, for example teachers who only administered the DIBELS, tended to report less time spent on benchmarking. Kindergarten teachers also reported the overall shortest daily average time spent benchmarking. Across all grades the overall daily average time spent benchmarking was 1.7 hours. The range of overall benchmarking minutes and the overall daily average spent by grade are shown in Table 2.

Of the 61 classroom teachers that reported benchmarking, 49% spent between 11 and 20 hours benchmarking students, 28% spent from 2 to 10 hours, 18% spent between 21 and 30 hours, and 5% spent greater than 31 hours. Chart 2 displays the total number of hours spent benchmarking during the MOY assessments for Read to Achieve.

Chart 2. *Total Hours Reported for MOY Benchmarking (over a 3 week period)*



Third grade classroom teachers spent an average of 16.80 hours during the three week benchmarking period, 2nd grade spent an average of 14.95 hours, and 1st grade teachers spent an average of 15.08 hours. Kindergarten teachers averaged the least amount of time benchmarking at 10.12 hours. Some LEAs asked for extensions of the benchmarking window, meaning their average hours per day benchmarking decreased but the overall number of hours benchmarking remained the same.

Table 2. *Grade Level Benchmarking Times*

Grade Level	Range of Daily Minutes Spent Benchmarking	Overall Daily Average Per Teacher	Average Total Number Hours Spent MOY Benchmarking
Kindergarten	380 – 1250	1.57 hours	10.12
1st Grade	275 – 1845	1.69 hours	15.08
2nd Grade	255 – 1920	1.78 hours	14.95
3rd Grade	120 – 3300	1.78 hours	16.80

Progress Monitoring

Sixty-seven of 74 teachers (90.5%) logged time for progress monitoring. The majority of teachers only reported conducting progress monitoring outside of the benchmarking windows.

Table 3 displays, by grade, the average daily amount of time spent progress monitoring as well as the total number of minutes progress monitoring during the period that teachers were logging their minutes.

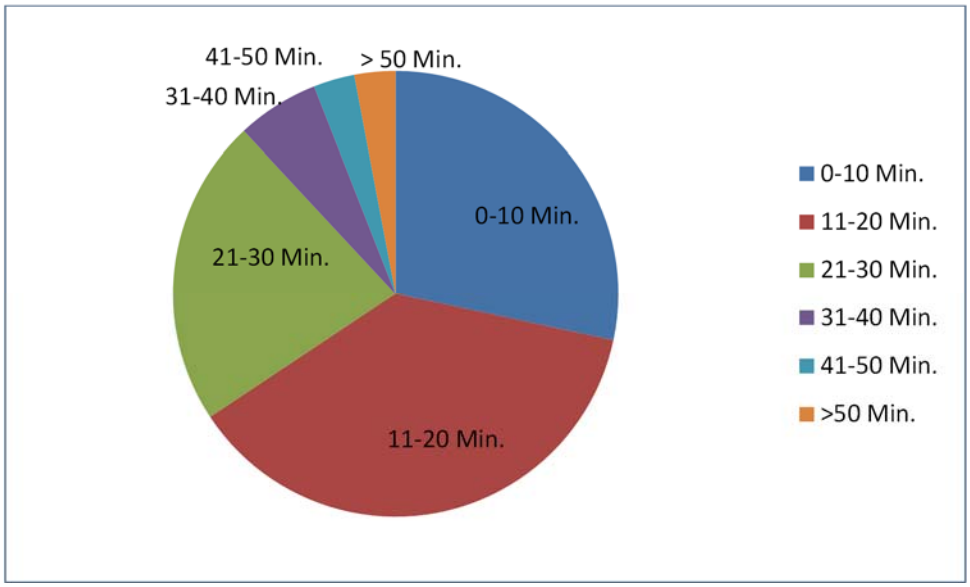
The majority (66%) of teachers spend on average fewer than 20 minutes per day progress monitoring their students, according to the amount of time they entered in their logs.

Table 3. *Progress Monitoring (PM) Time by Grade*

Grade Level	Range of Daily Time Spent PM in Minutes	Average Daily Time Spent PM in Minutes
Kindergarten	8.67 –30.00	15.60
1st Grade	5.75 – 90.00	17.50
2nd Grade	5.31 – 46.67	13.09
3rd Grade	3.50 – 60.00	12.40

It should be noted that the progress monitoring times reported may not be a true reflection of typical progress monitoring time, due to the fact that 51 teachers reported snow days or weather delays during the logging period. Therefore, teachers might have had to double-up on progress monitoring to make up for missed schools days. Chart 3 displays the average daily minutes spent progress monitoring.

Chart 3. *Overall Daily Average Spent Progress Monitoring*



Overall Time Classroom Teachers Spent on mCLASS:Reading 3D Assessments

The 74 classroom teachers who returned tracking logs spent an overall average of 15.96 hours assessing students for Read to Achieve spanning a four-week period of time around the Middle of Year (MOY) benchmark period. This time includes both benchmarking and progress monitoring. Benchmarking for MOY by classroom teachers accounted for 78% of the time as compared to the 22% spent progress monitoring.

Appendix B: mCLASS:Reading 3D Teacher Interview

Introduction

In the winter of the 2014-2015 school year, 91 teachers took part in interviews related to their use of mCLASS:Reading 3D. Within each school contacted we asked administrators to identity 2-3 teachers who would be willing to work to participate in observations and interviews and would be willing to complete the time logs. Our goal was to include around 100 teachers. This number was selected based on SERVE's capacity to conduct in-depth and meaningful qualitative data collection. At the outset of the evaluation project staff agreed to allocate resources to additional interviews and observations if our effort did not reach saturation (i.e., the point at which no new information is generated with additional cases). However, we felt that the targeted number of observations resulted in robust findings with little need for additional interviews. Although this is a small sample of the K-3 teachers in North Carolina, it is large enough to expect that the diversity of teachers' opinions would be represented. There are questions where many teachers did not answer, either because the question was not applicable, they did not know the answer, or they just did not have a strong feeling about the issue and chose not to respond. Teacher responses are presented in tables so the number of teachers responding is clear for all questions.

Teachers were asked questions related to their impressions of mCLASS:Reading 3D, the training they received, the amount of time required to assess students during progress monitoring and benchmarking windows, the classroom environment and student activities during assessment times, and how teachers utilized the information gleaned from mCLASS:Reading 3D. Information resulting from these interviews is contained in this report. Teachers were allowed to skip questions that they did not feel comfortable answering or that did not apply to them. Because of this, the number of responses varies by question.

Teacher Impressions of mCLASS:Reading 3D

During the 2014-2015 school year, we collected data from teachers about their experience with and comfort level using mCLASS:Reading 3D. In general, most teachers who took part in the interview had fewer than three years of experience using mCLASS:Reading 3D (see Table 1). With increased use, they were more comfortable administering the assessment and using the results to inform instruction.

Table 1. *Length of Time Using mCLASS:Reading 3D at Their School*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Fewer than one year	7	7.7%
Fewer than two years	28	30.8%
Fewer than three years	26	28.6%
Fewer than four years	11	12.1%
Fewer than five years	13	14.2%
Six years or more	4	4.4%
No response	2	2.2%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Teachers who had used the assessment before the implementation of Read to Achieve in 2013-2014 reported more comfort using the assessment. Because 2014-2015 was the second year of implementation for most teachers, we questioned teachers about whether their opinions of mCLASS:Reading 3D had changed since the 2013-2014 school year. One-third of teachers had a better impression of Reading 3D this year and found it to be more useful. Overwhelmingly, teachers felt more comfortable using the assessment (88%) this year. The following three tables provide teacher responses as related to overall impression of mCLASS:Reading 3D.

Table 2. *Teachers' Overall Opinion of Usefulness of mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Went up	34	37.4%
Went down	8	8.8%
Stayed same	36	39.5%
No response	13	14.3%
Total	**91**	**100.0%**

Table 3. *Teachers' Change in Comfort Level Using mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent
More comfortable	81	89.0%
Less comfortable	1	1.1%
Same comfort level	5	5.5%
No response	4	4.4%
Total	**91**	**100.0%**

Teachers were asked if they had changed how they are using mCLASS:Reading 3D since they began using it. One-fourth of teachers felt there was no change since they began using it. Still, three-fourths felt they were more efficient at giving the assessment, better able to use the data, and more prepared to provide instruction.

Table 4. *Teachers' Change of Use of Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent
No change	24	26.4%
Better prepared to provide instruction	22	24.1%
More efficient at giving assessment	16	17.6%
Better at understanding or using the data	16	17.6%
No response	13	14.3%
Total	**91**	**100.0%**

Teachers were asked how they would rate mCLASS:Reading 3D as a diagnostic tool. The majority of respondents felt the assessment provided good data on pinpointing reading-related concerns in students.

Table 5. *How Teachers Rated mCLASS:Reading 3D as a Diagnostic Tool*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Poor	5	5.5%
Fair	12	13.2%
Good	50	55.0%
Excellent	21	23.1%
No Response	3	3.2%
Total	**91**	**100.0%**

Teachers were asked what assessments they used to determine their students' reading skill level before using mCLASS:Reading 3D. Some teachers gave multiple answers for a total of 97 responses. Some teachers did not name a specific test but did answer the question, such as "All the usual ways, there are lots of way to assess a student's skills."

Table 6. *Assessment Used Prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Running records	23	23.7%
Developmental Reading Assessments (DRA)	16	16.5%
Teacher has only used Reading 3D	19	19.6%
Teacher did not name a specific test	11	11.3%
Unnamed county or local benchmark	5	5.2%
AIMS Web	3	3.1%
Fountas and Pinnell	3	3.1%
Informal reading inventory (IRI)	2	2.1%
Success maker	1	1.0%
Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)	1	1.0%
No Response	13	13.4%
Total	**97***	**100%**

*Note. Teachers gave multiple answers

Teachers who reported using previous assessments were asked how they compared to using mCLASS:Reading 3D. Nearly half gave no response, and of those who did respond, one-third felt the previous assessments took less time. Responses (displayed below in Table 7) indicated the previous assessments took less time because there were fewer tests, fewer students to assess, and/or fewer technological issues with test administration.

Table 7. *How Previous Assessments Compared to mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent
No Response	40	44.0%
Teachers reported it took less time	17	18.6%
Teachers reported it could be folded into their guided reading groups	8	8.8%
Teachers reported it took about the same amount of time	7	7.7%
Teachers reported it took less time because they did fewer tests (did not do both TRC and DIBELS)	5	5.5%
Teachers reported they had more autonomy about how often to do assessment	5	5.5%
Teachers reported it took less time because fewer students were assessed	3	3.3%
Teachers reported Reading 3D is better than what they did before	4	4.4%
Teachers reported it took less time because there weren't technology problems	2	2.2%
Total	**91**	**100.0%**

Training

Ensuring teachers understand how to administer mCLASS:Reading 3D is an important aspect of the assessment. Teachers were asked where they received training on mCLASS:Reading 3D, if they thought that training was adequate, and what they found to be most helpful. Eighty-five teachers stated they had received training. However, 34% percent of teachers felt training that the training they received was not adequate, needed refresher training, or some training on a specific part of the test, such as writing. Many teachers reported that they learned it as they used it.

Table 8. *Where Teachers Received Training on mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Response	Frequency	Percent

Teacher was only trained at school	20	22.0%
Teacher did not report who trained them	20	22.0%
Teacher was trained by colleague in a train the trainer scenario	16	17.5%
Teacher was trained by someone at DPI, the district, or someone who was not an employee at their school	13	14.3%
Teacher is a trainer at his/her school	10	11.0%
College course/internship	6	6.6%
No training	3	3.3%
No response	3	3.3%
Total	**91**	**100%**

It was of interest to examine whether teachers who did and did not feel they had adequate training differed on their reports of what type of training they received. Of those teachers who reported they received adequate training, they were most often trained by someone other than school staff, through a college course/internship, or were trainers themselves.

Table 9. *Teacher Reports of What was Most Helpful About the Training Received*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Demos where teachers practiced giving the assessment with hands-on practice	23	25.2%
Talking to other teachers about what they do	12	13.2%
Just learning by doing	10	11.0%
Watching videos	3	3.3%
Modeling	4	4.4%
Advanced training/leader training (more intensive training)	2	2.2%
Refresher course	2	2.2%
No response/No component stood out as most helpful	35	38.5%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Time

Time as related to mCLASS:Reading 3D has been an area of concern for teachers—time required to progress monitor and benchmark students, time from instruction, and time to reflect on how the data will be used. Teachers also identified other assessments which they were required to administer during the school year in addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D. Teachers were asked multiple questions to capture information related to the amount of time spent on both mCLASS:Reading 3D and other assessments.

In addition to asking teachers about time spent assessing students on mCLASS:Reading 3D, we asked them what other assessments they administered throughout the year and how much time they spent administering them. Ninety-two teachers were interviewed, seven did not respond, and 17 said there were no additional tests administered. In general, there was no uniformity in their responses; and thus, it proved difficult to determine an exact number of hours/days spent testing. We looked at the range of other assessments administered throughout the year and, of those that were calculable, a collective number of days spent testing was estimated. We based the number of days on a six-hour school day; hence, if a teacher responded "3 hours a day for two days," we counted that as one day. Fifteen teachers did not provide any time frame, and almost twenty gave vague answers, such as "every day for a week," "three-four weeks in December," "three times a year," or "every six weeks." Finally, ten teachers considered portfolios as an additional assessment (beyond mCLASS:Reading 3D), and one of those stated her class spent 30 minutes each day working on portfolio passages. Cumulative days spent testing ranged from a half day (N=9) to six days (N=2), with one day being the most common (N=20). It should be noted that while the cumulative days spent testing in one classroom may have been two days, the time may actually have been 2-3 hours each day for two weeks.

Chart 1. *Number of Cumulative Days Assessing Students in Addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring*

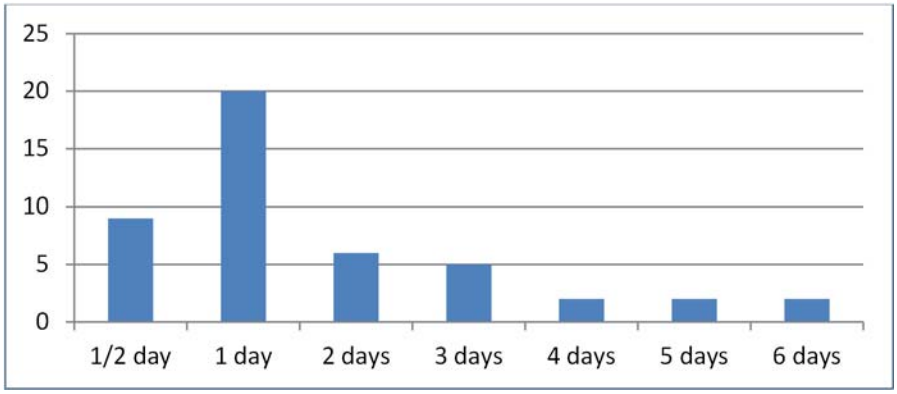


Table 10. *Assessments Administered in Addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Assessment	Number of teacher responses
Math, non-specified (local and/or state)	49
Reading, non-specified	17
Writing, non-specified	13
Score 21	3
Letters/high frequency words/sight words	9
IQ/Behavior	4

Assessment	Number of teacher responses
I-Ready	5
Discovery Ed.	1
Science, non-specified	3
Social Studies, non-specified	1
Case 21 (reading and math)	5
AimsWeb (reading and math)	3
STAR (reading and math)	1
Fountas and Pinnell	1
RtA Portfolio	10
None	17
N/A	7

Math assessments were the most common type of assessment given to students in addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D (see Table 10 above). Many teachers gave insufficient information to allow us to determine if the math assessment was state-mandated, district-mandated, or a combination of the two. This total also does not include those teachers who identified a packaged assessment that includes *both* a reading and math component, such as Case 21 (N=5), I-Ready (N=5), AimsWeb (N=3), or STAR (N=1). In addition to these combined assessments (e.g., those assessments that included both reading and math components), some teachers said they also administered a district reading-only assessment (N=17) but did not specify a particular one, although it is likely Schoolnet or district-generated. Identified reading assessments included Score 21 (N=3), Discovery Education (N=1), Fountas and Pinnell (N=1). Eight teachers said they were also required by the district to administer tests of letter recognition or high-frequency/sight words. Thirteen teachers were required to administer local writing assessments. Four stated behavior/IQ tests for AIG placement, three gave science assessments, and one administered a social studies assessment.

These results indicate that many districts require assessments in addition to the state-mandated assessments. This local decision may be adding to teachers' feelings that they test too often and have limited time to instruct students.

We asked teachers how much time they spend progress monitoring each day. Seventy-six teachers were able to give us an estimate of how many minutes they spend on an average day. This information is below.

Table 11. *Daily Minutes Spent Progress Monitoring*

	Range	Mean	Median
Number of minutes	1.0-120.0	29.9	21.5

We asked teachers how long it takes them to benchmark their class in Reading 3D (including any prep time) at Beginning of Year (BOY), Middle of Year (MOY), and End of Year (EOY), and if there are significant differences between BOY, MOY, and EOY. Answers differed by teacher and grade. The mCLASS:Reading 3D assessment has more components for BOY than EOY, and therefore, BOY may take longer. This is also true because at BOY teachers are less familiar with students' abilities and may take longer to determine the correct level for testing. At BOY teachers are less familiar with their students, but they do have prior years' data history on the majority of their students. The number of components of the assessment given at each benchmark varies not only by time of year but also by grade level. Table 12 below reflects the number of hours teachers reported benchmarking across the three assessment periods. Not all teachers felt that they could answer this question; the table below includes data for 62 teachers.

Table 12. *Hours Spent Benchmarking During Benchmarking Window*

	Range	Mean	Median
Number of minutes	4.0-67.5	24.2	19.5

As a follow-up question, we asked, "Are you or teachers at your school doing anything different or innovative to cut down on the amount of time that mCLASS:Reading 3D takes to administer?"

Table 13. *Strategies Used to Reduce mCLASS:Reading 3D Assessment Time*

Response	Frequency	Percent
No strategy reported	31	34.1%
A sweep team does all the assessment (A group of people assess all students instead of classroom teachers, such as interventionists, Title I staff, or a group from central office)	14	15.4%
A sweep team helps with assessment but doesn't do it all (for example they just do the DIBELS leaving the TRC for the teacher)	12	13.2%
Some sort of pre-organization/list (plan for which students will assess on which days; making a list of kids to test with estimations of their testing level)	11	12.0%
Teaching assistant teaches the class so teacher can assess	9	9.9%
Teachers split up their class and send them to other same grade teachers so they can focus on testing for 1-3 days	6	6.6%
Principal hires a substitute to teach class	4	4.4%
Assess multiple kids at once	3	3.3%

Assess when teacher is not normally instructing (i.e. planning time, during specials, or during morning work)	1	1.1%
Total	**91**	**100%**

We asked teachers, "How much time, if any, do you spend interpreting and using mCLASS:Reading 3D data for instructional decision making?" Only about one-third gave us a response that could be converted to minutes per week. On average, teachers spent 59 minutes per week interpreting and using mCLASS:Reading 3D data, with a range of 8-210 and a median of 50. Rather than providing precise times, many teachers made more general estimates, such as "more than 30 minutes a week" (N=33), "once every other week/twice a month" (N=17)," once a semester or once after testing; or just to make groups" (N=30).

One of the greatest concerns teachers expressed in the first year of implementing mCLASS:Reading 3D was loss of instructional time due to progress monitoring and benchmarking. To better understand this issue, we asked the following, "We've heard a lot about lost instructional time associated with mCLASS:Reading 3D. What does that mean to you, specifically? What would you be doing during the time you are doing mCLASS:Reading 3D or what would you do differently if you did not have to benchmark or progress monitor?" The following table is a summary of the most common answers.

Table 14. *What Teachers Reported They Would Do with Their Time if They Did Not Have to Benchmark and/or Progress Monitor*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Guided reading/small groups in reading	39	42.8%
More instruction/teaching	18	19.8%
Higher quality instruction/teaching	12	13.2%
Teaching instead of an assistant or less qualified adult teaching	5	5.5%
Doing fewer worksheets/seat work/busy work	4	4.4%
Writing	2	2.2%
One-on-one reading that is not mCLASS:Reading 3D	2	2.2%
Teaching a subject other than ELA	1	1.1%
Other	5	5.5%
No response	3	3.3%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Environment

In an attempt to better understand who is administering mCLASS:Reading 3D in the classroom, what students are doing while the teacher is assessing individual students, and the quality of instruction students receive while the teacher is assessing, we asked questions related to the overall classroom environment and student activities.

Ideally, progress monitoring is intended to be embedded into the regular daily routine. We asked teachers questions about their understanding of how to embed progress monitoring into instruction. As Table 15 reflects, one-third of teachers were unclear of what we meant by embedding progress monitoring into instruction. One-half of the teachers gave answers such as, "I just go and quickly pull a student, assess him or her and dismiss them" suggesting that they do not embed progress monitoring into instruction. Many teachers described using data to inform instruction but not in a way that reflected embedding as described by NCDPI. Teachers gave answers such as, "To use all the information you get from 3D for instruction. It tells you where to take your student and helps to set goals." Only a small percentage (12%) of teachers described something that seemed to indicate that they understood the intention of embedding such as one teacher's comment, "Some teachers who have assistants will have a teacher have a group during intervention time, and then they would PM and then do intervention immediately based on that for 20 minutes."

Table 15. *Teacher Understanding "Embedding mCLASS:Reading 3D Progress Monitoring into Instruction"*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Teacher gave an answer that is not embedding	47	51.6%
Teacher reported that s/he does not know what this is	28	30.8%
Teacher reported that s/he understood what this was and gave an example that did seem like embedding	11	12.1%
Other or no answer	5	5.5%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Teachers were asked whether they do all their own progress monitoring and benchmarking or if they have help. More teachers, by far, do all of their own progress monitoring (83%) which is expected because progress monitoring is intended to immediately inform instruction. This is very different from the number of teachers who do all of their own benchmarking (22%). Many teachers have assistance by someone else for both benchmarking (27%) and progress monitoring (15%).

Table 16. *Who Conducts Progress Monitoring and Benchmarking*

Response	Frequency	Percent
I do all of my own benchmarking	20	22.0%
I do benchmarking with the assistance of someone else	26	28.5%
All of my students are benchmarked by someone else	45	49.5%
Total benchmarking responses	**91**	**100%**
I do all of my own progress monitoring	76	83.5%
I do progress monitoring with the assistance of someone else	14	15.4%
All of my students are progress monitored by someone else	1	1.1%
Total progress monitoring responses	**91**	**100%**

Teachers were asked what the rest of the class is doing while they are benchmarking or progress monitoring with an individual student. Some teachers gave more than one answer. About 60% of the responses indicate that students worked independently or in small groups but not with an adult.

Table 17. *Activities of Students Not Being Assessed*

Response	First Answer	Percent
Individual work or reading silently	55	42.0%
Small group work or centers/working in pairs but not with an adult	25	19.1%
Small group work with an adult	17	13.0%
Whole group instruction with someone who is not the teacher	8	6.1%
Work in some other subject	6	4.6%
Other	6	4.6%
No response	14	10.7%
Total	**131***	**100.0%**

*Note. Teachers gave multiple answers

Teachers were asked if they felt that students were receiving high-quality instruction while they were assessing. Twenty percent of teachers did not answer this, because someone else did most of their assessments. Of those who responded, only one-third felt students were receiving high-quality instruction while they were assessing.

Table 18. *Teachers' Perceptions of Whether Students are Receiving High-Quality Instruction While They are Assessing Other Students*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	13	14.2%

Mostly yes	9	9.9%
Mostly no	5	5.5%
No	39	42.9%
Ambiguous response	5	5.5%
No response	20	22.0%
Total	**91**	**100%**

When teachers were asked why students were not receiving high-quality instruction, the majority provided responses to indicate students were not receiving direct instruction, teacher feedback, or were simply occupied with busywork-type of activities. The table below provides more detail.

Table 19. *Teacher Responses About Why Students are not Receiving High-Quality Instruction*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Students are doing busywork/worksheets/something of low quality	11	12.0%
Teacher cannot provide one-on-one or small group that is not mCLASS:Reading 3D	10	11.0%
Teacher cannot correct their work/catch their mistakes	9	9.9%
General-Instruction would be better if teacher were available	8	8.8%
Students exhibit more behavior problems	7	7.7%
Teacher has created a packet or some way of providing higher quality activities	5	5.5%
Teacher cannot introduce/teach any new material	5	5.5%
Teacher has an assistant/other adult providing instruction	4	4.4%
Students sit with their hands up doing nothing and teacher cannot do anything about it	3	3.3%
Other	5	5.5%
No Response	24	26.4%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Teachers were asked if they feel comfortable with their ability to manage the rest of the class while they are assessing. If teachers did not do all their own benchmarking or progress monitoring, they were not asked this question.

Table 20. *Teachers' Comfort with Their Ability to Manage the Class While Assessing*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	60	66.0%
No	12	13.0%
No answer	19	21.0%

Total	**91**	**100%**

Teachers were asked if they had daily small group instruction in reading. All teachers said yes to this question. As a follow-up, teachers were asked what other students are doing when they are conducting small groups. Some teachers gave more than one answer.

Table 21. *Activities of Students When the Teacher is Conducting Small Groups*

Response	Frequency	Percent
Individual work or reading silently	40	30.5%
Small group work or centers/working in pairs but not with an adult	30	22.9%
Small group work with an adult	26	19.9%
Daily Five	13	9.9%
Working/reading with a partner	4	3.1%
Work in some other subject	2	1.5%
Other	2	1.5%
No response	14	10.7%
Total	**131***	**100%**

*Note. Teachers gave multiple answers

Next, teachers were asked how students' activities differ when teachers are conducting small groups compared to when teachers are progress monitoring. General answers suggesting that students would be receiving less instruction or less high-quality instruction during mCLASS:Reading 3D assessment included comments such as, "Students would be looking at books" or "I am not providing guided reading." Thirty-nine out of 91 teachers reported that it would not look different or gave no response.

Table 22. *Teacher Responses to How Student Activities Differ*

Response	Frequency	Percent
It is not different	22	24.2%
When teachers are in small groups students can check in with them/They can address problems that come up	16	17.6%
Teacher would have her own small group doing guided reading or another activity	10	11.0%
TA would be providing some small groups	2	2.2%
Teacher would be one-on-one with a student	4	4.4%
Students cannot do higher level work because it is noisier	4	4.4%
General answer suggesting that students would be receiving less instruction or less high-quality instruction	14	15.4%
Other	2	2.2%

No Response	17	18.6%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Utilizing Results

Data collection and use are fundamental to the success of mCLASS:Reading 3D. The mCLASS:Reading 3D teacher interviews questioned teachers about how they utilized data, including with whom data was discussed and how they are used in the classroom. We asked teachers where and/or with whom they discuss students' assessment data. Most teachers reported that they talk about how to use data to guide instruction in professional learning communities (PLCs) or informally with colleagues.

Table 23. *Time with Colleagues Discussing Using mCLASS:Reading 3D Data to Guide Instruction*

Response	Frequency	Percentage
They talk in PLCs or grade level meetings	41	45.0%
They said they discuss with colleagues but did not elaborate about with whom they meet	16	17.6%
Planned meeting with an administrator other than the principal	10	11.0%
Not meeting	8	8.8%
They (grade level) meet with the principal to discuss data but this is not a full faculty meeting	7	7.7%
They are planning this or about to begin	3	3.3%
Other	3	3.3%
They discuss in faculty meetings	3	3.3%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Teachers were asked how they used mCLASS:Reading 3D data. Teachers gave multiple answers. A typical answer included more than one use, such as "[The data] helps me form my groups and lets me know what skills to teach." Sixty-five percent said they used mCLASS:Reading 3D data to create groups for instruction (40%) and to determine needed instructional strategies (25%).

Table 24. *How Teachers Use Reading 3D Data*

Response	Frequency
Helps teacher create groups for instruction	72
Helps teacher determine strategies to use with certain kids/what skills to teach/ choose books and lessons	45

Teacher uses Home Connect to talk to parents about data/report cards	21
Teacher uses *Now What* to come up with ideas for groups, parent help at home/homework, classroom volunteers	4
Teacher uses data to get a baseline, figure out where students levels are and how far they've come/where going	8
Teacher uses data for identifying students for special education/gifted/PEPs	8
Teacher spends time teaching writing skills to help students be successful on the mCLASS	8
Teacher uses data for Response to Intervention	13
Total	**179***

*Note. Teachers gave multiple answers

Teachers were asked open-ended questions about how and where they looked at their data. Because most of these were open-ended teachers' answers may not have included all the ways that they look at their data. It is possible that more teachers are looking at data than these numbers suggest.

Data were most often discussed in teacher meetings and/or with colleagues—with 45% of teachers reporting examining data in PLCs and 17% with their professional peers. About 20% discussed mCLASS:Reading 3D data with their principal or another administrator. There was a difference in how teachers accessed data and how much these data were discussed when they did not do their own assessments. Only 45% of these teachers said they spoke to the assessor about their students' data; 18% said they logged into the testing site on their own. We probed further and asked teachers directly if they look at their data when someone else does the assessment and almost all teachers gave a definitive "yes." We did not ask directly if they log into the site to look at their data alone vs. with a colleague or administrator but many teachers mentioned both. An additional 25% answered the open-ended question that they discussed the data in PLCs or with administrators. Because only 18% of teachers reported that they logged in and looked at their data in the open-ended question but when asked directly they almost all reported that they did, it seems likely that more teachers were utilizing the data in ways that they did not mention in the open-ended question. *Therefore these numbers should be viewed with caution.*

Table 25. *How Teachers Review Their Students' Data When Students are Assessed by Someone Else*

Response	Frequency	Percent
N/A	42	46.2%

Response	Frequency	Percent
Casual talk/teacher can pull assessor aside and ask a question	23	25.2%
Log into the website and look at data	9	9.9%
Teacher gets information during PLC or faculty or grade level meeting	9	9.9%
Teacher reviews students' data with an administrator	3	3.3%
Teachers receive a folder of students' written work	2	2.2%
Teacher doesn't know who assessed each student due to multiple assessors	2	2.2%
Other	1	1.1%
Total	**91**	**100%**

Open Responses

At the end of the interview about mCLASS:Reading 3D, we asked teachers if there was anything else they wanted us to know. Roughly 80 teachers had additional remarks, most with multiple comments.

There were many positive remarks that support the usefulness of mCLASS:Reading 3D. Eight teachers felt the data was worth the time, and an additional twenty like the data they get from mCLASS:Reading 3D, with specific favorable comments on TRC (N=4), NWF (N=1), and DIBELS (N=4). One teacher felt the time from instruction was not too great due to how the school organized testing. Lastly, five teachers felt the materials provided, such as *Now What?*, parent reports, and print outs were very useful.

While many of the comments could be grouped into "big idea" topics, it is important to note some of the specific issues teachers had with testing. Comments fell into three primary topics—(1) General concerns, (2) Differences in testing procedures; and (3) Specific issues with mCLASS:Reading 3D. The numbers next to the comments below indicate the number of responses for that remark. Some of these responses do reflect comments we have heard in informal settings, but it is important to note that these data are anecdotal, often being reported by fewer than 5 teachers.

General Concerns

Some teachers expressed concern with the amount of time mCLASS:Reading 3D takes to administer and/or the time the time it takes from instruction (N=22). One teacher remarked

that even with teaching assistants helping in the class, it is difficult to track which aspects of instruction students who were being assessed missed and that it is easier just to re-teach the material to everyone. Additionally, several teachers commented that teaching assistants are not certified teachers, and students are not getting the best possible instruction. Some districts have additional tests required by the district in addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D that also pull from instruction. Seven teachers commented that the whole process was too much for one person—testing, running the class, scoring, scheduling students who score in the red or yellow, etc. In fact, quite a few expressed a concern with the frequency with which the students who are scoring blow proficient and well below proficient are progress monitored, commenting there is not sufficient time to instruct students on weak skills before it is time to assess them again. Six teachers felt there are other assessments that could provide the same information or more in less time. Finally, teachers commented that the data received was not accurate/helpful (N=6), not aligned with the pacing guides, and caused undue stress on teachers (N=5), students (N=5), and parents (N=3).

Differences in Testing Procedures

There were some comments about the requirements of testing. For EOY, teachers are required to test students from a different class. Some schools have also implemented this in grades or assessment periods where it is not required. There were differences in the degree to which teachers are testing their own students versus students from another class. Two teachers said that no one at their school tests their own students, not even on the DIBELS. Four teachers remarked that they do not like not testing their students because they are not getting the information that can be gleaned by seeing them make specific errors. A couple of comments were about leveling, one teacher said, “If close to Level P, someone else has to benchmark.” Finally there was one complaint that when the Title I person tests students, no intervention is taking place during those weeks.

Perceptions of mCLASS:Reading 3D Assessment

Multiple responses focused on the quality of, or issues with, the actual mCLASS:Reading 3D assessment. The most common concern was the difficulty of the written portion. Seventeen respondents felt it was too difficult and five felt the scoring matrix was too limited. Still, two teachers felt the written component provided good information but felt it should not be a part of the reading score.

The inconsistency and difficulty of mCLASS:Reading 3D levels was of concern. Some teachers indicated that they felt the levels are too hard and/or not developmentally

appropriate for students (N=9). Reading 3D TRC book levels are aligned to the Fountas and Pinnell leveling system. Specifically, they said Level D was too difficult for kindergarten (N=4); 1st grade has to make the most growth, from a Level D to Level J (N=4); and the questions are too hard and/or poorly worded (N=7). Teachers also felt the requirement for the lower levels to read independently is too challenging for children who are accustomed to being read to and that the assessment should be oral at the lower levels (N=3). With regard to children with disabilities and English language learners, teachers felt the requirement to ask non-verbal children for oral responses was not appropriate. Some teachers felt that additional leveled books were needed (N=9).

Teachers felt there was a need for more training to promote uniformity in testing and scoring. Further, teachers felt they should be trained to assess at all grades and levels, given the skilled variance among students within the same grade. Finally, four teachers commented on the software and connection issues while assessing, such as the program logging teachers out when they were actively using the software.

Other

A few teachers made specific comments on book topics, format, and software scoring issues. These comments indicate a need to examine thoroughly the testing procedures and specific books used.

- [Grade Level 3] the book "about the English Channel, the kids think it is a TV station. It should be deleted."
- "There are universal book stoppers because of the way the questions are written. The one about the kite, there are no indentions to delineate the paragraphs and most kids don't see that and then summarize incorrectly based on the instructions, simply because they cannot see the right paragraph. "
- "When scoring on DIBELS, if they skip the line, we can delete the whole line, but on TRC we have to do it word for word. By the time we do that, they child has moved on a couple of lines with their reading."

Conclusion

In summary, most teachers had less than three years' experience with mCLASS:Reading 3D. Generally, they felt more comfortable now using the assessment, and their opinions grew more favorable with use. As a result of using mCLASS:Reading 3D, teachers felt more prepared to give the assessment, use the data, and provide instruction for students. While most teachers felt the training they received to use mCLASS:Reading 3D was adequate, over one-third expressed a need for additional training.

Time required to assess students in mCLASS:Reading 3D remained a concern for interviewed teachers although most teachers recognized that this tool was helpful and that they gleaned important knowledge from the data that informed their instruction. Teachers report spending, on average, 30 minutes each day progress monitoring students which meets expectations. Benchmarking should take about 12-15 hours during a three-week period based on the number of students in the class. Teachers spent an average of 24 hours benchmarking students across three assessment periods. Also, teachers spend about an hour each week interpreting and using the data for instructional decision-making. In addition to mCLASS:Reading 3D, teachers administer other assessments, such as a local reading assessment and those in other subjects, including math, social studies, and science. These additional assessments typically add a full day to the amount of time teachers spend assessing students.

Teachers were four times more likely to do all of their own progress monitoring than all of their own benchmarking. While teachers are assessing, students are most often engaged in independent or small group activities without the assistance of a teacher. While most teachers reported being comfortable with their ability to manage the class while assessing, they do not feel students are receiving high-quality instruction.

As related to interpreting and using data gleaned from mCLASS:Reading 3D, most teachers said they discuss the data with colleagues and use information to create groups for instruction and/or to determine which reading skills to teach and strategies to use.

Appendix C: Middle of Year 2014-2015 Benchmarking Observation Visits

In January and February of 2015 SERVE staff visited a total of 94 kindergarten through 3rd grade classroom teachers to observe Middle of Year (MOY) benchmarking assessments for Read to Achieve. Schools in the sample were selected at random from across the state. There was also a small cohort of schools that were selected from a list provided by NCDPI. The NCDPI list contained schools that the regional consultants felt had some innovative method for conducting the benchmarking assessment. Fourteen teachers, from five different elementary schools, were observed from NCDPI's list.

Table 1. *Grade Level of Teacher and Number of Benchmarking Observations*

Classroom Teacher Grade Level Taught	# of Teachers Observed
Kindergarten	8
Kindergarten – 1st Transition Class	1
1st Grade	30
2nd Grade	28
3rd Grade	27

Observations of Benchmarking Assessments

A wide variety of benchmarking assessment contexts were observed. These benchmarking assessment contexts generally fell into one of five categories below. In all situations the classroom teachers are not necessarily benchmarking their own students. The five types of situations observed include:

1) Teacher conducts the assessment within his/her own classroom and continues to have sole responsibility for management of their classroom while conducting the benchmarking assessments.
2) Teacher conducts the assessment within his/her own classroom with at least one other adult present in the classroom. Teacher conducts the benchmarking assessments as well as has shared responsibility for classroom management.
3) The teacher conducts the benchmarking assessment outside of the classroom and the teacher has someone else manage their classroom.
4) Someone other than the classroom teacher conducted the assessment within a child's regular classroom. For example, a reading specialist in the child's classroom pulls individual children to a testing assessment table while the teacher continues with the regular lessons.
5) Assessment by a non-classroom teacher conducted outside of the child's regular classroom. (i.e., a reading specialist in an office or empty classroom.)

Table 2. *Assessment Contexts Observed*

Assessment Context Type	# of Classrooms Observed	# Classrooms from NCDPI List
Teacher benchmarking as well as managing students without another adult present (#1)	32*	4
Teacher benchmarking as well as managing students with assistance of another adult (#2)	25	2
Teacher benchmarking out of classroom (#3)	30	5
Another assessor benchmarks within classroom while teacher continues teaching (#4)	4	3
Non-classroom teacher benchmarks outside of classroom (#5)	3	0

*In the 32 classrooms where the teacher was the only adult in the room there were an average of 18 students present while the teacher was benchmarking.

The Read to Achieve benchmark assessments observed included nine instruments. Observers saw the full range of assessments. The chart below shows what assessments were conducted. In some classrooms we observed more than one type of assessment instrument. Sometimes students took more than one type of assessment and on some occasions the teacher used a variety of assessment instruments. For example, a student might have taken the TRC and the DORF and in another classroom some students took the DORF while other students took the TRC.

The most common instrument that was observed being administered was the Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC). Observers saw this administered by 82 teachers.

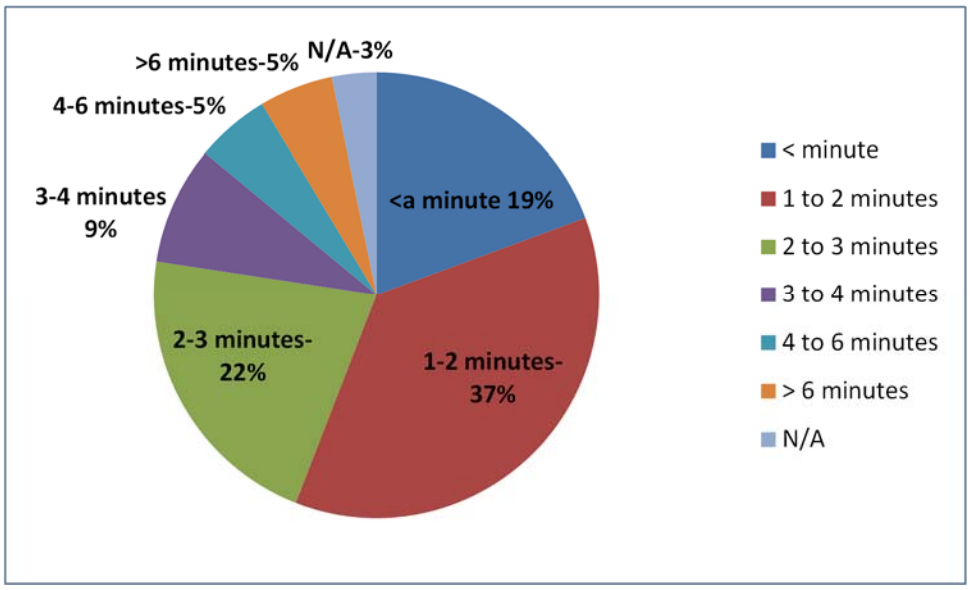
Table 3. *Instruments Used for Benchmarking*

Benchmark Instrument
First Sound Fluency (FSF)
Letter Naming Fluency (LNF)
Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF)
Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF)
DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF)
DORF Retell (Retell fluency)
DIBELS Maze (DAZE)
Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC)
Word Recognition (WR)

In general, teachers were well organized before beginning the benchmarking assessments. Their materials were usually at their testing station and they had a plan for who they needed to assess. As a result, 63% of the teachers took less than a minute to prep for the first student to begin benchmarking, 26% took between one and two minutes, and 8% took between three to seven minutes. For some teachers there was a delay in administering the assessments due to problems with logging into the Amplify system. At times this could have been due to connectivity issues at the LEA, but on rare occasions observers did see teachers receive an error message that said to call Amplify.

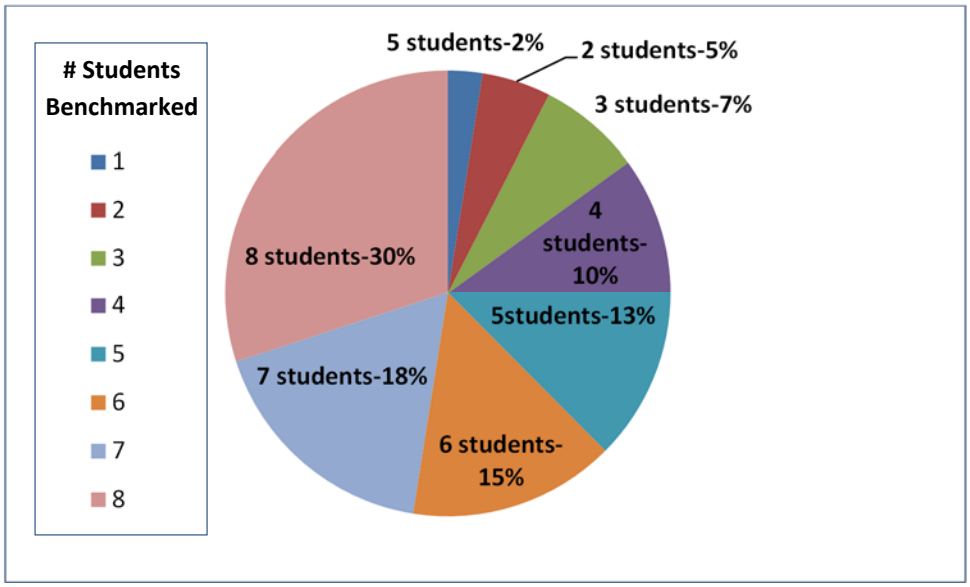
Transition time is defined as how long it takes from the end of an assessment of one student until the beginning of assessing the next student. During this time teachers were recording scores, selecting the next materials to use, and if they were in the classroom some used this time to take questions from the students in their classroom or to remind the students of the classroom rules. Teachers generally were able to transition between students quickly. It took less than a minute to two minutes to transition to the next student in 76% of the cases. Thirty-seven percent of teachers' transitioned to the next student in 1 to 2 minutes. Twenty percent of the teachers were able to get to the next student within three to five minutes. For some teachers it took longer because they had to wait for students to arrive from other classrooms if they were assessing other teachers' students. Chart 1 displays the transition times between benchmarking students.

Chart 1. *Transition Time Between Students*



During benchmarking, observers noted how many students were assessed. Observers planned to spend approximately 30 to 45 minutes with each teacher. The number of students assessed varied by the assessment instrument given. The TRC could take a long time given that students picture walk the book (i.e., student is asked to look through the pages before reading) and then read to the teacher. They were asked oral questions and had to write answers as well. The other assessments were timed and teachers could move right through a number of students. Most teachers were able to benchmark multiple students during this period. Chart 2 shows the breakdown on how many students were assessed during the observation period.

Chart 2. *Number of Students Benchmarked During Observation*

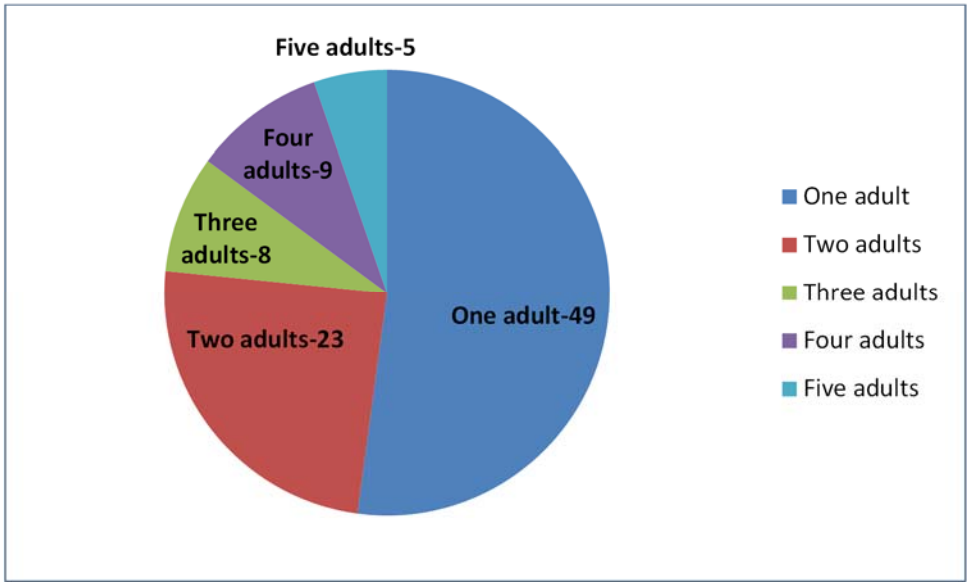


The number of students in the assessment area was primarily dependent on the assessment setting. In benchmarking testing situations where one or more teachers were assessing outside of the classroom (i.e., in the library, an empty classroom, or the hallway) the number of students ranged from 1 to 10 students. If a teacher was assessing students in the classroom the number of children present varied from 7 to 24.

During the benchmarking observations, evaluators also observed classroom behavior among students who were in the classroom, but not being benchmarked when a teacher was assessing other student(s) in the room. Evaluators noted the level of student engagement before, during, and after benchmarking. In general, most students were on task (defined as working quietly on whatever task the teacher had assigned).

Chart 3 shows the number of adults present in the benchmarking environment. In the 22 instances observed where more than two adults were in the room this was a group setting/testing room situation with multiple adults conducting assessments with students.

Chart 3. *Number of Adults in Assessment Area*



Observers made note of who was in the testing environment while the teacher was conducting the benchmarking and what role the adult(s) played in the assessment setting. For example, in row one of Table 4 reading specialists were observed assisting with benchmarking in six instances and another two were observed that were assisting with classroom management but not assessing students.

Table 4. *Role of Other Adults in the Assessment Setting*

Role of Other Adult	Assistance with assessment	Assistance with classroom management
Reading Specialist	6	2
Another teacher	1	2
Other	1, not specified	1, not specified
Instructional Coach	1	0
Parent Volunteer	0	1
Substitute Teacher	0	5
Teacher Assistant (TA)	0	47
Guidance Counselor with TA	0	1

For the MOY benchmark most teachers (53%) were benchmarking another classroom teachers' students. In some situations teachers left their classrooms to get the next child that needed to be assessed whereas other teachers stayed in their rooms and used a system where once a child completed an assessment he or she was asked to tell the next student to come to the other classroom for assessment.

Table 5. *Who Administers MOY*

Person Administering MOY Benchmarking Assessment	# Times Observed
Teacher of record	36 (38%)
Another classroom teacher who does not teach this child	50 (53%)
Teacher Assistant	0 (0%)
Reading specialist	5 (5%)
Other: *Description of other: AIG, Curriculum Coordinator, and one teacher reported she assesses her own students on DIBELS and others for TRC*	3 (3%)

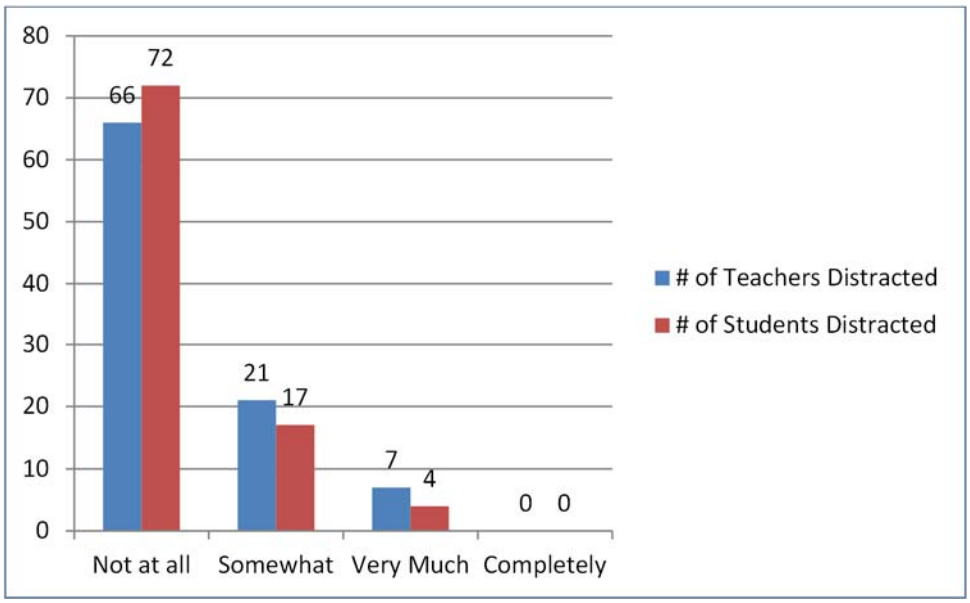
Most teachers (98%) were using an iPad to record student answers. One assessor who was not the student's regular classroom teacher also used a laptop to keep notes for the child's teacher. During the observations of benchmarking a few teachers had problems signing on to the Amplify site to record answers. In one classroom a teacher was not able to sign on at all so the observation was rescheduled for later in the day.

If at any point a teacher's or student's attention is taken away from an assessment the validity of the test can be called into question, particularly when the teacher must follow along with his or her iPad and make notes on the student's reading. Because many factors can affect the teacher's or student's concentration we looked at a variety of environmental influences: distractions, interruptions, and noise levels. It is important to note that even slight losses of attention can impact the procedure, which makes it much more difficult for teachers that have to manage the classroom while conducting these benchmarking assessments.

Observers looked at the number of distractions to teachers and to students, which occurred during the benchmarking of students. We define a distraction as anything that prevents the teacher or student from giving their full attention to the assessment. This could include a child approaching the assessment table, another student making a loud noise, etc. Observers noted amount of distractions as—(1) not at all distracted, (2) somewhat or slightly distracted, (3) very much distracted, and (4) completely distracted. Seventy percent of teachers did not appear to be distracted while assessing a child. While 77% of students did not appear to be distracted at all by activities going on around them while they were being assessed, 18% of students seemed to be somewhat distracted while they were being assessed,

and 22% of teachers appeared to be somewhat distracted by activities in the testing environment. It was rarely observed that either students or teachers were very much distracted. For students this was only 4% and for teachers this was 7%. There were no observations of either teachers or students being completely distracted.

Chart 4. *Teacher and Student Distractions*



Observers also looked to see how many interruptions to the benchmarking assessment occurred. Interruptions are defined as when the assessment stops or pauses for a teacher or student to attend to something else. This could include such instances as when a parent or other adult enters the room, a child (not being assessed) asks the teacher a question, announcements are made over the intercom, a fire alarm goes off, etc. While the observers were in the assessment area 44% of the teachers experienced interruptions during the benchmarking of a student. Teachers assessing in their own classroom were most likely to be interrupted, as they accounted for 76% of the cases observed.

Observers tallied the number of times the teacher turned their attention to others (i.e., monitored classroom activity) while assessing a student on the MOY benchmarking. The tallies were conducted only during timed assessments that could affect a student's score. This did not include casual monitoring of the classrooms which are considered to be brief glances to maintain classroom awareness. The specific behaviors we counted were: how often teachers looked away from the child being assessed, how often teachers used non-verbal classroom management to redirect others in the classroom (e.g., tapped on the table when students were too loud), how often teachers used verbal classroom management, and how often a student approached the teacher while she was assessing another child. There was only one case where

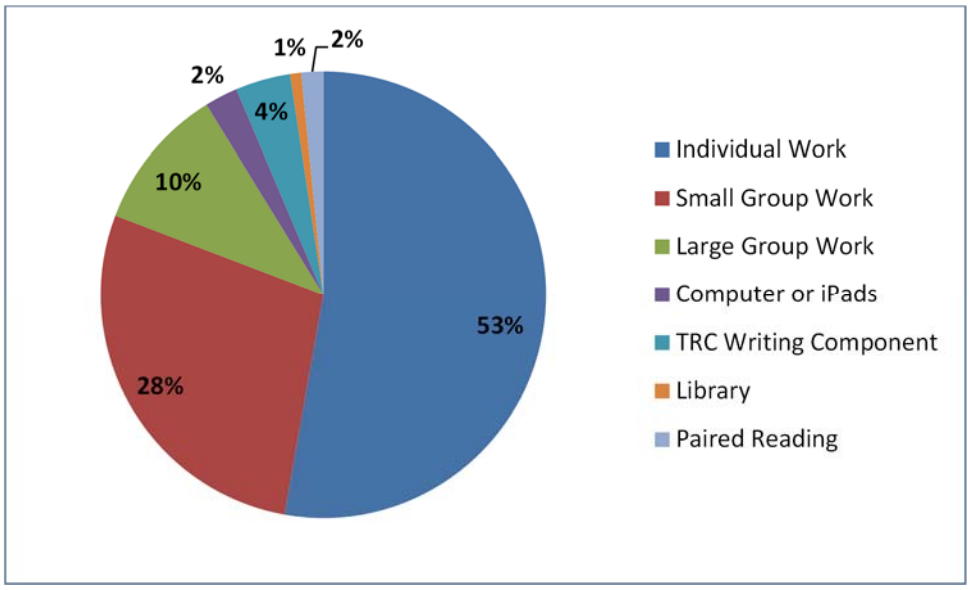
an observer mentioned that this interruption could have affected the validity of the test. Teachers can invalidate a test if there are severe interruptions during the assessment. This would include fire alarms, loud speaker announcements, etc.

Table 6. *Frequency of Teacher Turning Attention Away*

Frequency	Never	1 Time	2 Times	3 Times	4 Times	5 Times	6 or More Times
Teacher looks away	65	11	3	6	2	3	3
Teacher uses non-verbal classroom management	70	14	4	3	0	2	0
Teacher uses verbal classroom management	57	12	8	5	2	2	7
Student/adult approaches	61	17	6	6	3	0	0

Observers took note of what the other students were doing if they were present during the benchmark assessment of students. Most frequently (53%) students were doing individual work.

Chart 5. *Others Students' Activities*



Observers made note of the noise level within the assessment area. For the most part (76%) students not being assessed were either silent or talked quietly while assessments were

in progress. In 14% of the assessment settings students were speaking in a normal voice. In 11% of the assessments the volume was high or particularly high such that it appeared distracting to the assessor. The results are seen in Table 7.

Table 7. *Noise Level in Assessment Area*

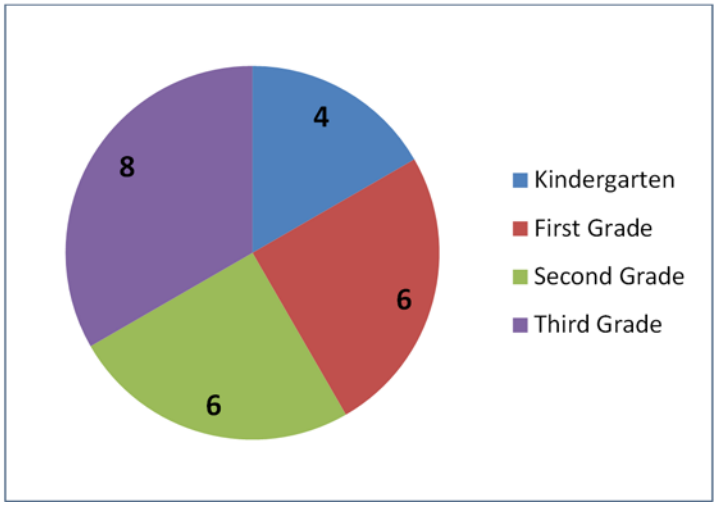
Noise Level in Assessment Area	# of Teacher Observations
Assessment area is silent	24
Students are talking quietly, such as reading aloud or working in groups but volume is low	47
Students are talking at typical volume	13
Noise level is somewhat high, such that it seems at-times disruptive	9
Noise level is particularly high, such that it is consistently disruptive	1

Appendix D: Spring 2015 Progress Monitoring Visits

Overview

SERVE staff conducted progress monitoring visits in the Spring of 2015. The visits took place shortly after the benchmarking visits; therefore, observers were well acquainted with the schools and the assessment process within the schools. Across all regions twenty progress monitoring visits were completed. Observers were instructed to observe a variety of grade levels.

Chart 1. *Grade Level of Teacher Observed During Progress Monitoring*



Observation of Progress Monitoring

Observations were conducted using a pre-determined protocol to ensure reliable information was obtained. The first section of the protocol requested observers to note overall climate in the classroom during the progress monitoring process, such as student engagement, noise level in the room and assessment area, number of adults and students in the room, how and by whom the assessment is being conducted, and any unique scenarios worth documenting. Generally, students were considered "on task most of the time" and/or "on task all or almost all of the time" before the assessment. Responses of "N/A" indicate the observer was unable to observe the classroom engagement. Overall, most and/or all students were on task "most of the time" or "almost all of the time," but classroom engagement dropped slightly as the testing continued.

Table 1. *Classroom Engagement*

Classroom Engagement	Before Assessment	During Assessment	After Assessment
N/A	4	4	8
Completely off-task	0	0	0
Mostly off-task, with a few students or small periods of time where most of the class is focused and on-task	0	0	0
A mix of on-task and off-task behavior	0	2	1
Most of the class is on task most of the time	14	13	11
All students are on-task all or almost all of the time	6	5	4

Most observations indicated the assessment area was silent and/or the noise level was low. Table 2 displays the results of the noise level observed.

Table 2. *Noise Level Observed*

Noise Level Near the Assessment Area	# of Times Observed
Assessment area is silent	6
Students are talking quietly, such as reading aloud or working in groups but volume is low	14
Students are talking at typical volume	3
Noise level is somewhat high, such that it seems at-times disruptive	1
Noise level is particularly high, such that it is consistently disruptive	0

Students, Teachers, and Test Administration

The number of adults varied in the assessment area. In nine classrooms, there was only one teacher. Ten classrooms had two teachers, and the number of students ranged from 12 to 20. Two classrooms had three teachers with 15-16 students. Teacher-student ratio was 1:20 on the highest end and 1:1 on the lowest end. On average, there were 16.6 students in regular classrooms.

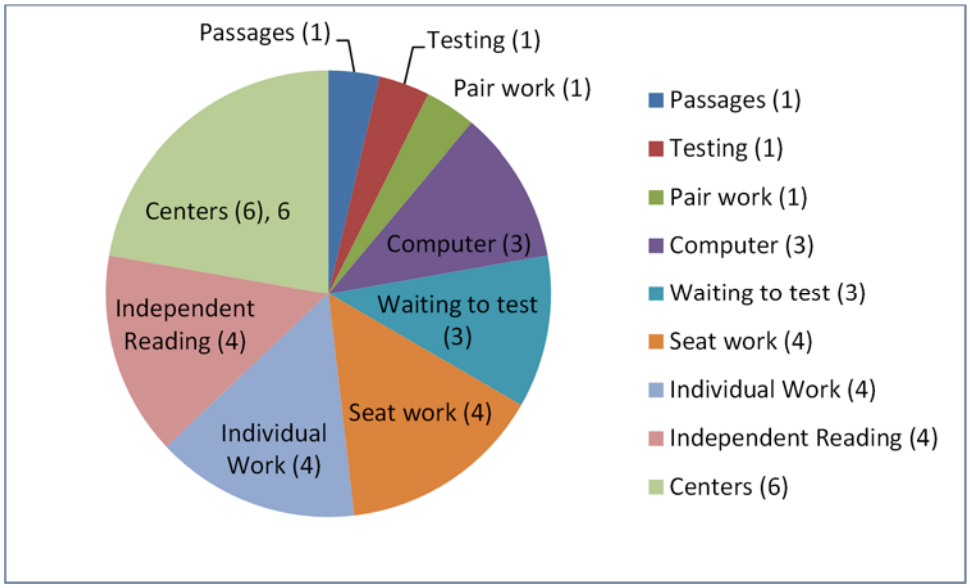
Most of the progress monitoring was completed by the teacher of record (N=22) with only two other classrooms utilizing the assistance of someone else (who was not specified). Additionally, all data were collected using an iPad device.

Assessment Area

In 19 of our observations, we found that the teacher was at a separate table to the side or away from the front of the classroom. In one situation, there were three adults in a typical classroom with testing centers. As the students rotated around reading centers, they also would go to an adult to complete the assessment. NCDPI has not recommended such a testing situation, but it was observed.

There was a mix of activities for other students in the classroom while the teacher was assessing a specific student. In most cases, students worked independently without direct instruction. Yet, they still remained under the supervision of teachers who were focused on testing individual students. Below is a summary:

Chart 2. *Non-testing Student Act*

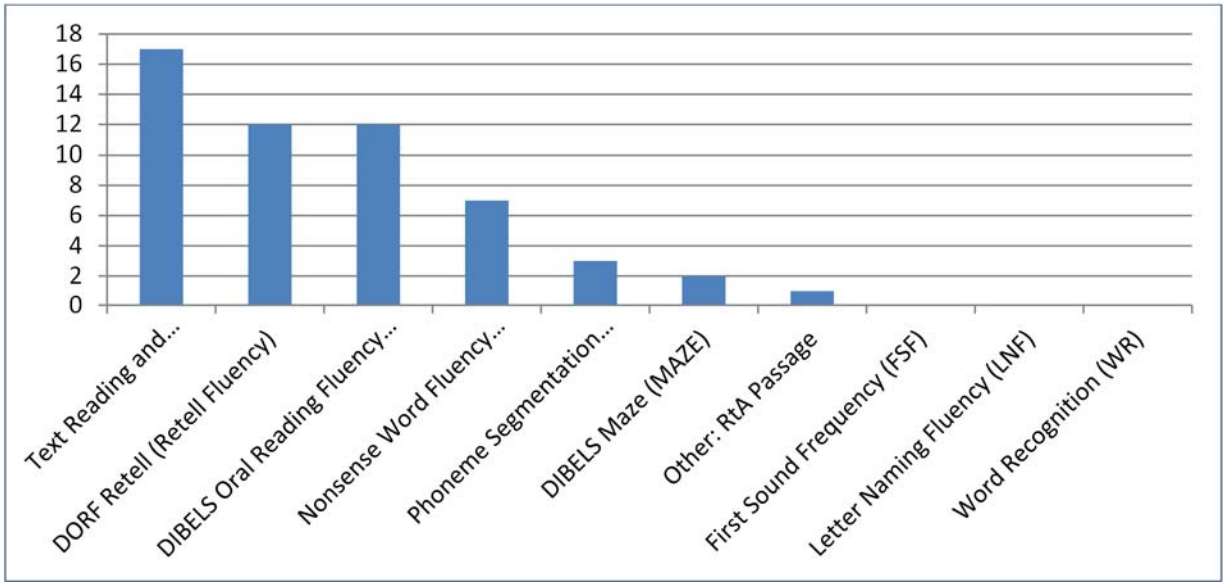


Assessment Preparation and Administration

Teachers administered a combination of assessments during our observations, with Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC), DORF Retell, DIBELS Oral Reading Fluency (DORF), and the Nonsense Word Fluency (NWF) being administered most frequently. A few teachers

administered the Phoneme Segmentation Fluency (PSF), and DIBELS Maze (DAZE). In most cases, teachers had all assessment materials ready and required less than a minute to prepare (N=21), allowing them to cycle through students and assessments quickly.

Chart 3. *Assessment Administered*



Distractions and Interruptions

The observers were given a Likert Scale upon which to determine student distraction. This included—Not at all, Somewhat, Very much, Completely. In general we conceptualized distraction by observing how often a student or teacher turned his or her attention from the assessment area. The majority of students taking assessments (N=22) and teachers (N=21) were not distracted by activity in the classroom or by what other students in the room were doing. Only two students were "somewhat" distracted and only three teachers were "somewhat" distracted. The following chart illustrates how many times teachers looked away during the assessment to monitor classroom activities, used verbal or non-verbal management of students not being assessed, and/or a student approached the teacher while the teacher was administering the assessment. The data in the table below illustrates that teachers rarely look away or are interrupted by students while they are progress monitoring, as indicated by the top row. For example, 13 observations indicated that the teacher did not look away from the child who was being assessed. Observers also noted if the teacher was interrupted, while testing. Ten of 24 observations indicated the teacher was somehow interrupted. In three cases, one (1) student approached between testers and in two (2) cases students approached with their writing responses.

Table 3. *Testing Interruptions*

Number of Occurrences	Teacher looks away	Teacher uses non-verbal redirections	Teacher uses verbal redirections	Student approaches
0 times	13	12	11	10
1 time	3	1	1	3
2 times	2	2	2	2
3 times	0	2	2	2
4 times	0	0	0	0
5 times	0	0	1	0
N/A	4	4	3	6

Classroom Management Observations

This section of the report addresses what is happening in the classrooms we observed while the teacher is conducting assessments. For example, are there other adults in the room and if so, how are they assisting the teacher, what are the other children doing during the assessments, and how focused are other students while the teacher is assessing a student? Observers also noted the classroom engagement of the assessed student before and after the assessment.

In most cases (N=20), teachers progress monitored the students themselves. Three teachers utilized the assistance of a reading specialist. Almost half of the teachers (N=11) had no teaching assistants to help with classroom management while the teacher assessed students. In nine observations there was an assistant helping with the rest of the class.

The observers were asked to note what the students who were not being assessed were doing while the teacher conducted assessments. In most cases, they were doing individual work (desk work, silent reading, etc.), small group work, or a combination of the two. In some cases small groups were assigned a task by the teacher without supervision and in other cases small group activities were facilitated or monitored by an assistant. In three observations, it was noted that students were silently reading, and in one case students were paired to read together.

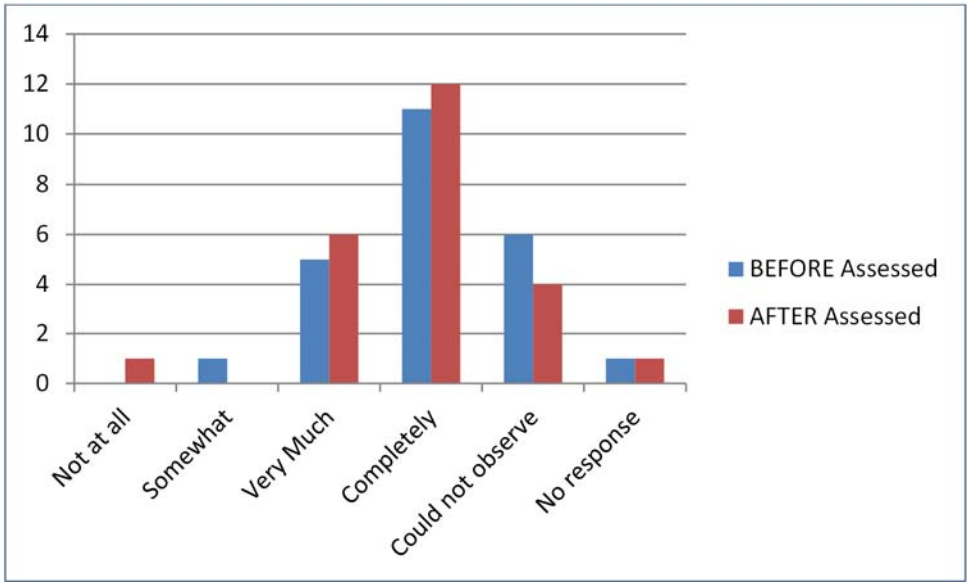
Table 4. *Student Activities and Assistance*

Is there a specialist, teaching assistant or other adults assisting?		
Role	**With assessment**	**With classroom management**
Reading Specialist	3	0
Teacher Assistant	0	9
None	20	11
Other (role not specified)	1	4
What are the other students doing while the teacher is assessing?		
Individual Work		20
Small Group Work		10
Large Group Work		0
Other (Three specifically replied silent reading and one said paired reading)		4
On a scale of 1-5, how focused/on-task are the majority of students?		
Completely off-task		0
Mostly off-task, with a few students or small periods of time where most of the class is focused and on-task		0
A mix of on- and off-task behavior		0
Most of the class is on-task most of the time		11
All students are on-task all or almost all of the time		4
N/A		9

Generally, other students in the classroom were on-task while the teacher was assessing students. Specifically, eleven observers considered the class “on-task most of the time” and four “on-task all or almost all of the time.” Nine observers chose N/A which may indicate they were unable to observe other students, such as the case where teachers conduct assessments in a private room other than the classroom.

More specifically, observers noted the engagement levels of students not being assessed, both before individual student assessment began and after assessment was completed. Engagement increased after individual students were assessed.

Chart 4. *Level of Classroom Engagement During Assessment*



Embedding

The evaluation team considered the degree to which progress monitoring is embedded into the classroom day. Embedding refers to the ways in which a teacher integrates progress monitoring into the classroom schedule without removing the student from ongoing classroom activities for assessment, such as was common during benchmarking observations. Examples may include assessing during small group reading time and/or making assessments a part of center rotation. Observers were asked to make notes of any embedding of progress monitoring that occurred in the classroom.

Observers were also asked to document any other ways teachers incorporated mCLASS:Reading 3D or writing stems into the daily instruction. Examples may include practicing writing stems similar to those found in mCLASS:Reading 3D; using assessments/phrases during reading groups, "What *text features* does the author use;" or signs around the room with identified vocabulary words related to mCLASS: Reading 3D.

Of the 24 observations, 23 contained comments related to embedding. Twelve indicated there were no signs that teachers tried to make the progress monitoring process a part of the classroom routine. One teacher stated she purposely kept assessment separate by design, as she felt the results were more accurate. Seven teachers embedded assessment during centers/rotation times. Additionally, three teachers used the rotation/center time for

assessment, but also incorporated one-on-one time to teach missed concepts to the assessed student once the assessment was complete. One English language arts teacher (i.e., she only teaches ELA, has 57 students throughout the day, and focuses her time on one subject) uses the time after progress monitoring to conference with her students by examining their goals, reviewing any homework questions, and going over definitions related to the assessment such as "fluency," etc. Two teachers pulled students during silent reading time, and one pulled students during small group time.

Two observers noted that teachers practice TRC-type questions during regular instruction in an effort to prepare students for benchmarking and progress monitoring and to give them practice with the question format. One of the two even has students develop their own TRC questions for the stories they have read to give to other students to practice.

In summary, the process of progress monitoring with mCLASS:Reading 3D was well organized. Most often students were assessed by the teacher of record. Teachers were prepared to assess students and transitioned between assessing students fairly quickly. In about half of the classrooms, the teacher was the only adult in the room, while the other half had at least two adults in the classroom, such as a teaching assistant or reading specialist. In general, non-assessed students worked in centers, read independently, or worked on independent tasks. Most or almost all of the time students were on-task with a slight drop-off during assessments. Teachers strived to manage class behavior with few interruptions, but some distractions were noted with teachers utilizing verbal and non-verbal cues for redirection. Overall, teachers maintained a positive classroom climate during progress monitoring.

Appendix E: Reading Camp

During the 2014-2015 school year, SERVE planned data collection activities to glean information about Read to Achieve reading camps conducted in both 2014 and 2015. In the Spring of 2015, we began interviews with educators who were involved in the 2014 reading camps. During the Summer of 2015, we conducted both interviews and observations to collect data on the 2015 camps. The data collected for these three assessments are summarized below.

2014 Reading Camp Interviews

Early in 2015, SERVE staff interviewed educators in 20 North Carolina school districts about the 2014 Read to Achieve (RtA) reading camps. Our interviews gathered input from a range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals and district level elementary and RtA staff. As part of our interview process, we asked interviewees about both their perceptions of the 2014 reading camps and the logistics involved in initiating and operating the camps during their first year.

As the RtA reading camp program has developed, our approach to the evaluation of the program has also evolved. While we gathered useful information through the 2014 interviews, we used the data from the 2014 interviews primarily to refine and enhance our interview and observation activities as we visited programs and talked with reading camp staff about their 2015 camps.

Perceptions and performance. To gauge the overall perception of staff who took part in the 2014 reading camps, we first asked them to describe the experience for students in terms of academic and social/emotional needs, as well as to provide their own overall opinion of the camps. Although a few staff members indicated the testing was stressful and often resulted in student anxiety, staff perceptions were almost universally positive. Specifically, 85% indicated that the social/emotional experience was "mostly positive," and 80% told us the academic experience was also "mostly positive." Staff's positive assessment of the reading camps was reflected in their comments. A number told us the camp resulted in academic gains for students and provided them with opportunities to continue working on needed skills; some reached proficiency as a result of the camp. One district reported only 2 of 23 students were retained after reading camp. Further, staff pointed to the "camp, not school" atmosphere as valuable. One staff member told us, "The kids loved it! I still see some of the kids, and they still talk about how fun it was." Students' self-confidence grew, as did student-teacher relationships. Parents also viewed the camp as positive. A survey for parents administered in one district showed "…[Parents] were all pleased--way more positive than I thought it would be." For most, it was, "Just an overall good experience."

As we were approaching the 2015 reading camps, we were curious what sites planned to do differently from the 2014 reading camps. Therefore, we asked respondents, "What were the lessons learned? What are you doing differently in 2015 or wish you could do differently?" Several respondents mentioned changing the length of the day or the number of weeks they would hold camp. One respondent said they started too early in the summer, and the students needed more of a break before reading camp began. Various respondents also said they would do more focused planning for reading camp in 2015, which was confirmed by the 2015 data. A few respondents said that with more planning time, they would be able to improve the quality of instruction. One school reported the success of interest-based projects during summer reading camp influenced plans to expand their use during the regular school year.

In these interviews, we asked how many students were promoted after reading camp. Although we were not able to get information from all districts, about 32% of students who attended reading camp were promoted at the end of the camp. It is interesting to note that the range of promotion rate varied widely—in one district 91% of students were promoted at the end of camp while at another only 4% were promoted. Additional research to examine differences between camps could yield useful information. According to staff we interviewed, "quite a few" more were promoted at the November promotion deadline. Students passed based on performance on the Read to Achieve assessment or Read to Achieve portfolio. Other students were not promoted initially but were promoted to 5th grade after being in the 3-4 transitional class. Table 1 below shows promotion rates at the end of reading camp based on information given during the interviews.

Table 1. *Number of Students Promoted at End of the Reading Camp*

Total Students	Number Promoted	Percent
45	5	11%
131	60	46%
23	2	8%
7	3	42%
48	12	25%
13	2	15%
422	120	28%
11	8	72%
23	21	91%
50	25	50%
23	1	4%
12	3	25%
Total 808	**262**	**32%**

Materials and methods. Curricula and classroom practices are the backbones of instruction. In an effort to determine the impact of instructional approach and curriculum on student performance, we asked what curriculum districts used for the reading camp and whether it was different from that used during the school year. We also asked about instructional approaches used in the classrooms.

Districts used a number of different curricula. Fourteen of nineteen districts used a curriculum or materials that differed from that used during the school year. There were no common curricula used across the 2014 reading camps. Camps used curricula that were common such as Seeds of Science, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and i-Ready. However, most respondents said they did not use a specific curriculum, but rather, used materials they already had or used school/district staff-developed lessons.

To obtain a more in-depth perspective, we also asked staff whether the curriculum used in the summer was more effective than the one used during the school year, and if so, why. Many staff thought that the summer curriculum was more effective than the curriculum used during the school year. It is interesting to note that six of eighteen staff pointed to small group size and/or low student-teacher ratio rather than the curriculum itself as the reason for program effectiveness. Other staff told us that the materials were engaging, and the activities were carefully scripted; this helped to ensure that all students received effective instruction.

We also asked what approaches to instruction programs used. While programs used quite a few instructional methods, small group work seemed to be central to instruction in every district. The range of techniques used is described in Table 2.

Table 2. *Approaches Used in Reading Camp*

Approaches Used*	Frequency
Small groups	18
Whole group	7
One-on-one instruction	7
Centers	3
Guided reading	3
Independent work	2
Technology/computer programs/iPads	2
Make sure students have fun	2
Read with a partner	1
Daily 5	1
Small teacher student ratios	1
Focus on writing	1

*Note. Respondents reported multiple approaches so percentages are not given here.

Routines. Classroom routine provides the structure to support students' learning. We asked camp staff about daily routines. We found that there were few universal elements among programs. Most sites served both breakfast and lunch. Only one site reported that they did not serve lunch. The length of day ranged from 4 to 7 hours with the vast majority meeting for 4 to 5 hours. Six of the programs reported that students rotated classrooms, although it is possible that this was true of other sites but not mentioned by the respondent. One site rotated teachers from group to group. Routines varied widely in terms of how the day was structured in terms of when students engaged in small groups versus whole group instruction and other activities. Every site did this a little differently.

Staffing. We asked our contacts about staffing in the reading camps. Programs appeared to be well staffed with qualified teachers, although there was very little support staff available. All teachers were certified, and most were classroom teachers, although many programs also had exceptional education teachers, ESL teachers, or Title I teachers on staff. A number of programs reported the use of academic coaches or reading specialists, and one program had a librarian. Many programs had an assistant principal in the building.

Almost half of respondents described staff as enthusiastic about working with the students and very committed to showing growth. Some schools reported that they were able to hire teachers who had a record of showing growth on RtA passages during the school year, but other schools were more limited in whom they were able to hire. Prior experience teaching third grade was not a qualification to teach in the summer reading camps. It is required by the RtA legislation that reading camp teachers have a record of success helping students improve reading skills. Therefore districts wanted to hire teachers skilled in teaching the foundational skills of reading and able to diagnose reading difficulties and then intervene to grow reading skills. Administrators reported that they focused on hiring highly qualified teachers with a consistent record of helping students grow as readers. As a result, summer camp teaching staff were selected from a variety of grade levels and other instructional positions.

While seventeen of twenty (85%) districts provided training to teachers prior to the reading camps, the duration and focus of the trainings varied widely. Six respondents said teachers attended an orientation or received training specific to curriculum or methods used in the reading camp, such as working on portfolios. Others were trained on specific curricula, such as the Hill Reading Achievement Program (HillRAP) or i-Ready. At least one teacher told us that more training would have been helpful. Three schools said they did not have formal training but sat down as a group and talked about planning. Nine of the programs reported either a half

or full day of professional development before the beginning of camp. Two programs said they had two days of PD. A staff member in one district told us that the teachers selected for reading camp were "highly effective" and did not need to be trained, and two districts said that teachers did not need training for the reading camps because they were "already trained."

Budget. In previously held focus groups, participants identified budget as an important issue. We asked staff if the 2014 Reading Camp budget was adequate. Nine programs told us the budget covered the basic requirements of reading camp. Eight programs indicated that they supplemented the budget, and one indicated they needed to but had no supplemental funds. A few respondents were not involved in the budget and were unable to respond.

Parent feedback. We asked if sites had received much feedback from parents and if it was mostly positive or negative. Fifteen out of the 21 (71%) programs reported positive feedback from parents. Parents reported that they were happy with students' growth and that their children seemed to have fun. They also appreciated that the program was free to them. The concerns they heard from parents included complaints about too much testing and how it would affect students if they did not pass after reading camp.

Respondents were asked if there was anything else they wanted to tell us. They reported that reading camp had been a better experience than they had anticipated, although some still had concerns about teacher and student burnout. Several reported that they hope to work in the 2015 camps.

2015 Reading Camp Interviews

In the Summer of 2015, SERVE conducted interviews with educators who were involved with the reading camps to collect information about camp logistics and operation. Overall, we interviewed 34 staff members in 28 districts. Some interviews were conducted with district level staff and others with site level staff at reading camp sites. Although our intent was to interview one staff member in each district we visited, in a number of districts more than one staff member chose to participate in the interview. We also conducted telephone interviews with staff members of districts that were not visited to get a larger and more representative group. We talked with fourteen district level staff, ten site level staff, and ten staff involved at both the district and site levels, as illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3. *Role of the Interviewed Personnel*

Role of the Interviewee	Frequency	Percent
District Level	14	50%

Site level	10	14%
Site and District Level	10	36%
Total	**34**	**100%**

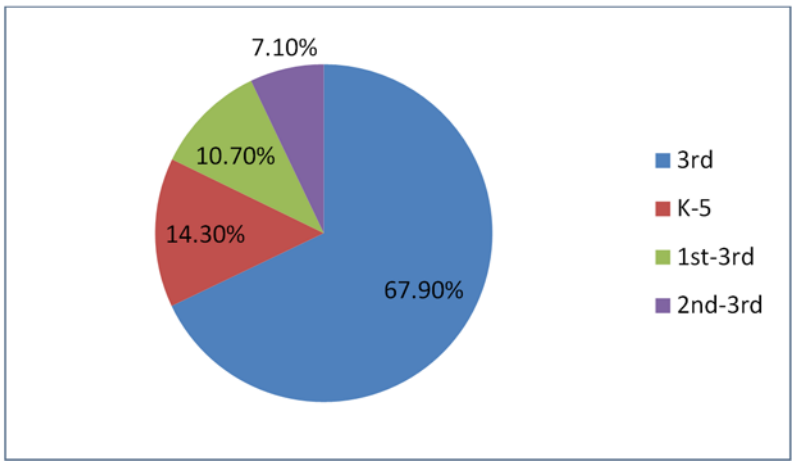
Population Served. The number of students served by RtA reading camp programs varied widely across districts, with one program that served only 10 students and two programs that served over 450 students. Between these two extremes, every program served a different number of students, with the exception of three which each served 60 students. Table 4 addresses this population range. Respondents supplied numbers for one or two sites, and others supplied district wide totals. The numbers in the table provide a broad look at the diversity of reading camps in terms of numbers of students served across districts.

Table 4. *Number of Students Enrolled in Reading Camp*

Number of Students	Number of Districts	Percent
1-50	8	28%
51-100	9	32%
101-150	2	7%
151-200	4	14%
201-250	3	10%
>251	2	7%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Although all the sites we visited housed Read to Achieve summer reading camp programs, some sites also provided space for other non-RtA programs. These programs served groups of students across grades K-5 and met a variety of needs. Some provided day camp for students over the summer while others provided summer tutoring or special programming such as a focus on the arts. Programs were funded by other sources, such as Title I and ASPIRE. Without exception, we found that Read to Achieve funding was used only for Read to Achieve reading camp students. The range of grades served at program sites is described in Chart 1 below.

Chart 1. *Grade Levels of non-RtA Programs at Schools where RtA Reading Camps Held*



Most RtA summer reading camps served only students required to attend—those who had not reached reading proficiency as defined by RtA and who did not qualify for a Good Cause Exemption. A few programs also served other students who attended by choice. In some cases, these were students who had recently been approved for a Good Cause Exemption. By law, these students may attend Reading Camp without cost. Others were students with IEPs who requested to attend. Still others were portfolio students who chose to remain after completing their portfolio. Most programs that accepted proficient students did not ask any student to pay to attend.

Few districts had to turn away students. Staff at one program told us they added students to their program as it progressed. Several districts indicated that they enrolled more students than they expected based on their count prior to the end of the school year. Only one program said they had a waiting list with three students on it. Tables 5, 6, and 7 provide specific numbers.

Table 5. *Were Exempt Students Served?*

Exempt Students Served	Frequency	Percent
No	21	75%
Yes	7	25%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Table 6. *If Exempt, do They Pay to Attend?*

Paying for Attendance?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	2	7%
No	17	61%

No Information	9	32%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Table 7. *Were Students Turned Away?*

Turned Down Students	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	25%
No	21	75%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Reading camp personnel had varying goals for students attending reading camp. When we asked staff members to describe the goals and expectations, almost all identified a goal related in some way to proficiency as measured by Read to Achieve. However, it is worth noting that many also expressed goals benefitting students in other ways, such as social/emotional growth or increased self-confidence or confidence as a reader. One staff member told us the goal of their program was "…to do all we can to make a difference for the students" so that every student knows, "I matter." Staff at a significant number of programs said they wanted students to have fun. Program goals are described in Table 8 below.

Table 8. *Overall Reading Camp Goal*

Reading Camp Goal*	Frequency	Percent
Stop summer slide	6	21%
Generally focus on reading	7	25%
Focus on skills/individual needs	14	50%
See growth	9	32%
Focus on written responses	14	50%
Have fun/gain confidence	7	25%
Small classes or groups	1	4%
Quality teachers/instruction	3	11%
RtA/pass test/become proficient	11	39%

*Respondents could give more than one answer

Curricula and instruction. Program staff were asked what curriculum they were using for reading camp and if it differed from what they used during the school year. More than half of programs used a different curriculum for reading camps than that used during the school year. Programs used a number of different curricula, but some of the most popular ones mentioned were Seeds of Science, Leveled Literacy Intervention, and i-Ready. Five schools reported that they were not using a specific curriculum but rather locally-developed materials.

To get a broader view of reading camp curricular approaches, we also asked whether programs incorporated subjects other than reading. The majority of programs said they were

not (61%). Eight programs said they were integrating science but many of these said they were using Seeds of Science which integrates science and reading. A few programs mentioned a focus on writing and one said they were including art and physical education. Districts used different processes to choose their curriculum (See Table 9).

Table 9. *Who Made Curriculum Decision?*

Who Made Curriculum Decision	Frequency	Percent
District formed a group to work on summer school curriculum	11	39%
Director of Elementary Education or Curriculum Director	5	18%
Teachers made the decision	3	11%
Chosen at the school level	3	11%
Consulted with literacy specialists	2	7%
Materials were given to us	1	3.5%
Elementary curriculum team	1	3.5%
No Response	2	7%
Total	**28**	**100%**

Of the districts that provided more detail regarding curricula choices, more than half said that the reading camp curriculum was more effective than the regular school year curriculum. When asked why, a number told us that it was due to the changes in structure and time available for reading instruction rather than the curriculum used. It may be useful to consider the implications of this as Read to Achieve goes forward.

Reading camp programs used a variety of instructional approaches (See Table 10), including small group, whole group, one-to-one, individual work, and use of technology. Regardless of the approach, comments from staff we interviewed indicate that students received consistent focused attention from very experienced teachers. In the words of one staff member, teachers with "a proven track record."

Table 10. *Approaches Used in Reading Camp*

Approaches Used in Reading Camp*	Frequency
Small groups	24
Whole group	18
Technology/computer programs/iPads	11
One-on-one instruction	9
Independent work	9
Small teacher student ratios	9
Guided reading	7
Centers	5

Approaches Used in Reading Camp*	Frequency
Read with a partner	3
Daily 5	2
Providing Incentives	1
Make sure students have fun	1

*Note. Respondents reported multiple approaches.

In many cases reading camp programs were very structured to make effective use of the available time and to ensure that every child received appropriate content and instruction. This structure and focus may be a key to whether the RtA summer reading camps prove to meet their academic goal—proficiency.

Staff were asked how they grouped students to maximize reading growth. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said that students were matched by general reading level and another 32% said they were matched by TRC levels. Seven percent said students were in groups with mixed reading ability levels.

Staff. Our interview had multiple questions about the staff serving students in reading camp. There was a range in the number of staff directly involved in education (e.g., teachers and administrators) employed by districts for their program. The range is described in Table 11.

Table 11. *Number of Professional Staff Employed at Reading Camp*

Number of Professional Staff Employed	Number of Districts	Percent
Between 3 and 9	5	27%
Between 10 and 15	4	22%
Between 16 and 20	1	5%
More than 20	3	16%
No information	5	27%

Typically, all instructional staff was certified, but in many cases, teachers did not teach 3rd grade during the school year. On average, 24% of teachers were teaching the grade in reading camp that they taught during the school year. In at least one case, this was intentional; K-2 teachers were selected to reinforce the K-2 “learning to read” skills that anchor the “reading to learn” skills that begin to be critical in 3rd grade.

Teacher training prior to the summer reading camps varied widely. Some respondents said that teachers received no special training (N=4). A staff member in one district told us that the teachers selected for reading camp were “highly effective” and did not need to be trained. Other teachers attended an orientation or received training specific to curriculum or methods

used in the reading camp. Half of the programs reported either a half or full day of professional development before the beginning of camp. Six programs said they had two days of professional development. Some districts developed innovative training. For example, in one district, a teacher from another district who had been highly effective with the 2014 reading camp—14 or her 16 students reached proficiency—was asked to do a half day of training prior to the 2015 reading camp. Some districts used teachers to train other teachers. Occasionally teachers who worked at reading camp last year met with the current staff to provide them with some guidance before reading camp began.

Reading Camp Planning. SERVE staff participated in regional meetings to prepare for these interviews. Program structure was a regular concern heard during these meetings. It is clear from the data that most of the staff were not 3rd grade teachers. Because the students were finishing the 3rd grade year it was of interest whether these teachers may feel that they need more structure and support to teach students who were not the grade they taught during the school year. We questioned whether administrators would feel that the teachers needed to be given structured lesson plans. Table 12 illustrates teachers' perception on structure versus autonomy. Regardless of whether the respondents described the teachers as having more autonomy versus more structure there was clear confidence in the teachers' abilities to provide high quality instruction.

Table 12. *How Much Autonomy Teachers Had*

How Much Autonomy Teachers Had	Number of Districts	Percent
Total autonomy	3	11%
More autonomy but some structure	7	25%
Even mix of autonomy and structure	7	25%
More structure but some autonomy	7	25%
Total Structure	3	13%
Total	**27**	**99%**

When asked, many districts indicated that they had sufficient staff, but many also said they would like more, especially support and administrative staff and specialists. Some districts said more staff would allow even smaller teacher-student ratios to provide more frequency and more intensity. All districts that expressed a need for more staff cited budget as the reason for staffing limits. One district reported it was a problem that they did not have a special education person on staff, and another reported that it had been a problem that they did not have a nurse on site. Overall, teacher staff ratios were small ranging from 1:3 to 1:12 with a mean of 1:8 and median of 1:9.

Since staff interviewed previously about the 2014 Summer reading camps identified budget as an important issue, we asked staff if the 2015 Summer reading camp budget was adequate. While some programs told us the budget covered the requirements of reading camp, they also said their budget was very tight. Further, a few districts indicated that they supplemented the budget with funds that would otherwise have gone to other programs. Many districts pointed to transportation as their most critical budgeting problem; one district told us transportation used 30-50% of their reading camp budget.

Another issue that came up at regional meetings was staff concerns that this year's budget was based on last year's (2013-2014 school year) numbers and that the two years were very different. We asked respondents what would be the best way to project the numbers for reading camp. Most respondents suggested looking at the current students' scores instead of scores from the previous year. Many suggested looking at BOY or BOG scores or end of year student outcomes. At least one respondent suggested using an average of the numbers of students who are qualifying for reading camp and project from that. Another suggestion was to monitor mCLASS:Reading 3D scores all year to predict reading camp enrollment.

We asked respondents what they did differently in 2015 compared to 2014. Many reported that they looked at the past year and did make changes, although those changes varied greatly, including the duration of the day; whether students rotated classrooms or teachers moved between classes; and student:teacher ratios. Several mentioned reducing the student teacher ratio, because they felt that was the key to success. Several also said they focused this year on hiring highly qualified teachers.

Finally, we asked staff whether they have received positive feedback on their reading camp programs. While few received specific comments, staff shared information that supports the positive perception of the program. Staff in one district told us that parents of students who attended the 2014 reading camp often asked if their student could attend again this year. In another district, many more parents brought their student to be enrolled on the first day of camp than had been expected based on projections. And, a staff member in still another district said"…there is value. Twenty-four (59%) of kids ended up being proficient—is this typical [of programs]? Does it justify the resources? That said, regardless, it was good for the kids."

2015 Reading Camp Observations

In the summer of 2015 SERVE staff visited 18 school districts across North Carolina in order to observe Read to Achieve (RtA) summer reading camps. The number of observations in

each district varied; in some districts observers visited only one site, while in others, staff visited two or more sites. In some cases this was a result of the small number of reading camp sites operated in the district. In others it was the result of logistical factors, such as distances within the district or program schedule. In most cases, staff observed in multiple classrooms at the reading camp site(s) visited. Information in this report is cumulative, but represents multiple sources of information in most districts.

Observations at reading camp sites followed a defined protocol to ensure consistency of information. SERVE observers looked at logistical aspects of programs such as class size, teacher-student ratio, and academic and social-emotional components, including content, student engagement and student attitude.

Reading Camp Logistics. One component of the reading camp observation protocol addressed logistics, primarily around professional staff and students. We looked to see how many professionals staffed each program and determined the staff-to-student ratio. We also verified the size of the program as reflected by total number of reading camp classrooms. For the most part, teacher-student ratios were low and classes were small, allowing for a great deal of teacher-student interaction and substantial individual attention to students. There was a wide range in the number of classrooms operated by Read to Achieve reading camps district wide. Table 13 describes the distribution of classrooms across programs.

Table 13. *Number of Classrooms at Reading Camp Site*

Number of Classrooms at Site	Frequency
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
8	1
10	1
12	2
14	1
No information	3
Total	**18**

The number of students being served at the programs we visited ranged from 10 to 157 with a mean of 68 and a median of 60. The number of staff directly involved in education (teachers and administrators) ranged from 1 to 28 with a mean of 12 and a median of 10.

The relatively high staff-to-student numbers at the summer reading camps supported low teacher-student ratios. The range of ratios is described in Table 14 below. These ratios are much lower than those typical during the regular school year; those higher ratios limit the amount of small group and/or individual time teachers can provide to individual students. While we currently have no empirical information to prove these lower ratios impact individual student outcomes, teachers reported anecdotally that students are making faster progress in the summer than they did in the school year. Additional research could establish a causal relationship.

Table 14. *Observed Teacher to Student Ratio*

Teacher to Student Ratio	Number of Sites
1-3	4
4-6	8
7-11	6
Total	**18**

Academic components. Most of the summer reading camp curricula solely addressed reading skills. Observations indicated that programs that included another curriculum area typically used it to integrate reading skills while offering students variety in their activities. For example, one program devoted several hours each day to helping students to select a topic, read science trade books, and write a report based on their reading. It is worth noting that we observed that 39% of programs incorporated writing into their instructional activities, as information gathered during an earlier phase of this evaluation pointed to the writing component of RtA as a concern for educators. Table 15 below details the distribution of activities other than reading that were observed by SERVE staff during our visits.

Table 15. *Are activities other than reading provided at the reading camps?*

Activities in Addition to Reading	Number of Districts	Percent
Science	3	16%
Math	3	16%
Writing	7	39%
Art	1	5%
None	10	55%

Teachers incorporated several types of student activities into the reading camp day. These included small group activities, individual work and whole class activities. Most districts

included all of these types of work into the day. Observations showed that a great many activities involved an adult, either with a small group of students or providing support for individual work. Table 16 describes the activities we observed. "Other activities" included students reading in pairs, a student engaging in a Reading 3D assessment, and students working in a computer lab.

Table 16. *Student Activities*

Student Activities	Number of Sites	Percent
Small group activities, where at least one group was with an adult was part of a group	16	88%
Small group activities, no adult	10	55%
Individual work	14	77%
Whole class activity	14	77%
Other	6	33%

The large majority of students appeared to be highly engaged and on-task in the programs we visited. Most students seemed happy and/or content. We saw very little student inattention or discontent and virtually no behavior problems; this may be a function of the small class sizes and low teacher-student ratios inherent to these programs, along with the level of one-to-one teacher and student interaction possible. Tables 17 and 18 below detail student focus and affect.

Table 17. *Student Affect Observed*

Student Affect	Number of Districts	Percent
All students appear bored or unhappy	0	0%
Most students appear bored or unhappy and only a few students appear happy or content	0	0%
About half of the students appear unhappy and half appear happy or content	1	6%
A few or some students appear bored or unhappy but most students appear happy or content	5	27%
All students appear happy or content	12	67%
Total	**18**	**100%**

Table 18. *Student Focus*

Student Focus	Number of Districts	Percent

Completely off task	0	0%
Mostly off task	0	0%
A mix of on task and off task behavior	0	0%
Most of the class on task most of the time	2	11%
All students on task all or almost all of the time	16	88%
Total	**18**	**99%**

Appendix F: Teacher Survey

Introduction

Purpose. The purpose of this appendix is to summarize the results of online survey responses collected from K-3 teachers across the state in April and May of 2015 on the second year of implementation of the Read to Achieve (RtA) Program. This survey was designed to assess the amount of time that teachers spend benchmarking and progress monitoring, how teachers are supported in their efforts to benchmark and progress monitor, teachers' overall perceptions around the utility of benchmarking and progress monitoring, and how teachers are using benchmarking and progress monitoring to inform instructional practices.

Methodology. SERVE developed the survey and then piloted initial drafts of the survey with several teachers, instructional coaches, and survey methodologists before submitting the survey to NCDPI for review and final approval. Based on pilot testing results, some questions were modified to improve clarity. Also, some additional open-ended questions were suggested by representatives from NCPDI to allow teachers the opportunity to provide feedback on various aspects of benchmarking and progress monitoring.

The goal of the survey sampling approach was to draw a small, representative sample of K – 3 teachers who would be representative of the population of K – 3 teachers across the state. In determining an appropriate sample size it is important to understand that a large sample size generally results in greater precision in drawing inferences about the population. However, the rate of improvement in the precision decrease as your sample size increases. Thus, from a statistical perspective, there is little incentive to draw a sample size that is much larger than what statistical calculations indicate is needed. For this survey we calculated the sample size needed using the formula below. We estimated the population of K – 3 teachers to be around 25,000. We used a confidence interval (margin of error) of ± 5 and a confidence level of 95% to determine a needed sample size. Using these parameters we estimated that we would need approximately 400 K – 3 teachers to establish a confidence interval of ± 5 with a 95% confidence level. Although we only needed 400 teachers we decided to administer the survey to 100 randomly selected schools with a K – 3 teacher population of 1631 teachers with a goal of a minimum participation rate of 50%. We selected 100 schools because SERVE has the internal capacity to closely monitor the progress of the survey and provide immediate feedback to administrators and teachers at these schools. Given the larger sample size for our survey we estimate that the final confidence interval (margin of error) for our survey is ± 3.4 with a 95% confidence level.

Sample Size:

$$ss = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where:

Z = Z score for a 95% confidence level (1.96)
p = Expected variance in responses (.5 used in this survey)
c = Confidence Interval (margin of error) expressed as decimal (e.g., .05 = ± 5)

Correction for Finite Population:

$$\text{new ss} = \frac{ss}{1+ (ss-1/pop)}$$

Where:

pop = Population of K – 3 teachers

Once the sample schools were selected an email was sent to district superintendents seeking permission to contact selected schools within the district. We then sent an email to the principal at each school asking them if they would be willing to share the survey link provided in the email with all of the K-3 teachers at their school. SERVE staff monitored the progress of the survey and sent regular participation reports to the principals at each school.

Summary of Results

Demographics. Overall, 953 teachers in kindergarten through 3rd grade took the survey. Participation by grade was evenly divided with 22% of survey respondents in 2nd grade to 25% of respondents in 3rd grade. Also, 4% of respondents indicated that they taught across a combination of grades. Regarding years of experience, 41% of respondents had more than 10 years of experience teaching in K-3 grades, 19% had 6 – 10 years of experience, 29% had between 2 – 5 years of experience, and 19% had 6 – 10 years of experience. Only 11% of teachers had less than one year of experience in the K – 3 grades.

Because mCLASS Reading 3D has been used in some districts before the implementation of Read to Achieve, we asked teachers to report the number of years they have used mCLASS Reading 3D. Overall, 69% of teacher reported using CLASS:Reading 3D between 1 and 3 years,

whereas 31% reported using mCLASS:Reading 3D for more than 4 years. Also, 70% of teachers reported that they taught prior to the state's adoption of mCLASS Reading 3D.

Taken together, these results suggest that many of the teachers who took this survey had several years of teaching experience and that the majority of teachers taught before the state adopted mCLASS:Reading 3D as a benchmarking and progress monitoring tool.

mCLASS:Reading 3D training. As part of the survey, teachers were asked a series of questions about the training that they have received in using mCLASS:Reading 3D and their level of satisfaction with this training. Teachers reported receiving training to use mCLASS:Reading 3D from a variety of sources and also reported being generally satisfied with the level of training that they received. When asked about the types of training that they have received, the top three types of training reported were training from a reading/literacy specialist (68%), training from another teacher (49%), and training from a curriculum specialist (41%). The majority of teachers reported that this training took place at the school level (82%), but 37% of teachers also reported that this training took place at the district level. Teachers were also asked to rate their level of satisfaction with each training opportunity that they reported receiving. We calculated the percentage of teachers who reported being either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the top three most reported training opportunities. The majority of teachers indicated that they were satisfied with the training with 91% reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with training from a reading/literacy specialist, 90% with training from another teacher, and 93% with training from a curriculum specialist.

When asked about general levels of satisfaction with training, 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they were sufficiently trained on how to use mCLASS:Reading 3D. Also, 92% reported knowing whom to talk to if they had questions about mCLASS:Reading 3D and 87% reported having sufficient access to resources if they had questions. However, 44% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to receive additional training on mCLASS:Reading 3D. Taken together, these results suggest that most teachers feel sufficiently trained in using mCLASS:Reading 3D and believe that they have access to resources to help answer questions, but that some teachers would like to receive additional training.

Table 1. *Satisfaction with Training in Using mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
I feel that I have been sufficiently trained on mCLASS:Reading 3D.	4%	15%	56%	24%	1%

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure
I would like to receive additional training on mCLASS:Reading 3D.	12%	40%	34%	10%	5%
I know who to talk to if I have questions about mCLASS:Reading 3D.	1%	5%	56%	36%	1%
I have access to resources if I have questions about mCLASS:Reading 3D.	2%	8%	61%	26%	4%

Open-ended responses. Teachers were asked if they had anything else that they would like to share about their mCLASS:Reading 3D training experiences. Several themes emerged from these open-ended responses that may explain why most reported being sufficiently trained while 44% also reported wanting additional training. Some of the concerns expressed by teachers were that the training came from other teachers and/or administrators whom teachers perceived as not always having depth of knowledge around mCLASS:Reading 3D. For example, one teacher commented, “For new teachers who came to our grade level this year, it was expected of us as veteran teachers to "train" them in the mClass testing process. They did not get formal training from the district or school.” Some teachers reported that teachers were inconsistent in the use of mCLASS:Reading 3D and that some of this inconsistency was due to inadequate training. Some felt that formal training from a district or DPI representative with more experience would help improve the consistency of implementation.

A second theme that emerged was that many teachers felt that they had been sufficiently trained, but that they perceived that changes have been made to benchmarking and progress monitoring over time and that these changes have not been clearly communicated back to teachers through updated or refresher training. For example, one teacher commented, “…would like additional training because that helps me stay informed about everything regarding assessing and progress monitoring. I have been doing this for so long that many changes have occurred. Sometimes it is confusing. I think refresher trainings are needed.” The survey questions did not allow us to probe into what specific changes teachers were referring to in these open-ended responses, but no changes were made at the state level, implying that changes may have been made at the LEA level. Also, it should be noted that in our conversations with NCDPI regarding our findings we were informed that all regional consultants frequently offer refresher trainings in their regions. The survey questions did not allow us to better understand why teachers perceived that such refresher training was unavailable.

A third theme that emerged may be a result of the first two issues noted. Several teachers reported that the training that they and other teachers received was often too brief and that the training was often inconsistent across trainers. This could be related to the fact

that the trainers were often other teachers who may have had limited training information to offer. Relatedly, some of the inconsistency in training could be due to the fact the changes have been made to benchmarking and progress monitoring to comply with state standards and that information received could vary as a function of when the training occurred.

Prior assessment experience. One of the goals of the evaluation is to understand how much time teachers spend benchmarking and progress monitoring students throughout the year. In addressing this issue, it is important to evaluate the time commitment in historical terms. That is, are teachers spending more or less time assessing students as a result of the introduction of mCLASS:Reading 3Das the state's primary assessment tool. As such, teachers who indicated that they taught before the introduction of mCLASS:Reading 3D were asked how much time they spent on formative assessments in the past. Overall, 50% of teachers reported spending 1 – 2 hours a week on formative assessments of students' reading skills and abilities. Also, 18% reported spending 3 or more hours per week on formative assessment. While 32% reported spending less than 1 hour on formative assessments prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D, only 1% of teachers reported not using any form of formative assessment prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D.

Table 2. *Time Spent on Formative Assessment Prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
No time – I did not use class time to gather formative reading data	8	1%
Less than 1 hour per week	186	32%
1-2 hours per week	292	50%
3-5 hours per week	82	14%
More than 5 hours per week	21	4%
Total	**589**	**100%**

Teachers were also asked about how often they used formative assessment data to inform reading instruction prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D. Only 4% of teachers reported that they did not use formative assessment data prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D to inform reading instruction. Overall, 29% of teachers reported using assessment data at least once a month and 67% reported using assessment data to inform instruction between daily and once a week.

Table 3. *How Often Formative Assessment Data were Used to Guide Instruction Prior to mCLASS:Reading 3D*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or not at all	22	4%

At least once per month	173	29%
At least once per week	189	32%
2-3 times per week	89	15%
Daily	116	20%
Total	**589**	**100%**

Taken together, these results suggest that although teachers must spend time conducting assessments via mCLASS:Reading 3D, asking teachers to engage in some form of formative assessment is not a new activity for most teachers as most reported having to conduct some form of assessment prior to using mCLASS Reading 3D. Additionally, among those teachers who reported using formative assessments prior to mCLASS Reading 3D, approximately two-thirds reported using this information to guide instructional practices frequently in the classroom.

Benchmarking

Teachers who took the survey were asked a series of questions related to the time that it took to benchmark, support received for benchmarking, overall usefulness of benchmarking, and the impact of benchmarking on their instructional practices. Some questions were about benchmarking in general while others were related to specific benchmarking windows (i.e., beginning of year (BOY), middle of year (MOY), or end of year (EOY) benchmarking.

Time. First, teachers were asked how much planning time (on average) they spent during a single benchmark assessment period to accommodate for benchmarking. Overall, 10% reported spending less than an hour a week, whereas about one-third of teachers reported spending 1-2 hours, 3-5 hours, and more than 5 hours per week, respectively preparing for benchmarking. In interpreting these findings it should be noted that teachers would most likely engage in planning time to prepare any instructional activities even if benchmarking was not a part of these activities. These numbers may suggest that the nature of benchmarking may require some additional planning time given that teachers must plan activities that minimize teacher involvement.

Table 4. *Time Spent (on Average) Preparing for Benchmarking*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour per week	86	10%
1-2 hours per week	246	30%
3-5 hours per week	248	30%
More than 5 hours per week	242	29%

Total	**822**	**100%**

Next, we asked teachers to report for each benchmarking period the number of days that they conducted assessments as well as the average number of hours that they assessed students on the days that they benchmarked.[19] It is important to note here that we asked teachers to report retrospectively how much time that they benchmark and such information may represent more of a perception of time spent benchmarking instead of actual time. For this reason we also asked a group of teachers to complete time logs where actual times where recorded. Information on time logs is reported in other sections of the report.

For each teacher we multiplied the number of days that they reported benchmarking by the average number of hours that they reported benchmarking per day. Overall, K – 2 teachers reported spending (on average) a total of 79.23 hours on benchmarking across all three benchmarking periods, or an average of less than two hours per day over a possible 45-day benchmarking window. Third grade teachers reported spending slightly more time on benchmarking with an average of 84.67 total hours benchmarking students. Breaking these numbers down into 25-hour increments suggests considerable variance in teachers' total benchmarking time commitment over the course of a year.

Table 5. *Teachers' Perceived Total Time Spent Benchmarking in 2014-15*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Less than 25 hours	30	4%
26 - 50 hours	182	25%
51 - 75 hours	191	26%
76 - 100 hours	157	22%
more than 100 hours	168	23%
Total	**728**	**100%**

The table below contains descriptive statistics (i.e., the number of respondents, range, mean, and standard deviations) on perceived benchmarking times by assessment window for K – 2 teachers and 3rd grade teachers separately. For K-2 teachers, the average number of days spent benchmarking at each assessment window is 10.5 with 2.8 hours spent each day benchmarking. For 3rd grade teachers, the average number of days spent benchmarking at each assessment window is 11.5 days with 2.6 hours spent each day benchmarking.

Table 6. *Estimated Time Spent Benchmarking By Assessment Window*

[19] We asked teachers not to include planning and preparation time in their responses.

	Average Number of Days Spent Benchmarking		Average Number of Hours Per Day Spent Benchmarking		Average Amount of Time (in hours) Spent Benchmarking	
Beginning of Year (BOY) Benchmarking						
	K - 2	**3rd**	**K - 2**	**3rd**	**K - 2**	**3rd**
N	555	193	550	192	548	192
Range	1 - 21	1 - 21	1 - 8	1 - 8	3 - 105	1.5 - 120
Mean	10.6	11.8	2.5	2.5	24.6	28.2
StdDev	4.5	4.5	1.3	1.3	14.3	16.7
Middle of Year (MOY) Benchmarking						
N	556	192	553	191	551	190
Range	1 - 21	1 - 21	1 - 9	1 - 8	3 - 105	1.5 - 120
Mean	10.4	11.4	2.8	2.6	26.1	27.7
StdDev	4.6	4.6	1.5	1.5	15.6	16.5
End of Year (EOY) Benchmarking						
N	550	187	544	186	542	186
Range	1 - 25	1 - 21	1 - 9	1 - 8	3 - 225	1.5 - 120
Mean	10.5	11.4	2.9	2.7	28.3	28.0
StdDev	4.7	4.7	1.6	1.6	18.6	16.7
Averages Across All Benchmarking Periods						
N	564	195	561	196	559	195
Range	1 - 21	1 - 21	1 - 8	1 - 8	3 - 133.3	1.5 - 120
Mean	10.5	11.5	2.8	2.6	26.3	27.8
StdDev	4.4	4.5	1.4	1.4	15.4	16.0

Teachers were asked about the impact of benchmarking on their instructional time. Overall, 72% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that spending time analyzing benchmarking data is a meaningful use of their time. However, 89% of teachers also indicated that benchmarking took up too much instructional time and 64% reported that the information gained was not worth the loss in instructional time. Taken together, these results indicate while teachers do find the data to be useful, they also report not wanting to use their time to collect the information. Follow-up analysis (not reported) suggests that teachers who reported spending more time benchmarking were slightly less supportive of benchmarking across all questions.

Table 7. *Impact of Benchmarking on Instructional Time*

Question	Don't know/ N/A	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Analyzing benchmarking data and determining how to use it is a meaningful use of my time	5%	6%	17%	68%	4%
Using benchmarking materials to pinpoint students' reading ability is a meaningful use of time	4%	5%	18%	67%	6%
Benchmarking does not take up too much instructional time	1%	54%	35%	8%	2%
The loss of instructional time is worth the data that I receive from benchmarking	10%	25%	39%	25%	1%
Benchmarking takes up too much of my planning time	4%	4%	37%	32%	22%
Using benchmarking data during planning saves me time during instruction	11%	10%	39%	38%	2%

Open-ended questions on time. To better understand the survey results around time we asked teachers if there was anything else that they would like to tell us about the time it takes to benchmark. It should be noted that while our survey was specific to mCLASS:Reading 3D, we found that teachers were often required to administer a number of assessments for other academic areas or for district reading initiatives so we cannot say with certainly whether all comments were specific to mCLASS:Reading 3D unless the teacher made it explicitly clear that this was the case. The majority of responses related to the fact that benchmarking took up too much time. Overall, 31.8% of teachers reported that benchmarking took up too much time in general. However, 38.2% of teachers specifically indicated that benchmarking took up too much instructional time. To put it in perspective, one teacher said, "We lose a lot of valuable instruction time with the assessments. Although I think the information is helpful, spending over two weeks three times a year to complete mandated formal assessments takes almost a full quarter out of teaching time. As a classroom teacher, it is very frustrating."

A number of teachers expressed concerns about the writing section in TRC. The writing component is intended to assess the application of skills assessed as part of DIBELS, but teachers may need additional professional development or training in why the writing section exists and what the importance of it is. One teacher stated,

> "DIBELS does not take too long to complete, about 10 mins per student, but TRCs can take up to 1- 1 1/2 hours per child depending on their reading level. I also think questions could be asked orally to assess reading abilities."

Finally, 9.9% of respondents indicated that it would be helpful to have additional support staff or an assessment team who could help alleviate some of the burden on teachers.

Two respondents pointed out that while they appreciated having help in conducting assessments, this help came from reading specialists whose time could be better used providing reading intervention instead of reading assessment. Some teachers mentioned the importance of having an assistant who could help with providing instruction and managing the classroom. Several teachers were concerned with how benchmarking could be accomplished if they lost access to their assistants.

One concern shared by many teachers was the fact that when a teacher was required to conduct benchmarking assessments alone that this could detract from instruction as well as the quality of the assessment. One teacher noted,

> "When we are completing reading 3D it is very difficult to also provide instruction. I believe it would be in the best interest to pull sub [substitute] into the classroom while teachers are pulling students to complete reading 3D. This way students are getting quality instruction, they are able to collaborate with peers, continue to have teacher instruction, and won't be given worksheets/busy work. It is impossible to listen/ mark errors in reading, direct class, walk around to monitor students, and focus on volume control. Reading 3D would be completed quicker if this was the only thing teachers had to focus on."

Another teacher put it more bluntly,

> "During benchmark assessments, if we do not have help in the classroom, we have to test, teach and monitor the other students in our classroom all at the same time. We cannot leave the classroom if we do not have an assistant in the room! We have to do it all at the same time! It is a very challenging task, but again we try our best! I have an excellent class as far as behavior, but they are 6 and 7 years old and need attention from whoever is supervising the class."

Support. One of the goals of this evaluation is to better understand the degree to which teachers are supported as they benchmark students. Results from observations and interviews indicate that schools use a number of strategies to support teachers during benchmarking (e.g., having other teachers, administrators, reading specialists assist with progress monitoring, classroom instruction, and classroom management). Because schools use a variety of methods to support teachers and given the inherent difficulty in capturing various forms of support, we designed a series of questions that asked teachers to report whether they benchmarked their own students, if they had support from others, or other staff at the school conducted benchmarking for the teacher at each benchmarking window. Below we report results by grade, benchmarking window, and mCLASS:Reading 3D assessment tool. However, these results

should be interpreted with caution because of problematic wording in the question that was not detected until after the survey was deployed.[20]

Table 8. *Who Assesses Students on TRC*

	Teacher Only	Teacher with Support	Other Staff
Beginning of Year (BOY) TRC			
K – 2 Teachers	77.5%	3.6%	19.0%
3rd Teachers	67.0%	12.0%	21.1%
Middle of Year (MOY) TRC			
K – 2 Teachers	36.3%	2.0%	61.7%
3rd Teachers	24.4%	23.4%	52.2%
End of Year (EOY) TRC			
K – 2 Teachers	1.3%	0.3%	98.3%
3rd Teachers	13.4%	25.4%	61.2%

Table 9. *Who Assesses Students on DIBELS*

	Teacher Only	Teacher with Support	Other Staff
Beginning of Year (BOY) DIBELS			
K – 2 Teachers	86.4%	2.6%	11.0%
3rd Teachers	73.9%	14.1%	12.1%
Middle of Year (MOY) DIBELS			
K – 2 Teachers	74.3%	2.7%	23.0%
3rd Teachers	61.9%	15.7%	22.3%
End of Year (EOY) DIBELS			
K – 2 Teachers	68.3%	1.7%	30.1%
3rd Teachers	54.6%	17.5%	27.8%

Teachers were also asked about the usefulness of online resources in supporting their use of data received from benchmarking. In particular, we asked about the use of mCLASS:Reading 3D Now What? Tools and the K-3 Literacy Read to Achieve LiveBinder. Those teachers who reported using these resources reported that these resources were helpful. However, 45% and 19% reported that they did not know if LiveBinder and mCLASS:Reading 3D Now What? Tools were as helpful, respectively. Although not asked specifically, these results suggest that for those who are familiar with these tools report that these tools are helpful, but

[20] Teachers should have been asked "who assesses your students" followed by a checklist where they could select themselves and other adults at the school (e.g., "another teacher from the same grade"). However, teachers were asked "which students do you assess", which does not align well with response options other than "I assess my own students."

that some teachers are either unfamiliar with these tools or undecided on whether these resources are helpful.

Table 10. *Use of Vendor Provided Tools for Translating Benchmarking Data into Instructional Practices*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
mCLASS:Reading 3DNow What? provides helpful intervention strategies for struggling readers	19%	4%	12%	59%	6%
LiveBinder provides helpful intervention strategies for struggling readers	45%	2%	6%	44%	2%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Usefulness. Teachers were asked a series of questions about the usefulness of benchmarking in general, the validity of benchmarking data collected, and potential barriers to using benchmarking data. The majority of teachers (approximately 80%) indicated that benchmarking was helpful for identifying students' reading skills, abilities and needs at all three benchmarking windows. Also, 91% agreed or strongly agreed that benchmarking provides useful information about students' reading skills and abilities in general. However, only 37% agreed or strongly agreed that they would be unable to support their students' instructional needs in reading without benchmarking. Taken together, these results suggest that while the overwhelming majority of teachers find benchmarking to be useful, some believe that they can meet their students' instructional needs without it. This latter finding may be related to the finding that some teachers report benchmarking taking up too much instructional time such that the cost of collecting the information may outweigh the benefits of having the information for some teachers.

Table 11. *Teachers' Beliefs About the Usefulness of Benchmarking in General*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Benchmarking provides useful information about students' reading skills and abilities	1%	2%	7%	77%	14%
Without benchmarking, I would not be able to support all of my students' instructional needs in reading	2%	17%	44%	35%	2%
Beginning of year benchmarking is not helpful for identifying students' current reading skills, abilities and needs	3%	17%	62%	14%	4%
Middle of the year benchmarking is not helpful for identifying students' current reading skills, abilities and needs	2%	17%	67%	12%	2%

End of the year benchmarking is not helpful for identifying students' current reading skills, abilities and needs	2%	17%	66%	13%	2%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

When asked about the validity of benchmarking data teachers were somewhat divided. Overall, 65% agreed or strongly agreed that benchmarking provides a valid indication of students' reading skills and abilities. In addition, 40% agreed or strongly agreed that teachers are consistent in the way that they benchmark students.

Table 12. *Teachers' Beliefs Around Validity of Benchmarking Data*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Benchmarking provides a valid indication of students' reading skills and abilities	1%	7%	26%	59%	6%
Teachers are consistent in the way they benchmark students	7%	20%	33%	36%	4%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

We asked teachers about any barriers to using benchmarking data. Thirty-five percent agreed or strongly agreed that benchmarking provides more data than they can use, 61% belive the opposite and 23% reported that benchmarking provides data that teachers do not know how to use, meaning 74% must believe that they can use the amount of data they receive. In addition, 52% agreed or strongly agreed that a barrier to using benchmarking data is other work obligations. Taken together, this suggests that most teachers know how to use the benchmarking data, but may be unable to fully use the data given other work commitments.

Table 13. *Teachers' Beliefs Around Benchmarking Data Use*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Benchmarking provides more data than I can use	3%	6%	56%	31%	4%
Benchmarking gives me a lot of data that I don't know how to use	3%	12%	62%	20%	3%
Benchmarking gives me a lot of data that I am unable to use because of everything else I need to do at work	4%	6%	39%	39%	13%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Impact of Benchmarking on Instructional Practices. Teachers were asked a series of general and specific questions related to the impact of benchmarking on their instructional practices. Seventy-nine percent of teachers indicated that benchmarking adds value to their reading instruction, and 72% agreed that benchmarking data empowers them to be a better teacher. Also, the majority of teachers (86%) reported using benchmarking data for lesson and curriculum planning.

Table 14. *Impact of Benchmarking on Instructional Practices*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Benchmarking adds value to my reading instruction	2%	3%	16%	73%	6%
Using benchmarking data empowers me to be a better reading teacher	4%	5%	19%	65%	7%
I use benchmarking data to support my lesson planning	2%	2%	10%	78%	8%
I use benchmarking data to support my quarterly/year-long curriculum planning	4%	2%	21%	66%	6%
If I had a choice, I would never use benchmarking data while lesson planning	5%	17%	64%	11%	3%
I find benchmarking data useful for developing quarterly/year-long curriculum plans	7%	3%	22%	64%	4%
If I had a choice, I would not choose to use benchmarking materials to pinpoint students' reading ability	7%	13%	59%	15%	5%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Open-Ended Questions. At the end of the section of questions on benchmarking, teachers were asked if they had any more comments about the usefulness of benchmarking for making instructional decisions. The most common response from respondents is that the benchmarking provides valuable information (28.5%). For example, one teacher said,

> "Benchmarking helps to identify students' needs, and really effects how small groups are oriented. During whole group, it provides a focus on a certain skill such as written response where students have to answer questions based on the standards. It also helps to dictate what type of text is used during whole group, as we want to provide the text that fits our students best."

However, 22.0% of respondents also re-iterated that benchmarking takes up too much instructional time. For example, one teacher said, "The data that the assessment provides is very good information. It has helped me better plan my instruction and lessons. That part has helped to improve my students' skills. However, it takes too much from my instructional time trying to give the assessment nine weeks out of 36 weeks of school, is a whole quarter of the school year. Is there a better way of doing this?" It should be noted that teachers do not assess students all day, every day across the three benchmarking windows, but some teachers do spend several hours a day assessing students across most of the benchmarking days and large amounts of time devoted to benchmarking may be perceived as disruptive to the entire day. This may explain why several teachers indicated in the open-ended responses a perception that the entire benchmarking window represented lost instructional time.

For those who shared concerns around the time that it took to benchmark students, many felt that in addition to taking away from instruction, benchmarking took away from the time that teachers would normally devote to reading intervention. For example, one teacher said,

> "Before using mClass, I was able to identify the needs of my students and address those needs. I supported them in the areas that they needed, and I was very successful. Now I feel like I am failing as a teacher because I have less time to spend on my students. I am constantly assessing them, instead of teaching and supporting their needs."

In addition, several teachers reported concerns around the fact that because they were busy performing benchmark assessments that students were given tasks that teachers deemed less helpful in promoting literacy development. Many teachers indicated that they gave worksheets, small group activities that many teachers felt was "busywork" because they were unable to monitor the classroom and facilitate meaningful instructional activities.

A quote by one teacher may sum up some of the opportunities and challenges experienced by teachers during benchmarking,

> "Saying loss of instructional time is "worth it" seems a little too extreme. No teacher enjoys losing instructional time - especially when working with struggling students that need so much instruction. I love the data I gather, analyze, and plan based on results; however, in the perfect world, I could have this data and not lose my instructional time. Often during assessments, students have to be given review materials so they can work independently while others are being assessed. This limits student growth."

A final concern that many teachers noted was the writing component of the TRC (14.4%). Some teachers indicated that it takes too long for students to provide written answers and that this time adds substantially to benchmarking of each student. In addition, some teachers were concerned that written responses were unnecessary and not a valid source of information regarding a student's reading ability.

Progress Monitoring

Teachers were asked a series of questions related to their experiences with progress monitoring. Many of these questions were adapted from the benchmarking questions. The subject of these questions included the perceived time that it took to progress monitor, support received for progress monitoring, overall usefulness of progress monitoring, and the impact of progress monitoring on their instructional practices.

Time. Teachers were asked how often they progress monitor in general and the average number of hours that they progress monitor during weeks that they do progress monitor. It should be noted that this approach differs from the benchmarking questions around time where we asked teachers to estimate the exact amount of time that they conduct benchmark assessments. The reason for this is that benchmarking is conducted over three discrete time points throughout the year, making an estimation of time commitment more feasible. Progress monitoring, on the other hand, is conducted throughout the year and can vary from week to week and child to child, making calculations of precise time commitments difficult. Overall, 42% of teachers reported that they progress monitored infrequently (once a month or less), 35% reported progress monitoring once a week, and 22% reported progress monitoring at least 2 – 3 times per week or more.

Table 15. *How Often Do Teachers Report Progress Monitoring in General*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Rarely or not at all	31	4%
At least once a month	301	38%
At least once per week	278	35%
2-3 times per week	106	13%
Daily	70	9%
Total	**786**	**100%**

In addition, teachers were asked about the number of hours that they progress monitored during a typical week when they progress monitored. The majority of teachers (51%) reported spending 1 – 2 hours per week progress monitoring, whereas 21% reported spending less than an hour progress monitoring and 22% reported spending 3 – 5 hours progress monitoring per week.

Table 16. *Average Number of Hours Per Week Teachers Progress Monitor*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 hour per week	164	21%
1-2 hours per week	399	51%
3-5 hours per week	169	22%
More than 5 hours per week	31	4%
I do not progress monitor	18	2%
Total	**781**	**100%**

We were interested in whether teachers who reported progress monitoring less frequently did so because they devoted more hours per week assessing students when they did progress monitoring. However, we found that the opposite was true. Teachers who reported that they progress monitored 2 – 3 times per week or daily were more likely to report spending more than 3 hours a day progress monitoring compared to teachers who reported progress monitoring once a week or once a month.

Table 17. *Average Number of Hours Teachers Progress Monitor a Week by Frequency of Progress Monitoring*

	Less than 1 Hr/Week	1-2 Hrs/Week	3-5 Hrs/Week	More than 5 Hrs/Week
Once a month	26.9%	49.2%	18.5%	4.0%
Once a Week	20.9%	57.4%	19.1%	2.5%
2 - 3 Times a Week	7.5%	57.5%	30.2%	4.7%
Daily	7.1%	42.9%	41.4%	8.6%

Finally, teachers were asked about the impact of progress monitoring on their instructional time. Overall, 74% of teachers reported that progress monitoring takes up too much instructional time. In addition, 55% believe that analyzing progress monitoring data was a meaningful use of time, but 66% reported that the loss of instructional time was not worth the data received from progress monitoring.

Table 18. *Impact of Progress Monitoring on Instructional Time*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Analyzing progress monitoring data and determining how to use it is a meaningful use of my time	6%	8%	31%	52%	3%
Using progress monitoring materials to pinpoint students' reading ability is a meaningful use of instructional time	5%	11 %	29%	53%	2%
Progress monitoring takes up too much instructional time	2%	2%	22%	44%	30%
The loss of instructional time is worth the data that I receive from progress monitoring	9%	24 %	42%	24%	2%
Using progress monitoring data during planning saves me time during instruction	11 %	11 %	44%	32%	2%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

In addition to these questions, representatives from NCDPI asked that we include a question about whether districts provide a progress monitoring calendar for teachers to follow. Our findings indicate that the majority of teachers report that the district does provide a calendar to follow, but that some teachers (7%) are unsure if the district provides such information.

Table 19. *Does District Provide a Progress Monitoring Calendar to Follow?*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Other	36	5%
Yes	548	70%
No	145	19%
Unsure	53	7%
Total	**782**	**100%**

Support. Teachers were asked about the assistance that they received in progress monitoring their students. The majority of teachers reported that they progress monitored their own students. However, 3rd grade teachers were slightly more likely to report that they had support from others on both the TRC and DIBELS. Few teachers reported that they did not progress monitor their own students on either the TRC or DIBELS.

Table 20. *Who Progress Monitors Students?*

	Teacher Only	Teacher with Support	Other Staff
	TRC		
K – 2nd Teachers	86.5%	7.8%	5.7%
3rd Teachers	78.4%	14.2%	7.4%
	DIBELS		
K – 2nd Teachers	88.4%	8.2%	3.4%
3rd Teachers	80.2%	13.4%	6.4%

Teachers were also asked about the usefulness of online resources in supporting their use of data received from progress monitoring. In particular, we asked about the use of mCLASS:Reading 3D Now What? Tools and the K-3 Literacy Read to Achieve LiveBinder. Those teachers who reported using these resources generally reported that these resources were helpful (63%). However, 47% and 23% reported that they did not know if LiveBinder and mCLASS:Reading 3DNow What? was helpful, respectively. This suggests that a portion of

teachers are either unfamiliar with these resources or have not used them to support their progress monitoring efforts.

Table 21. *Use of Vendor Provided Tools for Translating Progress Monitoring Data into Instructional Practices*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
mCLASS:Reading 3D Now What? provides helpful intervention strategies for struggling readers	23%	4%	11%	60%	3%
LiveBinder provides helpful intervention strategies for struggling readers	47%	3%	6%	43%	1%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Usefulness. Overall, 67% of teachers agreed that progress monitoring provided useful information, but only 25% agreed that they would be unable to support their students in reading without progress monitoring.

Table 22. *Teachers' Beliefs About Usefulness of Progress Monitoring in General*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Progress monitoring provides useful information about students' reading skills and abilities	2%	8%	23%	64%	3%
Without progress monitoring, I would not be able to support all of my students' instructional needs in reading	3%	19%	53%	24%	1%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Regarding the validity of progress monitoring, 58% of teachers agreed that progress monitoring provides a valid indication of students' reading skills and abilities and only 41% agreed that teachers were consistent in the way that they progress monitor students.

Table 23. *Teachers' Beliefs Around Validity of Progress Monitoring Data*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Progress monitoring provides a valid indication of students' reading skills and abilities	2%	8%	31%	56%	2%
Teachers are consistent in the way they progress monitor students	11%	15%	34%	37%	3%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

In terms of progress monitoring data use, most teachers reported knowing how to use the data (78%) and being provided with sufficient data (69%). However, nearly half of teachers

(46%) reported that one of the obstacles to using mCLASS:Reading 3D data was related to other work obligations that may take away time from using these data.

Table 24. *Teachers' Beliefs Around Progress Monitoring Data Use*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Progress monitoring provides more data than I can use	6%	9%	60%	23%	2%
Progress monitoring gives me a lot of data that I don't know how to use	5%	11%	67%	16%	2%
Progress monitoring gives me a lot of data that I am unable to use because of everything else I need to do at work	4%	6%	44%	35%	11%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

Impact on Instructional Practices. Overall, 67% of teachers reported using progress monitoring data to support lesson planning. However, teachers were somewhat divided in their perceptions of the impact of progress monitoring on instruction. For example, 52% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that progress monitoring supports them in providing high-quality instruction. In addition, 27% of teachers reported that if given the option they would not use progress monitoring data for lesson planning and 34% said that they would not use progress monitoring to pinpoint students' reading abilities.

Table 25. *Impact of Progress Monitoring on Instructional Practices*

Question	DK	SD	D	A	SA
Progress monitoring adds value to my reading instruction	4%	10%	28%	55%	3%
Using progress monitoring makes me a better reading teacher	6%	11%	32%	47%	3%
Progress monitoring supports me in providing high quality instruction in reading	7%	10%	31%	49%	3%
I use progress monitoring data to support my lesson planning	3%	6%	23%	64%	3%
If I had a choice, I would never use progress monitoring data while lesson planning	7%	7%	59%	21%	6%
If I had a choice, I would not choose to use progress monitoring materials to pinpoint students' reading ability	8%	6%	53%	27%	7%

Note. DK = Don't Know/Not applicable; SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly Agree.

In addition to assessing teachers' perceptions of progress monitoring, we also asked teachers to report on the instructional practices that they use to facilitate progress monitoring.

Teachers reported using a variety of practices with the use of centers or stations being the most commonly reported practice (76%). Here students are grouped by activities and asked to work on a task with minimal guidance from the teacher.

Table 26. *Instructional Management Practices Used to Facilitate Progress Monitoring*

Answer	Frequency	Percent
Morning work	435	56%
Centers or Stations	592	76%
Pullout groups	408	53%
Intervention periods within the classroom or between classrooms	421	54%
Assistance from volunteers, tutors, TAs or other school staff	379	49%
Other	58	7%

Open-ended responses. Teachers were also asked if they would like to share any additional comments about the usefulness of progress monitoring for instructional decision making. The most common answer among teachers (38.8%) who responded to this question was that progress monitoring takes too much time away from other activities, particularly instruction. Among those teachers who mentioned the amount of time taken up by progress monitoring, half indicated that it was particularly problematic for low-performing readers. From the student's perspective, all of the time spent progress monitoring takes away from the time that struggling readers could be receiving individualized instruction or some form of reading intervention. From the teacher's perspective, because teachers are required to progress monitor struggling readers more often, the teachers who have the most struggling readers often spend less time making changes to instruction as a result of progress monitoring requirements. For example, one teacher said,

> "While progress monitoring is useful, I personally feel that it occurs too often for the below proficient students and becomes overwhelming for the teacher when they have more than half of the class reading at a below proficient level. Again, it is useful to track their reading throughout the year, but not sure it needs to be done every 10 days."

Similarly, another teacher said,

> "When a large number of students are on RED [not proficient] and have to be progress monitored every 10 days, it gets to the point that there is a constant cycle of assessing. Instruction becomes focused on passing a test and students' learning is overly focused on passing a test. We lose the inherent value of learning and the enjoyment of reading."

Two other themes emerged from the open-ended responses that should be mentioned. First, 8.9% of teachers who provided additional comments indicated that there are better ways to benchmark. Among the teachers with this position, the most common response was that using personal observations was a more informative way to identify students' instructional needs. For example, one teacher noted how using more informal observations of performance could provide important information and had the benefit of not disrupting classroom activities:

> "Progress monitoring in itself is a necessary useful tool however using mCLASS is time consuming…Before using mCLASS to progress monitor, I could take anecdotal notes during a reading group on each child, without interrupting the instruction flow or the learning that was taking place within the group. During these groups I could immediately give feedback and interventions for difficulties that would arise with reading that several students would benefit from learning. These anecdotal notes would drive my instruction and interventions. Now with mCLASS one child is reading a passage at a time and no other students are involved. I still have reading groups for interventions and reading guidance but now I also have to stop the flow of the reading group and the reading strategies being taught for the sake of proving that I am progress monitoring struggling students on mCLASS."

The second theme to emerge was regarding the validity of mCLASS as an assessment tool. A number of teacher (18.5%) mentioned problems with the progress monitoring, particularly their perception that the reading level of the books used for progress monitoring (which are chosen by the district) did not align with the reading level of the books used for benchmarking and that this lack of alignment created confusion for teachers who use progress monitoring results to inform practices that will influence benchmarking. In addition, some teachers noted that progress monitoring did not require a written component as part of the assessment. This last point is interesting given that most teachers were concerned with the amount of time devoted to progress monitoring, yet adding a written component would surely add to the time it takes to progress monitor.

Additional Open-Ended Questions Requested by NCDPI

During the survey review process representatives from NCDPI asked that we include additional questions in the survey related to changes in instructional practices as a result of using mCLASS:Reading 3D for benchmarking and progress monitoring. In this section, we summarize results obtained for these questions. It is important to note however, that when we asked these questions we assumed that answers would be related specifically to mCLASS:Reading 3D given the overall purpose of the survey, but when we asked each question

we did not explicitly remind them that these questions were about mCLASS:Reading 3D only. This last point is important because teachers are often asked to conduct assessments in other academic areas or for district and school level initiatives that are unrelated to mCLASS:Reading 3D and Read to Achieve.

Q15. What resources do you use to translate student data into instructional practices? Of the 645 teachers who answered this question, 46.3% made some form of general reference to using mCLASS:Reading 3D data directly. That is, they did not indicate if they use external resources (e.g., LiveBinder) to evaluate mCLASS:Reading 3D data as a way to inform instructional practices. Next, 16.1% of teachers indicated that they used student performance on indicators other than mCLASS:Reading 3D to inform instructional practices. Teachers named a variety of other performance indicators, but the most frequently mentioned indicators were alternative assessments, end of unit assessments, teacher developed assessments, and observations of students reading performance. In addition, 9.8% of teachers reported using curriculum and/or intervention resources other than those associated with mCLASS. For example, a number of teachers indicated that they used information from the Florida Center on Reading Research (FCRR) or the Leveled Literacy Intervention System (LLI). Finally, 7.2% of teachers reported that they used other teachers, administrators, and/or literacy professionals in the school as a resource to translate data into instructional practices.

Q16. How do you change instruction? Teachers reported changing instruction in a number of ways. For example, one teacher said, “We reteach specific skills and strategies, we give homework to target fluency and comprehension, we also target writing in response to reading.”

Although a number of instructional changes were mentioned, 37.2% of teachers reported using assessment data to create reading groups based on specific areas where skill development was needed. In addition 25.7% of teachers reported that they used assessment data to differentiate instruction (beyond putting students into groups) in some way. For example, teachers reported using data to select leveled reading books, identify groups of students who needed differentiated instruction, or identify individuals who needed one-on-one instruction. For example, one teacher reported, “Using the mClass data I am able to group students for small group literacy work, as well as differentiated the work that each group is given to best meet each students' needs.”

In addition, several teachers noted that group work and individualized instruction involved an iterative process in which data were used, students received individualized group instruction, and that this process was evaluated so that changes could be made as part of

progress monitoring. For example, one teacher said, “We use small groups to provide differentiated instruction. We utilize teachers, TAs and our reading teacher. We monitor students' progress weekly and make changes as needed.”

In addition to differentiating instruction, teachers reported a number of ways that they have changed instruction as a result of benchmarking and progress monitoring. Some of the changes mentioned include: work on vocabulary or fluency, use practice questions/question stems or work on writing, modifying homework, work on comprehension, and re-teaching or slowing the pace of teaching for struggling students. It should be noted that 8.9% of teachers did not report how they had changed instruction per se, but did report making greater use of data to inform instruction as a result of progress monitoring and benchmarking.

Q17. What results have you achieved by changing your instructional practices to meet the needs of the students? The majority of teachers who answered this question (67.3%) indicated that changes in instructional practices have led to student growth in reading. For example, one teacher said, “This year, I have seen a lot of growth between the 3rd and 4th 9 weeks. I changed the way I grouped my students and made sure my lessons were more purposeful and met the individual needs of students.” Another teacher made a similar comment about how making greater use of reading groups has resulted in improvements in reading:

> “My students are currently in the process of benchmarking for the spring. So far half of my students have completed TRC. They are all at or above benchmark. This is better growth than I even hoped for as all but one of my students came in at <PC [less than proficient] at fall benchmarks. I feel that really implementing reading groups 3-4 times a week has helped push my students to their greatest potential.”

Although most teachers reported student growth as a result of changing instruction, some teachers made mention of the limitations in improving student achievement. Across the responses about 6.3% of teachers indicated that they have not seen changes in students reading proficiency, the change is inconsistent, or the change should not be attributed to changes as a result of using mCLASS:Reading 3D. For many teachers who did not feel that students were improving, the time that benchmarking and progress monitoring took seemed to be a factor. For example, one teacher mentioned,

> “We have always used student data to change our instructional practices, even before MClass. The difference is that we haven't achieved the results we wanted to since using

> MClass due to the time constraints we face in the classroom. We are constantly testing the students instead of spending the time to teach them the material."

A number of teachers mentioned that benchmarking and progress monitoring has made them well aware of their students' needs, but the time it takes to assess means that they are less effective at implementing changes. For example, one teacher said,

> "I am more aware of what needs my students have. However, the continuous assessments and progress monitoring being done in 3rd grade limits the amount of time I can spend with these groups. I know what my students need, however the excessive amount of time I spend testing and assessing limits my time to meet with these students."

Taken together, these comments suggest that while most teachers have made instructional changes that they believe have resulted in improvements in students' reading skills, there is some level of dissatisfaction among some teachers who believe that they do not have the time to implement the changes needed given the time it takes to benchmark and progress monitor.

Appendix G: Local Alternative Assessment

Introduction

Background. One of the goals of Read to Achieve is to ensure that students demonstrate reading proficiency by 3rd grade. General Statute §115C-83.1G from the Read to Achieve Legislation says that the SBE "shall require that a student be retained in the 3rd 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 3rd grade students."

Third grade students can demonstrate reading proficiency in a number of ways or can be exempt from retention under the Read to Achieve legislation. Promotion to 4th grade is achieved by one of four general methods—(1) passing score on a state assessment; (2) passing score on a state alternative assessment; (3) student qualifies for a "good cause exemption"; or (4) passing score on a SBE approved local alternative assessment (LAA) administered by individual LEAs.[21] Below we briefly summarize each method and discuss the sequence of assessment.

State assessments. The primary state assessment used for reading in the 3rd grade is the Beginning of Grade (BOG) assessment in English Language Arts/Reading and the End of Grade (EOG) assessment in English Language Arts/Reading (hereafter, BOG and EOG, respectively). Students who pass either the BOG or EOG are exempt from retention.

State alternative assessments. Students who do not pass either the BOG or EOG and do not qualify for an exemption from assessment may take a retest of the EOG that is an alternative form of the original EOG and/or the Read to Achieve alternative assessment. Students who pass the retest of the EOG or the Read to Achieve alternative assessment are exempt from retention.

Good cause exemptions. Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in 3rd grade for good cause, but continue to receive instructional supports/intervention, and be eligible to participate in reading camps. Currently, 3rd grade students can qualify for the good cause exemption if one of the following conditions is met:

1. **Limited English Proficient students** with less than two school years of instruction in English as a Second Language program.

[21] It should be noted that passing a LAA is considered a good cause exemption (exemption 3).

2. **Students with disabilities** whose individualized education program indicates the use of an alternative assessment, who have at least a two-year delay in educational performance, or who have received intensive reading interventions for at least two school years.
3. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency on an **alternative assessment** approved by the SBE.
4. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency through a **reading portfolio**. This portfolio consists of two basic components—(1) summary results from benchmarking and progress monitoring using mCLASS Reading 3D, and (2) results from completed reading passages selected by NCDPI and administered by classroom teachers.[22] Student reading portfolio and review processes used by LEAs must be approved by the SBE.
5. Students who have received **reading intervention and previously been retained** more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grade.

State-approved local alternative assessments (LAA). Because the focus of this evaluation is on local alternative assessments, we discuss LAAs in greater detail here.

The Read to Achieve legislation gives the SBE authority to approve alternative assessments (good cause exemption 3) to the state assessments. In 2013-14, the SBE voted to approve alternative assessments that met two criteria—(1) LEAs had to request approval from the SBE and these requests had to be approved by the local board of education and signed by the local board chair; and (2) the request had to contain a statement indicating that the selected local alternative assessment generates valid and reliable scores that can be used to generate an accurate inference of whether a student is reading at or above 3rd grade level. It is important to note that in 2013-14, individual LEAs could seek approval from a list of approved LAAs, but that the LEAs selected the achievement level needed to pass the approved LAA. After 2013-14, the SBE approved the achievement level needed for passing the approved LAA.

In 2013-14, LEAs could use a variety of local alternative assessments that were approved by the SBE.[23] These included eight commercially available assessments that are still approved for use in 2015-16.[24] These include *Northwest Evaluation System – Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)*, *Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI)*, *STAR Reading*, *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*, *i-Station Benchmarks*, *i-Ready*, *CASE21*, and *Discovery Education Grade 3 Summative Assessment*.

[22] From "Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio: Implementation Guide 2015-16"
[23] Source. 'OCR Local Alternative Assessment Document.2013-14.xlsx' provided by NCPDI.
[24] Source. http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/docs/k-3literacy/achieve/alternative-assess.pdf

Because 2013-14 was the first year of implementation of Read to Achieve, LEAs were given some flexibility in the selection of local alternative assessments. For example, LEAs were allowed to use ClassScape/SchoolNet and Study Island in 2013-14, but approval for these assessments was not extended beyond 2013-14. Also, in 2013-14 LEAs were given the option to seek approval for using mClass:Reading 3D as an alternative assessment.[25] In 2013-14, LEAs were approved to use Rigby Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC), DIBELS Next, or a combination of the two as an approved alternative assessment.[26] After 2013-14, only the TRC from mCLASS:Reading 3D was approved as an LAA at a level P (proficient). It should be noted that mCLASS:Reading 3D is administered to all 3rd grade students across the state. If an LEA was approved for using mCLASS:Reading 3D as an alternative assessment, then all students in the district could potentially meet the promotion requirement via mCLASS:Reading 3D.

Sequence of assessments. Given the variety of pathways that 3rd grade students can use to meet the Read to Achieve proficiency requirements, NCDPI has established guidelines for the sequence of meeting these requirements (see NC Read to Achieve Implementation Guide, page 4). In general, 3rd grade students meet the proficiency requirement by passing the BOG or EOG. If a student is unable to pass either assessment, a determination is made whether the student qualifies for a Good Cause Exemption. If a student does not qualify for an exemption, he or she may be given the opportunity to take a re-administration of the EOG (alternative form) and/or the Read to Achieve alternative assessment. Students who do not pass the BOG or EOG or a state alternative assessment may complete a local alternative assessment (exemption 3) and/or a reading portfolio (exemption 4) to meet the promotion requirements of the legislation. Students who do not demonstrate reading proficiency by the end of school are encouraged to attend reading camp for additional reading support. At the conclusion of reading camp, students are given the opportunity to complete an alternative assessment (e.g., LAA, Read to Achieve assessment) to demonstrate reading proficiency or have a completed portfolio.

Purpose. The purpose of this evaluation is to report results of our analysis of the alignment between SBE approved Local Alternative Assessments (LAA) and NCDPI's End of Grade (EOG) assessment in English Language Arts/Reading using 3rd grade student assessment data that SERVE obtained from NCDPI and LEAs for the 2013-14 school year.

NCDPI asked SERVE to investigate the alignment between the SBE approved LAAs and the EOG to ensure that the local alternative assessments are aligned with the EOG and thus provide an equitable pathway for promotion to 4th grade for all students across the state.

[25] Letter from June Adkinson, February 17, 2014 "Alternative Assessment Proposals Under the General Assembly's Read to Achieve Law".
[26] "OCR Local Alternative Assessment Document.2013-14.xlsx" file provided by NCDPI.

One of the difficulties in assessing the alignment between LAAs and the EOG is that LEAs are only required to report to NCDPI whether a student took and passed a local alternative assessment. LEAs were not required to report actual test scores, how many students within an LEA took an LAA, frequency or timing of LAA assessment administration, and which LAA assessment was used to meet the proficiency requirement when LEAs were approved to administer two or more LAAs (e.g., mCLASS Reading 3D and STAR). Although the SBE requires LEAs to submit documentation in support of the reliability and validity of any LAA under consideration, the Read to Achieve legislation does not require LEAs to submit student-level LAA assessment scores to NCDPI[27], which is necessary to explore the level of alignment between the approved LAAs and assessments administered by NCDPI beyond what can be accomplished through a content analysis of the various assessments.

As such, NCDPI asked SERVE to explore the level of alignment between the SBE approved LAAs and the EOG and to report which LAAs are aligned with the EOG and when discrepancies were identified to consider why these discrepancies occurred. To accomplish these goals, SERVE was asked to reach out to LEAs who were willing to share their student-level LAA assessment data in order to evaluate discrepancies in students' assessment outcomes between the LAAs and EOG.

In this evaluation, we focus on the eight local alternative assessments that were originally approved in 2013-14 and continue to meet SBE approval for the 2015-16 school year. These include *Northwest Evaluation System – Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, *Scholastic Reading Inventory*, *STAR Reading*, *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*, *i-Station Benchmarks*, *i-Ready*, *CASE21*, and *Discovery Education Grade 3 Summative Assessment*. Also, given that most districts sought approval to use mCLASS Reading 3D as an approved local alternative assessment, we report findings on the alignment between the TRC assessment from mCLASS Reading 3D and the EOG. Finally, it should be noted that we excluded from our analysis LAAs that were created by LEAs[28] and approved for use in 2013-14 as these LAAs would be district specific, making analysis and generalizability of results problematic.

[27] Superintendents are required to sign a form indicating the alternative pathway that a 3rd grade student used to meet the promotion requirement when a student was not proficient on the EOG (see "3rd grade students achieving proficiency through alternate pathways – form" in LiveBinder). However, this form does not require LEAs to document the specific LAA that was used or the achievement score obtained on that assessment.

[28] In 2013-14 several LEAs were approved to create district LAAs using test bank questions from SchoolNet/ClassScape. It is our understanding that the district could select questions, but proficiency levels had to be approved by the SBE.

We used EOG data provided by NCDPI and LAA data provided by 19 LEAs to descriptively study the alignment of assessment scores for students in 3rd grade who took the EOG and a local alternative assessment during the 2013-14 school year. Although this was the first year of implementation of Read to Achieve and some of the LAA policies have changed, this was the most recently available data that were available from NCDPI.

Methodology

This discussion is divided into three sections. The first section describes the data collection procedure for obtaining test specifications/blueprints for the eight approved local alternative assessments included in this report. The second section describes the data collection procedure for obtaining student assessment data for the descriptive alignment study of student assessment results. The final section summarizes the analysis plan.

Collection of LAA test specifications. To better understand the assessments used in our analysis, we needed to obtain test specification information on the eight approved LAAs as well as those assessments administered or supported by NCDPI (e.g., EOG, mCLASS:Reading 3D). We were able to obtain necessary documentation on NCPDI supported assessments. However, obtaining test specifications on the eight approved LAAs proved more challenging because these assessments are financed and administered at the LEA level. To collect test specifications on the LAAs we contacted districts that provided us with student assessment data and asked if they would be willing to share any available documentation on the approved LAAs that were used in their district. Also, we contacted testing companies directly on behalf of NCDPI and requested any available test specifications. Finally, we reached out to personnel at NCDPI to see if they could provide us with test specifications. Unfortunately, we were largely unable to obtain test specifications from the LEAs, testing companies, or NCDPI for many of the LAAs examined in this report. Much of the information used in this report was obtained from publically available sources via literature review searches. These sources often lacked enough detail for a content analysis of the assessment or we found conflicting information between sources. As such, we were unable to conduct a full content analysis for this report. Instead, we provide a brief summary of relevant information that we could find for each LAA as part of the student assessment analysis.

Collection of student EOG/LAA assessment data. Third grade student record data for the 2013-14 school year was used for this analysis as this was the most current data that NCDPI could provide. NCDPI Accountability Services Technology Support personnel provided SERVE

investigators with 3rd grade assessment data for all assessments administered by NCDPI.[29] Also, we were provided with school enrollment and basic demographic information on each student. Finally, NCDPI personnel obtained mCLASS:Reading 3D benchmarking assessment data from Amplify on our behalf. Each data file received from NCDPI and Amplify contained a unique student ID that was used to merge files together.[30]

To obtain student assessment results on the eight SBE approved local alternative assessments we had to contact each LEA directly. LEAs are required to notify NCDPI of which students passed an approved LAA, but are otherwise not required to provide actual assessment results. NCDPI provided SERVE with a list of approved local alternative assessments for each LEA in 2013-14.[31] We contacted all 115 districts to request student-level LAA data and/or to verify that the district did not use an approved LAA in 2013-14. It should be noted that this sharing of LAA data was voluntary and at the discretion of each LEA. We followed all LEA policies when requesting these data from each district.

In total, we obtained LAA data on six of the eight LAAs still approved by the SBE in 2015-16 from 23 LEAs. Once we received LEA data, we merged LEA records with records provided by NCDPI to verify the information and evaluate data integrity.[32] We excluded four LEAs from our analytic file because data discrepancies could not be reconciled or the format of the data prevented us from merging LEA records with NCDPI records. In total, we used data from 19 LEAs who provided us with assessment data for 19,298 students. Third grade student enrollment across these 19 districts was 22,423 students, giving us LAA data for 86.1% of students in these districts.

Across the 115 districts that we contacted, 61 did not use one of the eight approved LAAs,[33] 11 used an approved LAA, but were unable to provide data, 8 districts had not made a determination regarding data sharing by the time we undertook our analysis, 7 refused to provide data, and 5 districts agreed to provide data, but did not follow through by the time analyses were undertaken.

[29] This includes EOG, BOG, EOG retest, Read to Achieve Alternative Assessment.
[30] Some ID discrepancies were found in the Amplify file. As such, mCLASS Reading 3D data were merged with the NCDPI assessment files using both student ID and student birth date information.
[31] "OCR Local Alternative Assessment Document.2013-14.xlsx" file provided by NCDPI.
[32] If merge was unsuccessful we contacted the LEA. In most cases the merge was unsuccessful because the LEA sent us student data for the wrong grade or year.
[33] Some LEAs had the option of using mCLASS Reading 3D as an alternative assessment and some had approval for LAAs that were not the focus of this evaluation because those assessments are no longer approved by the SBE.

When requesting LAA data, we asked LEAs to provide scores for all students in the district who took one of the eight approved LAAs. If districts administered an approved LAA at multiple time points, we asked for assessment data that were collected as close to the EOG assessment as possible.[34] If a district did not administer one of the eight approved LAAs to all students (verified by matching LEA records to NCDPI records), we asked districts to provide us with information on which students were selected and why (e.g., district targeted struggling readers) to aid in our analysis. Most districts that provided LAA data administered these assessments to most or all students within the district. It should be noted that some of the districts that provided us with LAA data collected such data for district reading initiatives and not for the purpose meeting Read to Achieve promotion requirements.

Analysis plan. Results are presented separately for each of the six LAAs for which SERVE received data. All LAA and EOG data were screened before analysis. If a student had assessment data on an LAA but was exempt from the assessment requirements due to a Good Cause Exemption for LEP, disability, or previous retention status this student was excluded from analysis. Additionally, students who had LAA data, but completed an alternative form of the EOG assessment such as the NCEXTEND1, were excluded from analysis as scale scores from these alternative EOGs are not comparable to the standard EOGs.

Analysis of the alignment between each local alternative assessment and the EOG is presented in four steps. First, we begin with an overview or synopsis of each LAA to provide background information. Second, we report the bivariate correlation (Pearson r) and a scatterplot of assessment scores between each LAA and the EOG. Third, we report the pass rate alignment between each LAA and EOG assessment for 3rd grade students who have scores for both assessments. Finally, in order to assess the degree to which the pass rate of each LAA differs from that of the EOG for students having similar levels of reading proficiency, we include a chart for each LAA that plots the pass rate on the EOG assessment and the LAA by the four proficiency levels of the TRC assessment that was administered at the End of Year (EOY) benchmark period. Because students in the same TRC proficiency level can be assumed to have a similar level of reading proficiency, any sizable difference in pass rates for a particular LAA from that of the EOG for students being in the same TRC proficiency level provides evidence that the level of proficiency required to pass the LAA is inconsistent with that required to pass that EOG. We used results from the EOY TRC assessment because students' classroom performance (e.g., grades) was not available from NCDPI and most districts were unable to provide this information for our evaluation.

[34] All districts provided spring assessment data. When available, assessment dates ranged from the last week of March to the first week of June. Some files did not indicate exact assessment dates, but we confirmed with LEA representatives that the assessment data were from the spring administration.

Because we did not have access to students' grades or other indicators of classroom reading performance we decided to use results from EOY benchmarking on the TRC as a proxy for student performance. It should be noted that LAA data used in this analysis may not have been used by districts for promotion decisions. As such, results must be interpreted in terms of the alignment between the various assessment tools only and not as an indication of actual promotions to 4th grade via local alternative assessment results.

Summary of Results

Before discussing results from student results, we begin with a summary of our findings around how districts implemented the LAA portion of the Read to Achieve Legislation. It was not our original goal to report such findings. However, after talking with LEA representatives across the state as part of our data collection efforts, we found that some of the practices around administering LAAs may be informative to NCDPI.

LEA Implementation of Local Alternative Assessments

In 2013-14, LEAs sought approval from the SBE to use a variety of LAAs as an alternative to the state assessments. LEAs could seek approval for more than one LAA. Most LEAs (83.5%) were approved to use mCLASS:Reading 3D as an LAA. This may result from the fact that all LEAs were already required to use mCLASS:Reading 3D for progress monitoring and benchmarking so using mCLASS:Reading 3D results would not create additional student-assessment burden nor would it result in additional cost to the LEAs. Nearly half of LEAs (46.1%) were approved to use an additional LAA other than mCLASS or the other eight assessments that are the focus of this evaluation. In most cases these LEAs used assessment questions from the SchoolNet and/or ClassScape assessment bank to develop their own LEA generated assessment. It is our understanding that districts were not allowed to develop their own LAAs beyond the 2013-14 school year. After mCLASS Reading 3D and the locally created LAAs, STAR was approved for nearly one-third (28.7%) of all LEAs, more than any other assessment.

It should also be noted that although all but nine districts sought approval for at least one LAA on the list below, approximately 25% of districts that were approved for one of the eight LAAs that are the focus of this evaluation did not end up using one of these assessments.

Table 1. *Number of Approved LAAs in 2013-14*

Assessment	Number of LEAs Approved	Percentage of LEAs Approved
mCLASS	96	83.5%
Other	53	46.1%

STAR	33	28.7%
CASE	11	9.6%
ITBS	9	7.8%
None	9	7.8%
NWEA MAP	8	7.0%
Discovery Education	6	5.2%
I-Station	3	2.6%
SRI	2	1.7%
I-Ready	1	0.9%

Source: "OCR Local Alternative Assessment Document.2013-14.xlsx" file provided by NCDPI. Also, verified by contacting LEAs.

In 2013-14, 14,604 students in 3rd grade (12.6%) were promoted to 4th grade as a result of successfully passing an approved local alternative assessment.[35] An additional 44,193 students (38.0%) passed a local alternative assessment, but this was not the primary factor that led to their promotion to 4th grade. [36] This last point requires some explanation.

The current Read to Achieve legislation provides multiple pathways for 3rd grade students to be promoted to 4th grade. For example, a student who passes the BOG reading assessment, EOG reading assessment, a reading portfolio, as well as an approved local alternative assessment meets the promotion requirement by any one of these standards. To account for these multiple pathways to promotion, NCDPI has developed a preference or priority order for reporting 3rd grade promotions. In this system, passing the EOG and/or the BOG takes priority over other assessments such as successfully completing a portfolio or LAA. Using this approach, the student in the previously mentioned example would be counted as passing 3rd grade via the EOG, but would also be recorded as demonstrating secondary proficiency on the BOG, portfolio, and LAA. Table 2 provides a summary of how students passed 3rd grade and is organized by NCDPI's priority order.

Table 2. *3rd Grade Promotion Outcomes in 2013-14*

Category	Frequency	Percent
Passed by EOG Reading	68871	59.3%
Passed by BOG Reading	631	.5%
Passed by Good Cause Exemption*	10407	8.9%
Passed by RTA Alternative Assessment	2570	2.2%
Passed by Local Alternative Assessment	14604	12.6%
Passed by EOG Retest	679	.6%

[35] Source. 'read-to-achieve.xlsx' table from the 2013-14 NC School Report Card Data.
[36] Source. Student level 'rtaaudit' file provided by NCDPI.

Passed by Reading Camp	3588	3.1%
Retained (Did Not Pass)	14755	12.7%
Medical**	79	.1%
Total	**116184**	**100%**

*This includes Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, students with disabilities, Harvard READs participants, students who demonstrate proficiency through a reading portfolio, students who have received reading intervention, and students who have previously been retained.
** No indication in RtA audit file provided by NCDPI if these students were retained or promoted.

The implication of this reporting system is that while only 14,604 students were reported as being promoted to 4th grade via a local alternative assessment in 2013-14, in fact a total of 58,797 3rd grade students (50.6%) were reported to NCDPI as having passed a LAA. We were unable to determine which LAAs were actually used for promotion purposes given that this information is not reported to NCDPI. However, given that most districts (83.5%) were approved to use mCLASS:Reading 3D as a LAA, and nearly half (46.1%) were allowed to create district specific assessments using SchoolNet and/or ClassScape, we believe that these assessments were most likely used as the primary LAA for determining promotion in most LEAs. Further evidence for this suggestion comes from the fact that several students in our analytic sample had non-proficient scores on one of the six LAAs, but were recorded as passing a LAA in the files provided by NCDPI. It could be the case that these students passed an earlier administration of one of the six LAAs not included in our requested data files or it could be that another LAA, such as mCLASS:Reading 3D, was used for determining promotion.

Table 3 provides a summary of students who passed a local alternative assessment for all public LEAs in the state. All but nine LEAs reported at least one student passing a local alternative assessment. In most LEAs, a significant portion of 3rd grade students were recorded as having passed a local alternative assessment even though they met the reading proficiency requirement via other means.

Table 3. *Number of 3rd Grade Students Who Passed SBE Approved Local Alternative Assessment by LEA in 2013-14*

LEA	Passed LAA but Promoted by Other Means	Promoted by Passing LAA	Passed LAA (Total)	Enrollment
Alamance-Burlington Schools	768	287	1055	1697
Alexander County Schools	245	97	342	423
Alleghany County Schools	69	5	74	100
Anson County Schools	124	75	199	261

LEA	Passed LAA but Promoted by Other Means	Promoted by Passing LAA	Passed LAA (Total)	Enrollment
Ashe County Schools	134	39	173	236
Avery County Schools	0	0	0	142
Beaufort County Schools	227	74	301	539
Bertie County Schools	58	24	82	174
Bladen County Schools	202	94	296	362
Brunswick County Schools	421	66	487	946
Buncombe County Schools	745	188	933	1900
Asheville City Schools	220	11	231	353
Burke County Schools	467	198	665	946
Cabarrus County Schools	1017	279	1296	2361
Kannapolis City Schools	137	104	241	440
Caldwell County Schools	477	180	657	866
Camden County Schools	97	21	118	133
Carteret County Public Schools	311	54	365	638
Caswell County Schools	93	31	124	202
Catawba County Schools	526	107	633	1263
Hickory City Schools	114	67	181	362
Newton Conover City Schools	50	22	72	225
Chatham County Schools	77	14	91	686
Cherokee County Schools	0	0	0	241
Edenton-Chowan Schools	107	29	136	160
Clay County Schools	73	8	81	109
Cleveland County Schools	699	58	757	1213
Columbus County Schools	115	48	163	450
Whiteville City Schools	0	0	0	163
Craven County Schools	564	179	743	1148
Cumberland County Schools	1127	101	1228	3853
Currituck County Schools	148	34	182	297
Dare County Schools	161	54	215	419
Davidson County Schools	771	248	1019	1500
Lexington City Schools	65	18	83	252
Thomasville City Schools	58	27	85	193
Davie County Schools	113	43	156	455
Duplin County Schools	174	26	200	786
Durham Public Schools	705	237	942	2597
Edgecombe County Public Schools	150	72	222	434

LEA	Passed LAA but Promoted by Other Means	Promoted by Passing LAA	Passed LAA (Total)	Enrollment
Forsyth County Schools	1685	570	2255	4044
Franklin County Schools	81	32	113	646
Gaston County Schools	1005	833	1838	2326
Gates County Schools	40	26	66	120
Graham County Schools	52	24	76	93
Granville County Schools	235	104	339	595
Greene County Schools	90	61	151	244
Guilford County Schools	2339	1054	3393	5519
Halifax County Schools	78	71	149	291
Roanoke Rapids City Schools	83	30	113	214
Weldon City Schools	0	0	0	77
Harnett County Schools	717	404	1121	1550
Haywood County Schools	228	68	296	536
Henderson County Schools	252	129	381	1030
Hertford County Schools	72	56	128	249
Hoke County Schools	142	40	182	665
Hyde County Schools	0	9	9	46
Iredell-Statesville Schools	0	0	0	1540
Mooresville City Schools	301	27	328	446
Jackson County Schools	153	75	228	285
Johnston County Schools	1490	506	1996	2616
Jones County Schools	15	6	21	101
Lee County Schools	355	90	445	786
Lenoir County Public Schools	303	137	440	684
Lincoln County Schools	510	63	573	878
Macon County Schools	172	89	261	304
Madison County Schools	98	33	131	182
Martin County Schools	68	47	115	275
McDowell County Schools	251	51	302	461
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	4545	1700	6245	11768
Mitchell County Schools	60	15	75	139
Montgomery County Schools	120	29	149	326
Moore County Schools	472	72	544	972
Nash-Rocky Mount Schools	2	0	2	1238
New Hanover County Schools	76	34	110	2055
Northampton County Schools	0	0	0	182
Onslow County Schools	736	206	942	1956

LEA	Passed LAA but Promoted by Other Means	Promoted by Passing LAA	Passed LAA (Total)	Enrollment
Orange County Schools	254	44	298	579
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Schools	667	86	753	929
Pamlico County Schools	46	16	62	90
Pasquotank County Schools	1	2	3	454
Pender County Schools	373	98	471	642
Perquimans County Schools	73	43	116	138
Person County Schools	210	20	230	371
Pitt County Schools	877	203	1080	1787
Polk County Schools	0	1	1	189
Randolph County Schools	568	252	820	1331
Asheboro City Schools	136	66	202	364
Richmond County Schools	75	52	127	543
Robeson County Schools	579	250	829	1796
Rockingham County Schools	333	188	521	1005
Rowan-Salisbury Schools	681	222	903	1482
Rutherford County Schools	367	152	519	620
Sampson County Schools	381	123	504	667
Clinton City Schools	0	3	3	253
Scotland County Schools	141	60	201	425
Stanly County Schools	250	46	296	621
Stokes County Schools	150	99	249	428
Surry County Schools	240	191	431	654
Elkin City Schools	76	4	80	98
Mount Airy City Schools	62	6	68	105
Swain County Schools	38	5	43	146
Transylvania County Schools	138	22	160	237
Tyrrell County Schools	0	0	0	46
Union County Public Schools	486	52	538	3175
Vance County Schools	119	20	139	543
Wake County Schools	5102	1112	6214	12137
Warren County Schools	0	0	0	187
Washington County Schools	0	24	24	120
Watauga County Schools	0	0	0	334
Wayne County Public Schools	709	441	1150	1481
Wilkes County Schools	287	51	338	723
Wilson County Schools	450	237	687	945
Yadkin County Schools	127	84	211	416

LEA	Passed LAA but Promoted by Other Means	Promoted by Passing LAA	Passed LAA (Total)	Enrollment
Yancey County Schools	92	26	118	185
Total	**42523**	**14211**	**56734**	**111210**

Note. Table does not include charter schools.

Based on our conversations with LEA representatives around obtaining student-level LAA data we made some observations that suggest possible avenues for future inquiry to better understand how districts are implementing the LAA portion of Read to Achieve. Below we summarize a few key findings from our data collection efforts.

- **Many of the LEAs that sought approval for using one of the eight LAAs did not end up using the alternative assessment.** It is not clear why this was the case. It could be that districts were financially responsible for offering the LAA. Some districts reported not using one of the eight LAAs because of the cost involved and the availability of other LAAs provided by the state (e.g., SchoolNet, ClassScapes). It is also possible that districts decided not to use one of the eight approved LAAs because mCLASS:Reading 3D was approved as a LAA and is administered multiple times throughout the year. This would give students multiple opportunities to meet the promotion requirement via the LAA without requiring LEAs to purchase one of the other approved assessments. We asked some districts why they chose to use one of the eight LAAs despite the fact that mCLASS:Reading 3D, SchoolNet, ClassScapes, etc. were available. Some district representatives indicated that the district felt that the other LAAs provided a better indicator of reading skills than mCLASS:Reading 3D. However, several district representatives indicated that the district had been using one of the eight LAAs before the implementation of Read to Achieve and that these districts continued to use one of the eight LAAs to inform district-level reading initiatives.
- **Many LEAs that did use one of the eight LAAs used the assessment on most students in the district and in many cases students were assessed at multiple points throughout the year.** At the outset of the evaluation we expected districts would use one of the eight local alternative assessments only on struggling readers who failed to pass the promotion requirement using one of the other pathways (e.g., EOG retest, Read to Achieve Alternative Test, portfolio, mCLASS Reading 3D). In some cases, this was true. Some districts reported using one of the eight LAAs only when students failed to pass one of the state alternative assessments or another LAA. However, we also found that if a district used one of the eight LAAs they

tended to use the assessment on all or most students in the district. Most of the districts that provided us with data for our study indicated that they used the LAA multiple times throughout the year (e.g. fall, winter, and spring). In some districts, students were assessed with an LAA more than five times throughout the year. *This finding implies that some students are being required to take additional assessments to inform district reading initiatives or as a way to meet the promotion requirement via a local alternative assessment. This additional assessment comes on top of EOG/BOG assessments, three benchmarking assessments, and ongoing progress monitoring.*

- **Several LEAs were willing, but unable to provide student-level LAA data for this evaluation because data no longer existed or was not maintained in a format that was easily accessible.** The 2013-14 school year was the first year that Read to Achieve was implemented across the state. Several district representatives that we spoke with indicated that record keeping around the local alternative assessment data had improved after 2013-14, but that for many districts, providing these data was an obstacle. For some districts, the data were available, but only at the school level (e.g., LAA assessment results were maintained in a student's physical record file at the school). For some LEAs, data were available in the district office but these data were not available in a digital format. In some districts, the district no longer used one of the eight LAAs and as a result they did not have access to the online tools that would allow them to access students' records. Many of these issues may be the result of Read to Achieve being new in 2013-14, which would create data management challenges for any organization. However, because districts are only required to report to NCDPI the students who pass an LAA (without including actual scores), it may be the case that less emphasis was placed on maintaining these records once reporting requirements were met.
- **In 2013-14, LEAs reported to NCDPI that approximately half of all 3rd grade students passed a local alternative assessment although only 12.6% were promoted primarily using a local alternative assessment.** In 2013-14, LEAs had flexibility in deciding which assessments to adopt as an SBE approved local alternative assessment. LEAs had a range of options including the eight LAAs that are currently approved, LEA developed assessments (ClassScapes, SchoolNet), and mCLASS:Reading 3D that is administered throughout the year in the form of progress monitoring as well as at three benchmarking periods. In this report we are unable to determine which local alternative assessment lead to promotion, but what is clear is that most 3rd-grade students took a local alternative assessment in 2013-14 and this may largely be the result of using mCLASS:Reading 3D or a locally developed alternative as an assessment tool. In this report, we are unable to

determine if the high number of students taking and passing a local alternative assessment was a result of using mCLASS:Reading 3D (which all students are required to take) or the result of taking an additional assessment. *What is clear from our analysis is that over one-third of 3rd grade students in the state took and passed a LAA when doing so appeared to be unnecessary to meet promotion requirements as part of Read to Achieve. For example, many of these students had passing scores on the EOG assessment or met good cause exemption requirements that would have made taking the LAAs unnecessary.*

Alignment Study Between LAAs and EOG English Language Arts/Reading Assessment

In this section we report results on the alignment between the six LAAs that were the focus of this investigation and the EOG. These six LAAs include: *Northwest Evaluation System – Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)*, *STAR Reading*, *Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)*, *i-Ready*, *CASE21*, and *Discovery Education Grade 3 Summative Assessment*. We were unable to obtain assessment data for the *Scholastic Reading Inventory* and *i-Station Benchmarks* assessments. Also, we report findings on the alignment between the Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) assessment from mCLASS:Reading 3D and the EOG. Before considering each assessment, we begin with a description of the EOG English Language Arts/Reading assessment.

Background on EOG English Language Arts/Reading Assessment

Description. The North Carolina EOG is administered at the end of the school year as a high stakes, summative assessment. The test blueprint, shown in Table 4, identifies the percentage of the test accounted for by each of the subdomains of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for Grade 3 English Language Arts (ELA). Specific standards assessed by the EOG can be seen in Table 5 along with the number of items for each standard.

Table 4. *Weight distributions for Grade 3 English Language Arts (2014-2015)*

Domain	Grade 3
Reading for Literature	32-37%
Reading for Information	41-45%
Reading Foundation Skills	NA
Writing	NA
Speaking and Listening	NA
Language	20-24%
Total	**100%**

Table 5. *Number of Items by Standard for Grade 3 English Language Arts (2014-2015)*

Grade 3 Standard	Number of Items
Reading: Literature	
RL.1	3-5
RL.2	1-2
RL.3	4-5
RL.4	4-6
Language	
L.4a	6-9
L.5a	1-3
Reading: Informational Text	
RI.1	6
R1.2	3
R1.3	3
R1.4	2-4
RI.7	2-5
RI.8	2

The test is administered in a paper and pencil format and scoring is completed after booklets have been gathered from school sites. Student achievement scores are reported on a scale ranging from 406-462 with a score of 439 or higher indicating a passing grade and serving to satisfy the Read to Achieve promotion requirement. Scores are also reported relative to achievement level with a level of 3 or higher indicating acceptable demonstration of proficiency, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6. *North Carolina Achievement Levels (Effective with the 2013-2014 school year[37])*

Achievement Level/Cut Score Range	Meets On-Grade-Level Proficiency Standards	Meets College-and-Career Readiness Standards
Level 5 denotes Superior Command of knowledge and skills (≥452)	Yes	Yes
Level 4 denotes Solid Command of knowledge and skills (442-451)	Yes	Yes
Level 3 denotes Sufficient Command of knowledge and skills (439-441)	Yes	No

[37] http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/achievelevels/eogelaachievelevel14.pdf

Level 2 denotes Partial Command of knowledge and skills (432-438)	No	No
Level 1 denotes Limited Command of knowledge and skills (≤431)	No	No

Intended use(s) and users. Scores from the EOG are used to satisfy federal and READY accountability model reporting. Additionally, scores serve as an indication of a student's growth in reading ability throughout the grade year of study. Students take a beginning of grade (BOG) exam in reading at the outset of the year that is an equivalent form of the EOG exam. By comparing scores for each student from the BOG to EOG, student growth can be ascertained and education professionals within the school setting (principals, teachers) may be evaluated through the EVAAS model.

Constructs and Inferences. The construct of reading ability as measured by the EOG is manifest in the CCSS Grade 3 ELA standards indicated in Table 5. Using EOG scores, inferences may be made about students' ability to read for literature, read to information and use language.

Sources.

- NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services Division. (2015). NCSCS for English language arts (elatestspecs15.pdf).
- NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services Division. (2015). NC EOG Tests of ELA/Reading Grades 3-8 (eogelaachielevel14.pdf).
- NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services Division. (2015). 2015 Read to Achieve Test Grade 3 English language Arts/Reading: North Carolina Assessment Specifications (ReadToAchieve_TestSpecs_2015.pdf).
- NC Department of Public Instruction/Accountability Services Division. (2015). NC Read to Achieve Test (rtacutscores15.pdf).

Rigby Text Reading and Comprehension (TRC) from mCLASS Reading 3D

Description. The Rigby Text Reading Comprehension (TRC) Assessment by Amplify is implemented in North Carolina for benchmarking (3 times per year) and progress monitoring (a variable number of times per year). The TRC is formative in nature and assesses oral reading accuracy and comprehension using a set of calibrated benchmark books. After reading the book, the student is asked a series of standardized questions to assess reading comprehension. Book levels range from B to U for 3rd grade readers on a scale in which B represents below

grade level reading ability, P and Q represent grade level reading ability and R through U represent above grade level reading ability. These levels are represented in Table 7 below.

Intended use(s) and users. Use of scores primarily align with formative purposes that aim to support teachers in monitoring student progress and identifying areas of difficulty in reading. Results from ongoing benchmarking and progress monitoring provide a measure of progress toward achievement of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study ELA standards. The tool also seeks to evaluate student performance on foundational skills that are necessary to become a fluent reader and the student's ability to apply those skills to increasingly complex texts.

Constructs and inferences. The constructs of reading ability measured by TRC include (1) print concepts, (2) reading behaviors, (3) TRC reading record, (4) oral comprehension, (5) MSV (meaning, syntax, visual) analysis, and (6) written comprehension. Inferences may be made about the student's reading ability as a whole and on each of these subscales.

Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability. The tests are administered in different environments (TRC is administered on a one-on-one basis with a teacher). The purposes of the assessments appear to vary, as the EOG is intended for inform accountability mandates in a high stakes testing environment while TRC is designed to monitor student progress toward learning goals. There seems to be some areas of overlap between the constructs of measurement, though the extent to which the constructs align is unknown.

Table 7. Rigby Text and Reading Comprehension Cut Scores for 3rd Grade

Time of Year	Far Below Proficient	Below Proficient	Proficient	Above Proficient
BOY	K or below	L	M to N	O or above
MOY	L or below	M to N	O	P or above
EOY	M or below	N to O	P to Q	R or above

Sources.

- Amplify Education, Inc. (2013). mCLASS Reading 3D: Test reading and comprehension (TRC) 2012 cut point revisions.
- Amplify Education, Inc. (2013). Written Comprehension alignment with the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.
- Amplify Education, Inc. (2013). mCLASS: Reading 3D text reading and comprehension alignments with the common core state standards for English language arts.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the TRC analysis includes 98,498 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the TRC at EOY. The Pearson correlation between TRC text levels[38] and EOG was strong ($r = 0.69$, $p < .01$). Chart 1 presents the scatterplot between TRC text levels and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as TRC Text Levels increase so does performance on the EOG.

Chart 1. *Scatterplot of TRC Text Levels (EOY) and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*

[38] Text levels were converted to numeric values to all for statistical analysis.

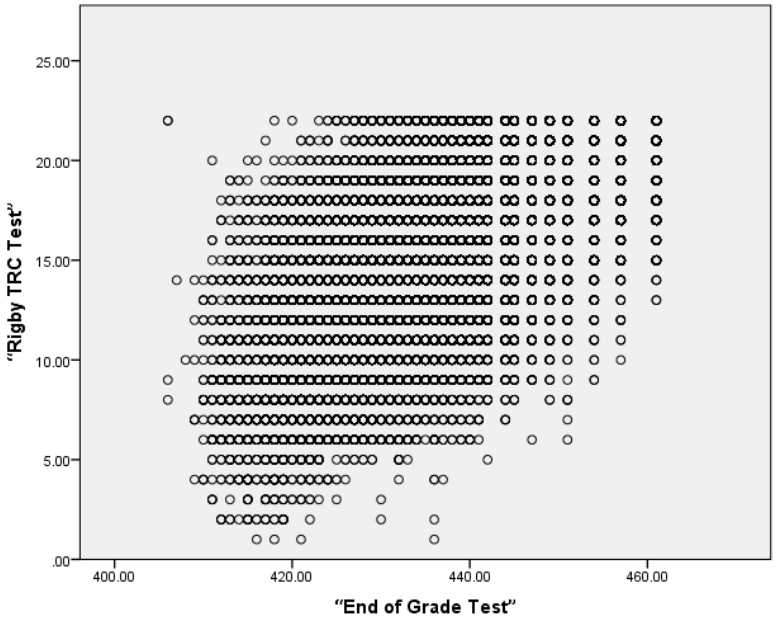


Table 8 presents the cross-tabulation of TRC and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment. Students are considered proficient on the TRC if they score Proficient or Well Above Proficient on the TRC and proficient on the EOG if they score at or above Level 3. Inspection of the frequencies indicates that 77.6% of students who were proficient or non-proficient on the TRC assessment were also proficient or non-proficient on the EOG, respectively. There were slightly more students who were proficient on the TRC, but non-proficient on the EOG compared to those who were proficient on the EOG but non-proficient on the TRC (13.4% vs. 9.1%, respectively).

Table 8. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by TRC Passing Scores*

	EOG		
TRC (EOY)	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	22624 (23.0%)	8975 (9.1%)	**31599 (32.1%)**
Proficient	13160 (13.4%)	53739 (54.6%)	**66899 (67.9%)**
Total	**35784 (36.3%)**	**62714 (63.7%)**	**98498 (100.0%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. TRC = 77.6%

Additionally, Table 9 provides the frequency with which students in each TRC proficiency category (Far Below, Below, Proficient, and Above) achieve scores within each performance level on the EOG (Limited Command (1), Partial Command (2), Sufficient Command (3), Solid Command (4), and Superior Command (5)). This table indicates that the largest discrepancy between the two assessments occurs for 6.4% of the analytic sample who were proficient on the TRC, but scored at level 2 on the EOG.

Table 9. *Distribution of EOG Performance Levels by TRC Performance Levels*

EOG						
TRC	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Far Below	10118 (10.3%)	5024 (5.1%)	1719 (1.7%)	1593 (1.6%)	67 (0.1%)	**18521 (18.8%)**
Below	3242 (3.3%)	4239 (4.3%)	2261 (2.3%)	3102 (3.1%)	232 (0.2%)	**13076 (13.3%)**
Proficient	2575 (2.6%)	6269 (6.4%)	4666 (4.7%)	9643 (9.8%)	1191 (1.2%)	**24344 (24.7%)**
Above	789 (0.8%)	3528 (3.6%)	4572 (4.6%)	23209 (23.6%)	10459 (10.6%)	**42557 (43.2%)**
Total	**16724 (17.0%)**	**19060 (19.4%)**	**13218 (13.4%)**	**37547 (38.1%)**	**11949 (12.1%)**	**98498 (100.0%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes.

Summary of findings. Results from this descriptive analysis suggests that overall, there is alignment of outcomes on the TRC and EOG. This is evidenced by the strong positive correlation (r = 0.69) between both assessments and the level of congruence between students' proficiency levels on both assessments (77.6%). These findings are similar to findings published by Amplify using results from the 2012-13 administration of the EOG.[39]

Northwest Evaluation Association – Measure of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP)

Description. The Measures of Academic Progress (NWEA MAP) assessment for Grade 3 Reading published by the Northwest Evaluation Association can be administered up to four times per year as a formative assessment to improve instruction, plan school improvement and measure growth. Scores from MAP assessments may also serve an interim function as a measure gathered at multiple times throughout the year to anticipate summative assessment performance. MAP is a computer-adaptive test, meaning that students take the test individually on a computer and each subsequent item in the test is chosen specifically for the student based on his/her previous answers. The test is untimed and the score results appear immediately on the screen at the end of the assessment. Scores are reported on an equal interval "Rasch Unit," or RIT, scale, which enables the comparison of scores to measure growth across multiple grade levels. In addition to the RIT score, state standards are identified (through a tool called "DesCartes: A Continuum of Learning") so that teachers are aware of learning that could be targeted to improve the student's performance on future tests. A Lexile score is also reported

[39] "Validity Evidence for mCLASS Reading 3D and Student Performance on the 2012-13 North Carolina End of Grade Reading Comprehension Test" found on NCDPI LiveBinder.

for the student. The purpose of the MAP is the measurement of student growth and the improvement of teaching and learning.

A linking study was performed in 2011 to connect student performance on the MAP assessment with student performance on the North Carolina EOG. The linking study used an equipercentile design and "translated" scores on the EOG to the scale of the MAP. The findings from the linking study are summarized in Table 10.

Intended use(s) and users. Scores from the MAP can be used to develop targeted instructional strategies and to plan school improvement. Additionally, since scores are measured on a common, equal interval scale, scores can be used to ascertain growth from one test administration to the next, including across grade levels.

Constructs and inferences. The technical manual for this test was unavailable for analysis despite attempts to retrieve such information from individual test users, the test developer and the research department of the testing company. As such, the construct(s) of reading ability as measured by the MAP and possible inferences that may be made from scores are unknown. The use of language describing future state standards as targets for intervention seems to indicate that the construct could be rooted in state standards.

Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability. The tests are administered in different environments (MAP is administered on computers and is untimed). As a computer-adaptive test, MAP delivers a unique set of items to each student while all students see the same set of items on the EOG. The purposes of the assessments appear to vary, as the EOG is intended to inform accountability mandates in a high stakes testing environment while the MAP is designed to track student growth and to inform instructional decisions and school improvement plans. The relationship between the constructs is unknown, as is any relationship between the inferences that may be made from scores from each assessment.

Table 10. *MAP North Carolina Proficiency Tables from Scale Linking Study*

Level 1	Level 2		Level 3		Level 4	
Cut Score	Cut Score	Percentile	Cut Score	Percentile	Cut Score	Percentile
<182	182	24	189	41	203	79

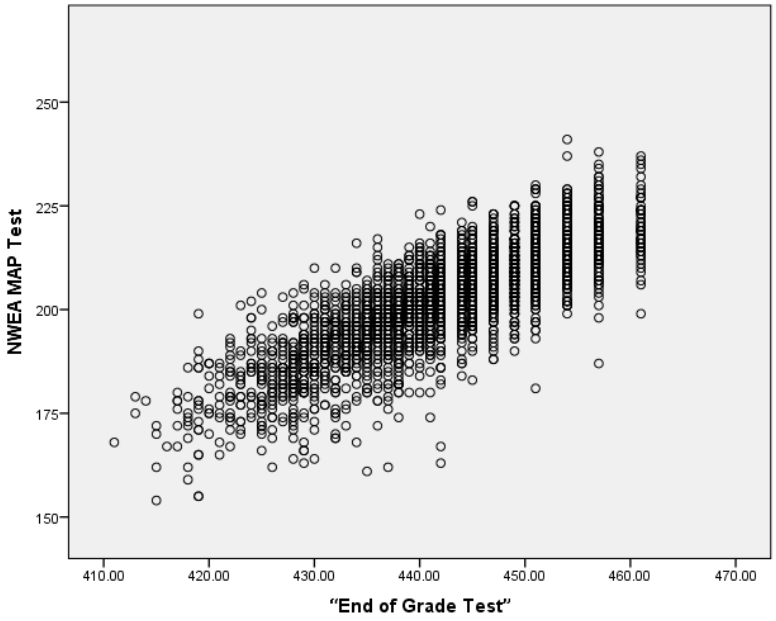
Sources.

- Northwest Evaluation Association. (2012). MAP Basics Overview.

- Northwest Evaluation Association. (2011). North Carolina Proficiency Tables from Scale Linking Study.
- Website. "Using MAP to Predict Proficiency on Summative Assessments."

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the NWEA MAP analysis includes 2,769 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the NWEA MAP. The Pearson correlation between the NWEA MAP and EOG was strong ($r = 0.79$, $p < .01$). Chart 2 presents the scatterplot between NWEA MAP and EOG. In general, as the NWEA MAP scores increase so does performance on the EOG.

Chart 2. *Scatterplot of NWEA MAP Scale Scores and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The NWEA MAP assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed for passing the assessment changed in 2015-16. As such, we present results using the same analytic sample with both achievement levels. Table 11 presents the cross-tabulation of NWEA MAP and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment using 2013-14 achievement levels that most LEAs adopted. In 2013-14, 3rd grade students were considered proficient on the NWEA MAP with a scale score of 197 or higher. Table 12 presents results using the 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level of 207 or higher.

Table 11. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by NWEA MAP using 197 Scale Score as Passing Score*

	EOG		
MAP 197	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	674 (24.3%)	151 (5.5%)	**825 (29.8%)**
Proficient	305 (11.0%)	1639 (59.2%)	**1944 (70.2%)**
Total	**979 (35.4%)**	**1790 (64.6%)**	**2769 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. NWEA MAP 197 = 83.5%

Table 12. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by NWEA MAP using 207 Scale Score as Passing Score*

	EOG		
MAP 207	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	943 (34.1%)	781 (28.2%)	**1724 (62.3%)**
Proficient	36 (1.3%)	1009 (36.4%)	**1045 (37.7%)**
Total	**979 (35.4%)**	**1790 (64.6%)**	**2769 (100%)**

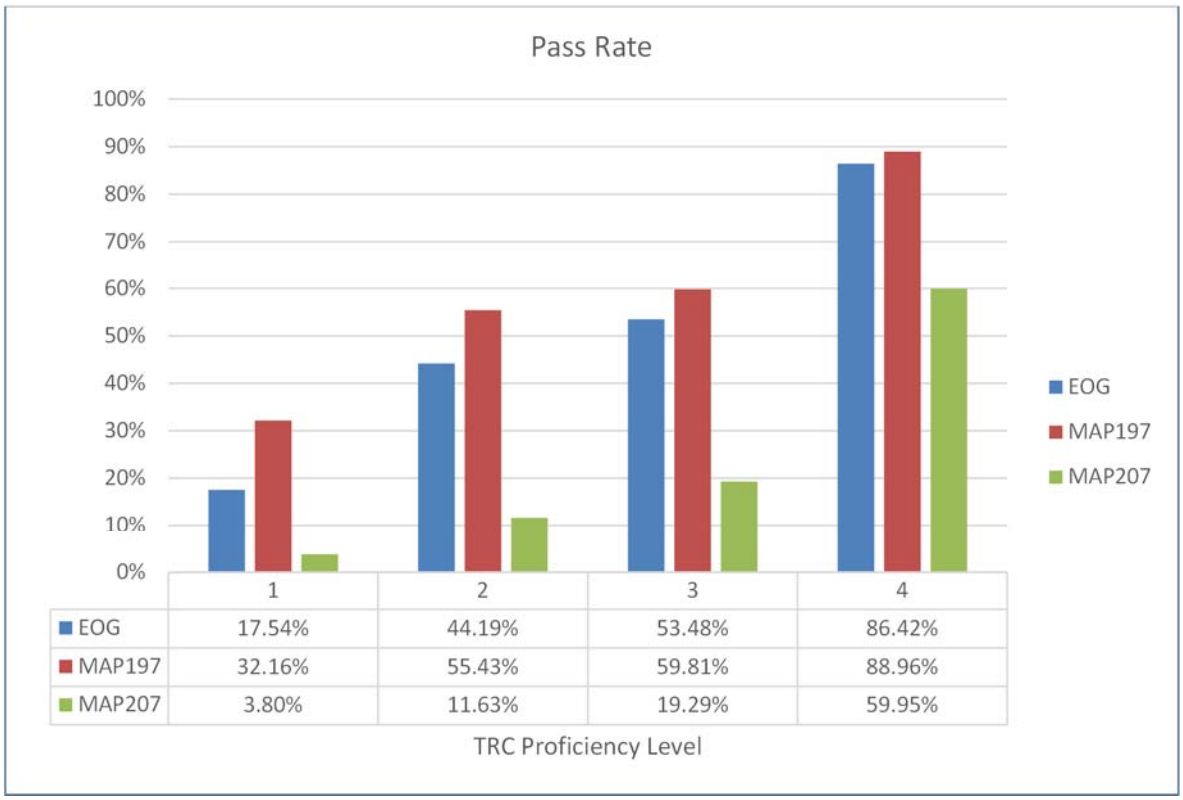
Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. NWEA MAP 207 = 70.5%

Inspection of the frequencies in Table 11 indicates that 83.5% of students who were proficient or non-proficient on the NWEA MAP were also proficient or non-proficient on the EOG, respectively using an achievement level of 197. Although congruence was high, when students were proficient on one assessment but not the other, students were more likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP, but non-proficient on the EOG than vice versa (11.0% vs. 5.5%, respectively). Inspection of the frequencies in Table 12 indicates that using an achievement level of 207 on the NWEA MAP results in lower overall congruence (70.5%) with most of the incongruence explained by students who were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the NWEA MAP (28.2%). Few students who were proficient on the NWEA MAP with an achievement level of 207 were non-proficient on the EOG (1.3%).

Chart 3 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the NWEA MAP when matched on TRC proficiency level. Inspection of results by TRC proficiency levels suggests that students in this sample who performed Far Below Proficient (level 1) on the TRC were nearly twice as likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG (32.2% vs. 17.5%, respectively) using the 2013-14 achievement level of 197. Students who performed Below Proficient (level 2) on the TRC were also slightly more likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared being proficient on the EOG (55.4% vs. 44.2%, respectively).

Inspection of Chart 3 also indicates that students across all TRC proficiency groups were less likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG with an achievement level of 207, with the discrepancy in proficiency levels being greatest for students with the lowest proficiency levels on the TRC.

Chart 3. *Pass Rates on the EOG and NWEA MAP by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	17.54%	44.19%	53.48%	86.42%
MAP197	32.16%	55.43%	59.81%	88.96%
MAP207	3.80%	11.63%	19.29%	59.95%

Summary of findings. Given the lack of test specification information available for the NWEA MAP, it is difficult to draw detailed and specific conclusions about this assessment. However, results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the NWEA MAP are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the NWEA MAP and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the NWEA MAP and EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 197 or higher that most LEAs adopted most likely resulted in the NWEA MAP being easier for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG. The fact that the achievement level for the NWEA MAP was raised to 207 in 2015-16 by the SBE suggests that steps were taken to correct this problem. However, results of this analysis suggest that an achievement level of 207 or higher may be too high, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the NWEA MAP compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

STAR Reading Assessment

Description. The STAR Reading Assessment for Grade 3 published by Renaissance Learning can be administered 2-5 times per year or up to 10 times if used for benchmarking. STAR is a computer-adaptive test. Students are presented with 25 vocabulary-in-context items (timed at 45 seconds per item) in the first section. In section two, they read a passage and answer five comprehension questions (timed at 90 second per item). Overall, the test takes about ten minutes. Given that the assessment can be taken many times, STAR software ensures that the student does not see an item more than once in a 90-day period. The purposes of the STAR assessment are–(1) quick and accurate estimation of reading comprehension using instructional reading levels for each student; (2) the assessment of reading achievement relative to national norms; (3) the tracking of growth in a consistent and longitudinal manner; and (4) the evaluation of the effectiveness of reading programs and interventions. The technical manual indicates that the assessment is not appropriate for high stakes testing purposes or for use in measuring the reading ability of students who have not mastered at least 100 sight words.

Scores from the STAR assessment are provided on the screen immediately following the conclusion of the test and are reported in a variety of formats. The instructional reading level (IRL) provides a criterion-referenced measure that indicates the level at which a student can be expected to comprehend correctly about 80% or more of the words in a given passage. The other 3 scores provide norm-referenced measures in the form of a grade equivalency, a percentile rank and a normal curve equivalent. (1) The grade equivalent (GE) is structured as a decimal with the integer number representing the grade level and the decimal value representing month in the school year. This convention allows for the interpretation of student performance at various points throughout a single year, echoing its design as a formative/interim tool. As an example, a student with a GE score of 4.0 performed as well as the typical student who is beginning the 4th grade. Since it is a norm-referenced score, it does not imply that students are capable of 4th grade level work, but that students are performing as well as 4^{th} grade students in the norm group. These scores will typically be higher than the IRL. (2) The percentile rank (PR) represents the percentage of students in the same grade and at the same time of year who earned a score lower than the student. As an example, a student with a PR score = 71 outperformed 71% of students in that grade at that time of year. (3) The normal curve equivalent (NCE) has been scaled to fit a specific score distribution with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 21.06 for the given group of students testing. This score seems similar to the PR but differs by having been fit on an equal interval scale, useful for statistical testing and analysis of growth longitudinally. The Renaissance Learning tool provides additional measures such as the ATOS 2000 and the ZPD 2000.

A linking study was performed in February of 2015 to connect student performance on the STAR assessment with student performance on the North Carolina EOG. The linking study used an equipercentile design and "translated" scores on the EOG to the scale of the STAR. The findings from the linking study are summarized in Table 13.

Intended use(s) and users. Scores from the STAR can be used to measure students' instructional reading levels, assess achievement relative to national norms, track growth longitudinally, and evaluate reading programs and interventions.

Constructs and inferences. The construct of reading ability as measured by STAR focuses on three areas of student reading ability—(1) comprehension; (2) general reading achievement; and (3) instructional reading levels. The construct of reading ability was initially based on vocabulary. Inferences may be made about students' level of reading comprehension relative to standards, relative to the students' previous levels of reading comprehension and relative to a national peer group.

Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability relative to national standards. STAR also provides norm-referenced scores and scores relative to pacing within a single school year and throughout all years of K-12 study. The tests are administered in different environments (STAR is administered on computers and is brief). The first section of the STAR assessment employs 25 vocabulary-in-context items that may be dissimilar to EOG items in format and abilities measured, indicating the constructs of measurement may differ in how reading ability is estimated.

Table 13. *STAR North Carolina Proficiency Tables from Scale Linking Study*

Level 2		Level 3		Level 4		Level 5	
Scale Score	Percentile Rank	Scale Score	Percentile Rank	Scale Score	Percentile Rank	Scale Score	Percentile Rank
320	22	401	42	456	55	642	87

Note. A scale score of 401 falls within the IRL score of 3.4 (IRL 3.4 = low scale score of 395 and high scale score of 407).

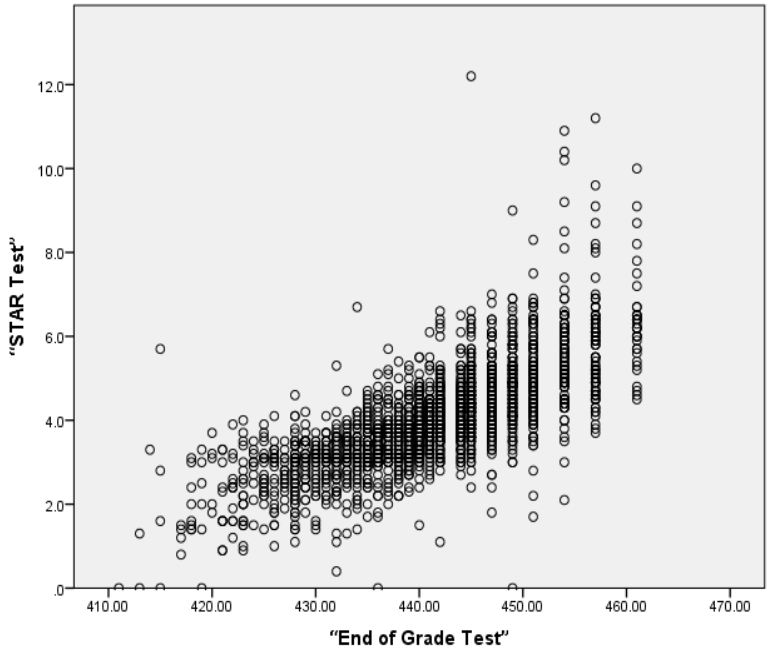
Sources.

- Renaissance Learning. (2009). STAR Reading computer-adaptive reading test: Technical manual.
- Renaissance Learning. (2009). STAR Reading North Carolina state standards alignments: Kindergarten through English IV.

- Renaissance Learning. (2014). Getting the most out of STAR assessments: Using data to inform instruction and intervention.
- Renaissance Learning. (2015). Learning progression development.
- Renaissance Learning. (2015). Relating STAR Reading and STAR Math to the North Carolina READY End-of-Grade (EOG) Performance.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the STAR analysis includes 2,257 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and STAR assessment. The Pearson correlation between the STAR and EOG was strong ($r = 0.73$, $p < .01$). Chart 4 presents the scatterplot between STAR individual reading levels and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as STAR scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 4. *Scatterplot of STAR Individual Reading Levels and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The STAR assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed for passing the assessment changed in both 2014-15 and 2015-16. As such, we present results using the same analytic sample with all three achievement levels. Table 14 presents the cross-tabulation of STAR and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment using 2013-14 achievement levels adopted by most LEAs. In 2013-14, 3rd grade students were considered proficient on the STAR with an individual reading level (IRL) of 3.0 or higher in most districts. Table 15 presents results using the 2014-15 SBE approved achievement level of IRL 5.1 or

higher. Table 16 presents results using the 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level of IRL 4.4 or higher.[40]

Table 14. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by STAR Level 3.0 Passing Scores (2013-14)*

	EOG		
STAR Level 3.0	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	280 (12.4%)	34 (1.5%)	**314 (13.9%)**
Proficient	511 (22.6%)	1432 (63.4%)	**1943 (86.1%)**
Total	**791 (35.0%)**	**1466 (65.0%)**	**2257 (100%)**

Note. Minimum pass score of 3.0 required in 2013-14. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. STAR at level 3.0 = 75.8%.

Table 15. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by STAR Level 5.1 Passing Scores (2014-15)*

	EOG		
STAR Level 5.1	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	783 (34.7%)	1091 (48.3%)	**1874 (83%)**
Proficient	8 (0.4%)	375 (16.6%)	**383 (17%)**
Total	**791 (35.0%)**	**1466 (65.0%)**	**2257 (100%)**

Note. Minimum pass score of 5.1 required in 2014-15. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. STAR at level 5.0 = 52.5%.

Table 16. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by STAR Level 4.4 Passing Scores (2015-16)*

	EOG		
STAR Level 4.4	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	760 (33.7%)	714 (31.6%)	**1474 (65.3%)**
Proficient	31 (1.4%)	752 (33.3%)	**783 (34.7%)**
Total	**791 (35.0%)**	**1466 (65.0%)**	**2257 (100%)**

Note. Minimum pass score of 4.4 required in 2015-16. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. STAR at level 4.4 = 67.0%.

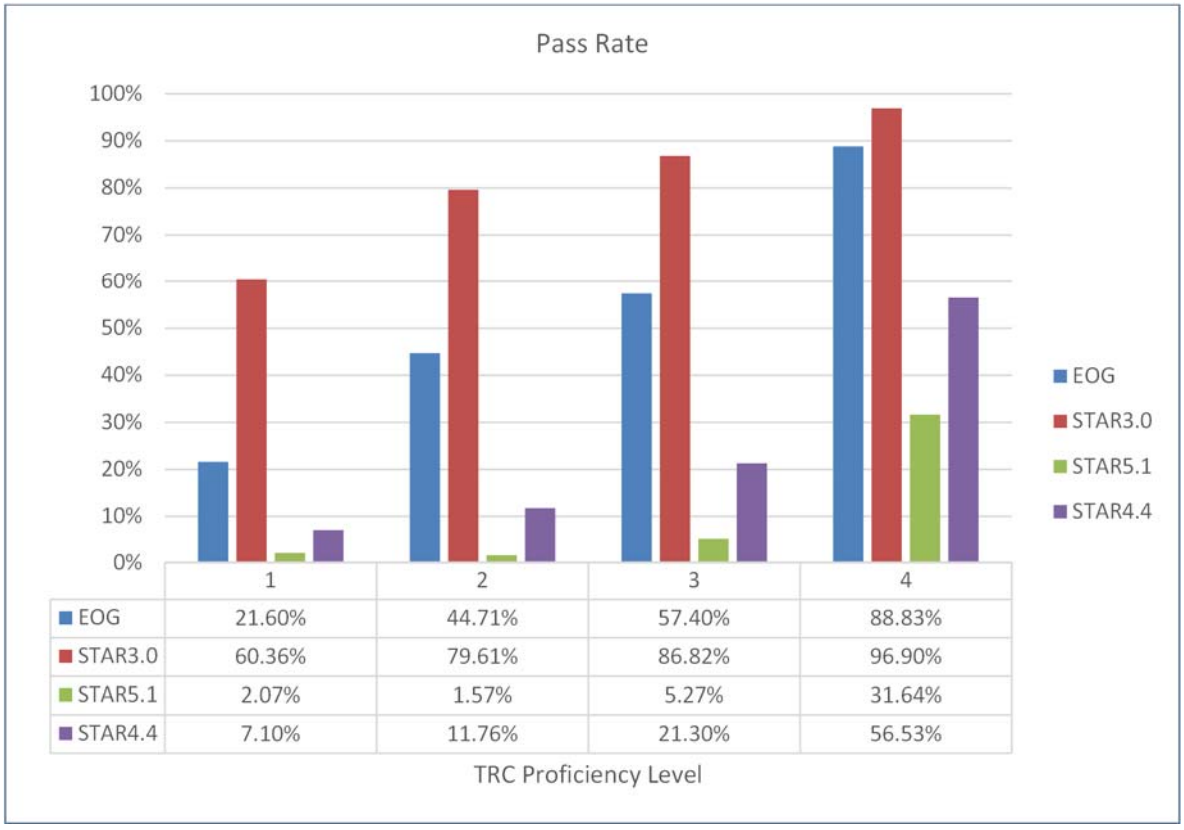
Inspection of the frequencies presented in the three tables above suggest that congruence between STAR and EOG proficiency scores was highest using 2013-14 assessment

[40] It should be noted that the SBE approved achievement level for the STAR in 2015-16 is actually a scale score of 537 or higher. For ease of interpretability with previous SBE approved achievement levels we report the achievement level as an IRL of 4.4 here because the scale score of 537 falls within the upper end of the IRL score of 4.4. The scale score of 537 or higher was used in the analysis.

levels and lowest using 2014-15 assessment levels. However, it is important to note that inspection of assessment results in 2013-14 suggest that discrepancies in results were much more likely to be due to students who were proficient on the STAR assessment, but non-proficient on the EOG. Using 2014-15 achievement levels suggests the opposite outcome. Virtually all discrepancies between the two assessments appear to be due to students who were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the STAR. Using 2015-16 achievement levels resulted in similar findings where most discrepancies were explained by students who were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the STAR. Taken together, these results suggest that the STAR was less difficult to pass using 2013-14 achievement levels, but more difficult to pass using 2014-15 and 2015-16 achievement levels compared to the EOG.

Chart 5 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the STAR by proficiency levels on the TRC. In general, these results suggest that students in the three lowest TRC proficiency levels were much more likely to be proficient on the STAR than the EOG using the 2013-14 achievement level of 3.0. However, applying 2014-15 and 2015-16 achievement levels suggests that students in the analytic sample were much more likely to be proficient on the EOG than the STAR assessment.

Chart 5. *Pass Rates on the EOG and STAR by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	21.60%	44.71%	57.40%	88.83%
STAR3.0	60.36%	79.61%	86.82%	96.90%
STAR5.1	2.07%	1.57%	5.27%	31.64%
STAR4.4	7.10%	11.76%	21.30%	56.53%

Summary of findings. Results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the STAR are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the STAR and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results of this study also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the STAR and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of IRL of 3.0 or higher that most LEAs adopted most likely resulted in the STAR being considerably easier for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. The fact that the achievement level for the STAR was raised to an IRL of 5.1 in 2014-15 suggests that steps were taken to correct this problem. However, results of this analysis suggest that an achievement level of 5.1 or higher is much higher than the proficiency levels used for the EOG, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the STAR compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. In 2015-16, the achievement level was lowered to an IRL of 4.4, suggesting that steps were taken to correct the fact that the STAR proficiency levels were much harder. However, results of this analysis suggest that the 2015-16 achievement levels may still be too high compared to EOG proficiency levels.[41] It should be noted, that results of a recent linking study between the STAR and EOG (Table 10), suggests that a scale score of 401 on the STAR aligns with level 3 (Sufficient Command) on the EOG.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS)

Description. The Iowa Assessment for Reading: Level 9 developed by the Iowa Testing Programs and published by Riverside Publishing is administered through a paper and pencil test that targets the measurement of vocabulary, reading, and comprehension. The Level 9 test refers not to the grade level being tested but to the average age of students taking the test (with 3rd graders being about nine years old). The reading test is broken into two subtests that last 25 and 30 minutes and include up to 41 items. The test forms currently being used (Forms E and F) are transitional forms that measure both CCSS and state standards. Full rollover to a new battery of assessments should take place in school year 2016-2017 when the Iowa Assessments are rebranded as the "Next Generation Iowa Assessments." While the name of the assessments and the method of delivery is expected to change (the paper forms will be translated to computer-based forms with technology-enhanced items), the purposes of the assessments are expected to remain constant: (1) provide comprehensive assessment of student progress in content areas, (2) generate comparative data for placing subject area scores on a common scale, measuring growth longitudinally and comparing students with other students in the

[41] These findings may explain some confusion that SERVE staff experienced when reaching out to LEA representatives for STAR assessment data. Some LEA representatives reported that their district discontinued using the STAR assessment because the STAR was too easy for students to pass and as a result the district questioned the validity of the STAR assessment. However, other districts reported to us that the STAR was extremely difficult and that very few students met the LAA requirement via the STAR assessment.

school, district, state and country, and (3) tailoring instruction to individuals, providing educational guidance, and evaluating the effectiveness of instruction. Scores are reported as norm-referenced percentiles.

Intended use(s) and users. Scores from the Level 9 Reading Iowa Assessment can be used to compare students across content areas, grade levels and peer groups and to improve teaching and learning over the course of multiple years.

Constructs and inferences. The technical manual for this test was unavailable for analysis despite attempts to retrieve such information from individual test users, the test developer and the research department of the testing company. As such, the precise construct(s) of reading ability as measured by the Level 9 Reading Iowa Assessment and possible inferences that may be made from scores are unknown. Inferences from scores can be made regarding a student's skill in vocabulary, reading, and comprehension.

Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability. The tests are both administered in a paper and pencil format during testing windows alongside a battery of assessments for other content areas, perhaps providing similar testing environments. The relationship between the constructs is unclear, specifically with regard to the test specifications and standards alignment of the Level 9 Reading Iowa Assessment.

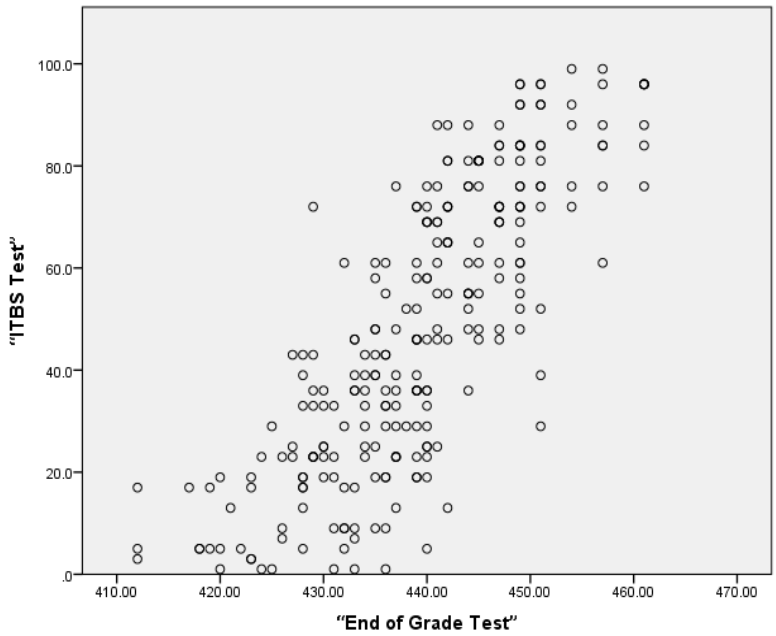
Sources.

- Riverside Publishing Website for ITBS.
- ITBS Research Guide.
- Iowa Testing Programs. (2011). Content and Cognitive Classifications: Form E: Levels 9 – 14.
- Iowa Testing Programs. (2012). Iowa Assessments Form E Technical Summary.
- Iowa Testing Programs Website. Proficiency in Reading and Mathematics.
- Iowa Testing Programs. (2012). Standard Score Ranges for Achievement Levels.
- Iowa Testing Programs Website. Interpreting Standard Reports from the *Iowa Assessments.*
- Iowa Testing Programs Website. Introducing the New Iowa Assessments™ Reading Levels 9 – 11.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the ITBS analysis includes 258 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and ITBS. Please note, given the small sample size for the ITBS, all results for this assessment should be interpreted with caution. The Pearson correlation between the ITBS and EOG was strong ($r = 0.80$, $p < .01$). Chart

6 presents the scatterplot between ITBS and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as ITBS scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 6. *Scatterplot of ITBS and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The ITBS assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed for passing the assessment changed in 2014-15. As such, we present results using the same analytic sample with both achievement levels. Table 17 presents the cross-tabulation of ITBS and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment using 2013-14 approved achievement levels. In 2013-14, 3rd grade students were considered proficient by most LEAs on the ITBS if they answered 50% of items correctly on the assessment. Table 18 presents results using the 2014-15 and 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level of 71% of items answered correctly.

Table 17. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by ITBS 50 Passing Scores*

	EOG		
ITBS 50	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	103 (39.9%)	36 (14.0%)	**139 (53.9%)**
Proficient	8 (3.1%)	111 (43.0%)	**119 (46.1%)**
Total	**111 (43.0%)**	**147 (57.0%)**	**258 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. ITBS at 50 = 82.9%

Table 18. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by ITBS 71 Passing Scores*

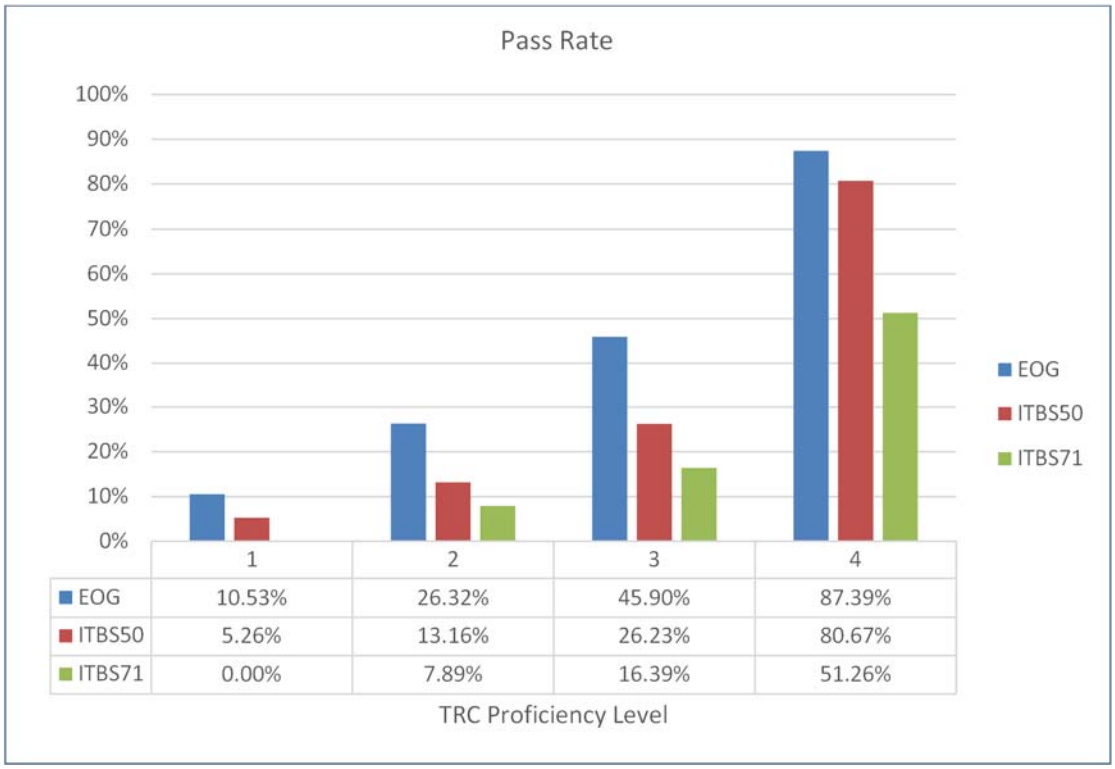
	EOG		
ITBS 71	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	109 (42.2%)	75 (29.1%)	**184 (71.3%)**
Proficient	2 (0.8%)	72 (27.9%)	**74 (28.7%)**
Total	**111 (43.0%)**	**147 (57.0%)**	**258 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. ITBS at 71 = 70.1%

Inspection of the frequencies presented in the tables above suggest that congruence between ITBS and EOG proficiency levels were higher using 2013-14 achievement levels compared to 2014-15 and 2015-16 achievement levels (82.9% vs. 70.1%, respectively). Both tables suggest that students in the sample were more likely to be proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the ITBS when there was a discrepancy between assessments. Raising the achievement level to 71% in 2014-15 resulted in an increase in the proportion of students in the sample who were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the ITBS.

Chart 7 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the ITBS by proficiency levels on the TRC. In general, these results suggest that students in the three lowest TRC proficiency levels were much less likely to be proficient on the ITBS than the EOG using both 2013-14 and 2014-15 achievement levels. Students who were Above Proficient on the TRC (level 4) achieved similar proficiency rates on the ITBS and EOG using 2013-14 achievement level, but the proficiency rate dropped for this group as well using the 2014-15 achievement level.

Chart 7. *Pass Rates on the EOG and ITBS by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	10.53%	26.32%	45.90%	87.39%
ITBS50	5.26%	13.16%	26.23%	80.67%
ITBS71	0.00%	7.89%	16.39%	51.26%

Note. Given small sample size (n = 258) this chart should be interpreted with caution

Summary of findings. Given the lack of test specification information available for the ITBS and the small sample size for this study, it is difficult to draw detailed and specific conclusions about this assessment. However, results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the ITBS are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the ITBS and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results of this study also suggest that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the ITBS and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 50% correct answers or higher on the ITBS that most districts adopted most likely resulted in the ITBS being more difficult for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. In 2014-15, the achievement level of the ITBS was raised to 71% correct items

by the SBE, making this assessment even more difficult for 3rd grade students to reach proficiency compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

i-Ready

Description. Information about the i-Ready assessment of grade 3 reading by Curriculum Associates, LLC is considered proprietary information and is housed on a password-protected website. The only information available for analysis was gathered from a customer service representative (placement tables) and the publisher's website (examples of score reports). From these two sources of information about i-Ready, it appears that the use of scores from the assessment serves formative and progress monitoring purposes. Scores are reported at the student, class, and school levels; student-level reports of CCSS proficiency are also available. All scores are reported on an 800-point scale, including scores for subscales (listed below).

Intended use(s) and users. Based on our review of limited resources it seems as though the i-Ready assessment can be used (1) to track proficiency of CCSS, (2) to pinpoint skill gaps, identify root causes, inform remediation and track performance across grade levels, (3) to group students by performance levels, (4) to measure absolute growth for groups of students longitudinally, (5) to allocate support and resources, and (6) to identify areas of strength, areas of weakness and areas for improvement for each student.

Constructs and inferences. Given the limited information available, it would appear that the construct(s) of reading ability as measured by i-Ready may include that of CCSS standards (comprehension of literature and information), vocabulary, phonological awareness placements, high frequency words and phonics.

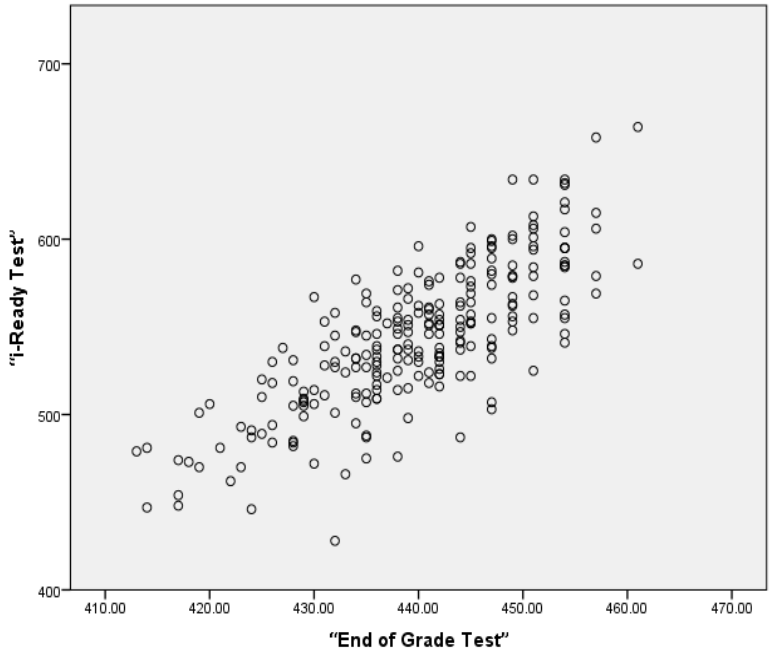
Comparison to NC EOG. Given the limited information available, relationships between the tests would be hard to conceptualize. It does appear that the tests both measure the CCSS domains of comprehension of literature and comprehension of information.

Sources.

- Curriculum Associates, LLC. (2014). i-Ready scale score placement tables (2014-2015 school year).
- Curriculum Associates, LLC. Example Reports (CCSS, Class Profile, School Performance, Student Profile).

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the i-Ready analysis includes 250 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and i-Ready.[42] Please note, given the small sample size for the i-Ready, all results for this assessment should be interpreted with caution. The Pearson correlation between the i-Ready and EOG was strong ($r = 0.78$, $p < .01$). Chart 8 presents the scatterplot between i-READY and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as i-READY scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 8. *Scatterplot of i-Ready and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The i-Ready assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, and to our knowledge achievement levels have not been changed for this assessment beyond what the LEAs requested in 2013-14. Table 19 presents the cross-tabulation of i-Ready and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment using 2013-14 approved achievement levels. The achievement level for the i-Ready is a scale score of 537 or higher.

Table 19. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by i-READY Passing Scores*

	EOG		
iReady	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total

[42] It should be noted that only one LEA was approved to use the i-Ready assessment in 2013-14. Because SERVE agreed to protect the anonymity of any LEA that provided LAA data we sought and received permission from the LEA that provided i-Ready data to include their results in this report with the knowledge that anonymity could not be guaranteed.

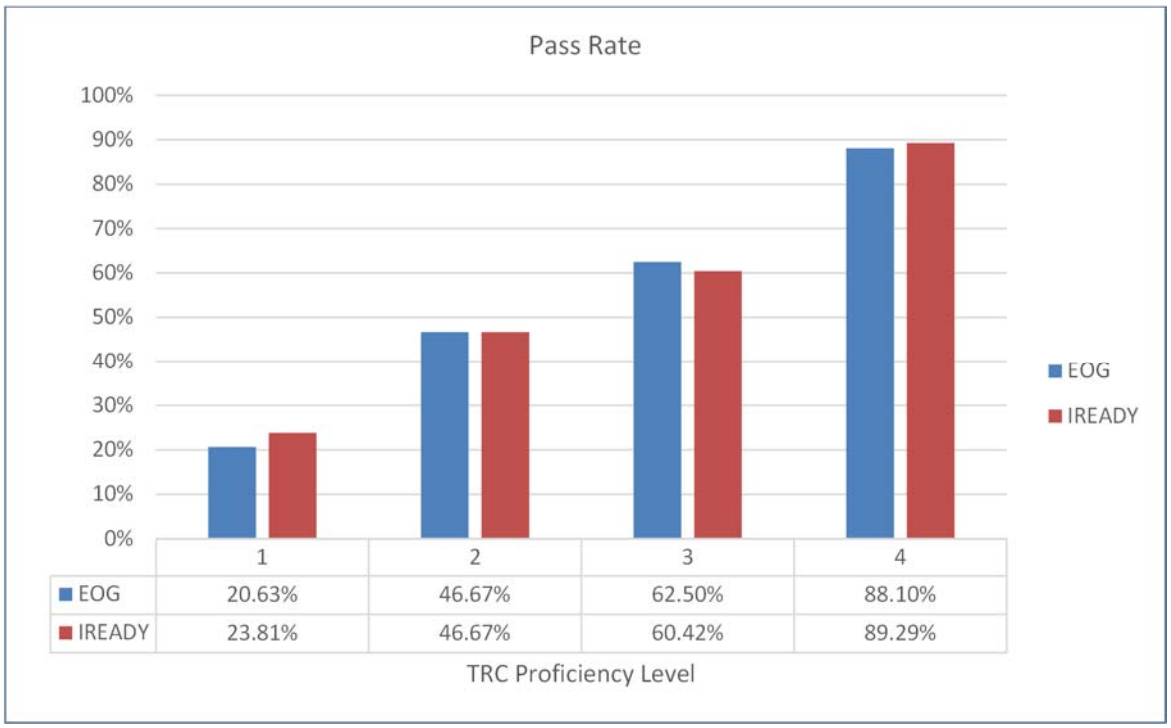
Non-Proficient	80 (32.0%)	25 (10.0%)	**105 (42.0%)**
Proficient	28 (11.2%)	117 (46.8%)	**145 (58.0%)**
Total	**108 (43.2%)**	**142 (56.8%)**	**250 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. iREADY = 78.8%

Inspection of the frequencies indicates that 78.8% of students who were proficient or non-proficient on the i-Ready assessment were also proficient or non-proficient on the EOG, respectively. When students did not pass one assessment or the other, it appears that an equal number of students passed one assessment, but not the other and vice versa.

Chart 9 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the i-Ready by proficiency levels on the TRC. These results indicate that proficiency rates on the EOG and i-Ready are similar across all TRC reading levels.

Chart 9. *Pass Rates on the EOG and i-Ready by TRC Proficiency Levels*



Note. Given small sample size (n = 250) this chart should be interpreted with caution

Summary of Findings. Given the lack of test specification information available for the i-Ready as well as the small sample size for this study, it is difficult to draw detailed and specific conclusions about this assessment. However, results of this descriptive study suggest that both assessments may be measuring similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. This is evidenced

by the strong positive correlation (r = 0.78) between both assessments and the level of congruence between students' proficiency levels on both assessments (78.8%), and similar patterns of proficiency rates by TRC proficiency levels. Finally, it appears that the achievement levels adopted by the SBE for the i-Ready result in similar outcomes for students who take the i-Ready and EOG.

CASE21

Description. Technical information about the CASE21 benchmarks 2 and 3 for grade 3 reading by TE21 was unavailable despite attempts to acquire such information from testing company representatives. The only information available for analysis was gathered from the publisher's website. It appears that the use of scores from the CASE21 assessment serve primarily formative purposes, though comprehensive exams are available for summative purposes. Scores are reported as a percent-correct measure along with a projected achievement level that may be related to the NC achievement levels (see above). Benchmark tests can be administered in "a single class period" though comprehensive assessments may take longer. Benchmark 2 contains 30-35 items and 5 passages while benchmark 3 contains 45 items and 6 passages. Benchmarks may be taken as nine-week tests, midyear or final comprehensive tests prior to the administration of the state test.

The CASE21 benchmarks appear to be aligned with CCSS with 37% of items measuring comprehension of literature, 43% of items measuring comprehension of information, and 20% of items measuring language. Score reports appear to include measures of depth of knowledge as well as scores for specific genres of reading (fiction, nonfiction, poetry, science, social studies, and technology). Reports are available at the class, school, and district level and item-level data is provided to teachers for analysis.

Intended use(s) and users. The purposes of the assessment appear to be formative and for benchmarking by nature. CASE21 benchmarks gauge academic progress and provide feedback to improve instruction. Analysis of item-level performance could inform professional development and the improvement of teaching and learning. The comprehensive exams appear to measure grade level performance on state or CCSS standards

Constructs and inferences. Since technical information was not available for analysis, it would be challenging to conceptualize the construct(s) of reading ability. Based on the score reports, it seems like inferences may be made regarding CCSS achievement, depth of knowledge in context, predicted scores on future assessments (in the form of projected achievement levels), and genre-specific performance.

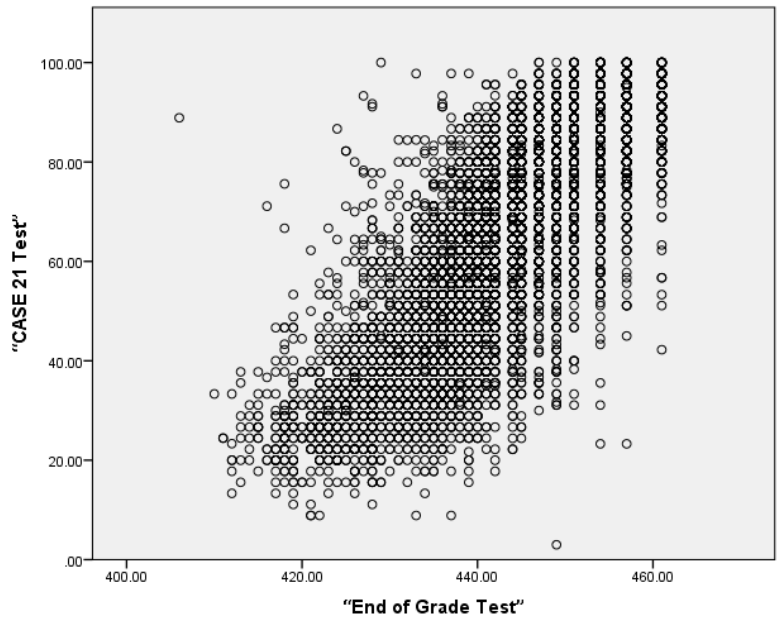
Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability and both are administered in a paper and pencil format. The purposes of the CASE21 benchmark assessments seems to focus more on formative and benchmarking purposes.

Sources.

- Training and Education in the 21st Century (TE21, Inc.). (2015). Benchmarks with comprehensive reports: North Carolina.
- CASE21 Website

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the CASE21 analysis includes 10,115 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and CASE21. The Pearson correlation between the CASE21 and EOG was strong ($r = 0.79$, $p < .01$). Chart 10 presents the scatterplot between CASE21 and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as CASE21 scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 10. *Scatterplot of CASE21 Percent Correct Answers and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The CASE21 assessment was approved by the SBE in the 2013-14 school year with most LEAs adopting an achievement level at or above 3. In 2014-15, the second benchmark assessment of the CASE21 was approved by the SBE with a requirement of 22 out of 33 correct answers for passing. According to our documentation, approval of the third benchmark assessment of CASE21 as a LAA in 2014-15 was not resolved. In 2015-16 approval for CASE21 (at all benchmarks) appears to be pending. Because our analytic sample includes only the third

benchmark assessment of CASE21 and the documentation that we have does not offer guidance on standards for the third benchmark assessment beyond 2013-14 we only analyze this assessment using the approved achievement level of 3 or above that most districts adopted in 2013-14. Table 20 presents the cross-tabulation of CASE21 and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment.

Table 20. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by CASE21 at Level 3 Passing Scores*

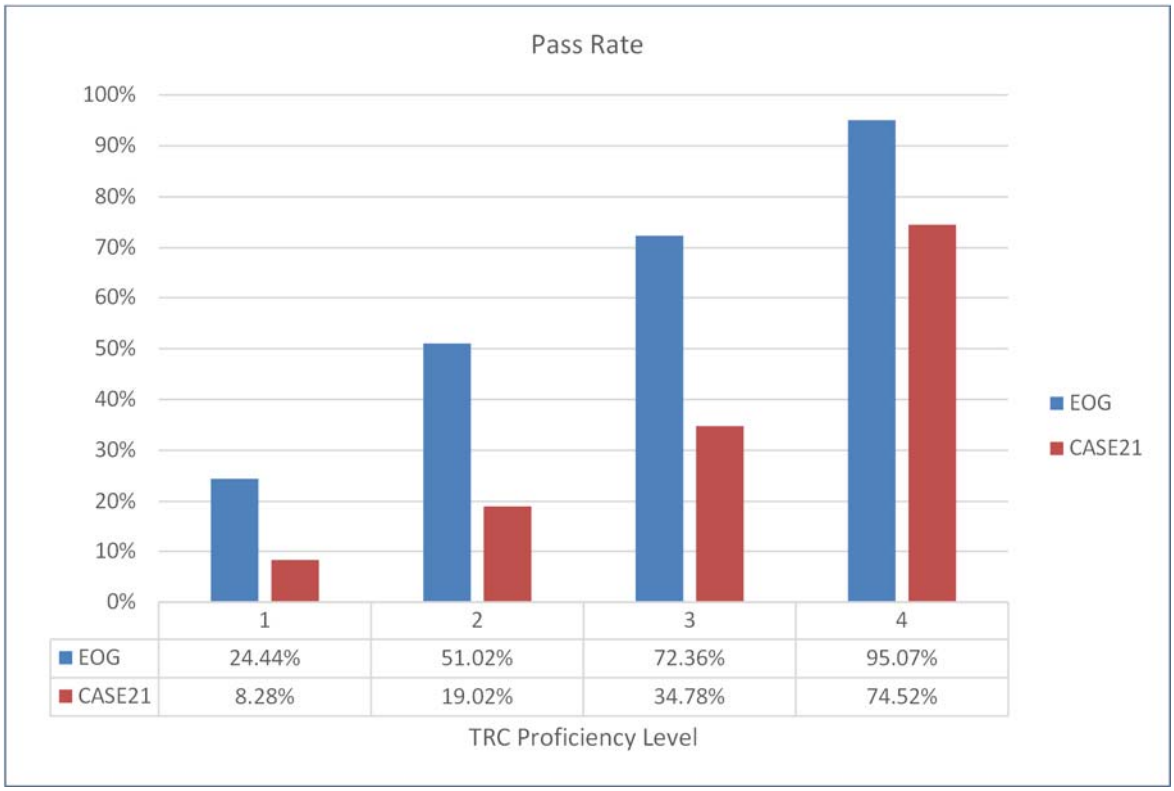
	EOG		
CASE21	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	2407 (23.8%)	2759 (27.3%)	**5166 (51.1%)**
Proficient	156 (1.5%)	4793 (47.4%)	**4949 (48.9%)**
Total	**2563 (25.3%)**	**7552 (74.7%)**	**10115 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. CASE21 = 80.7%

Inspection of the frequencies indicates that 80.7% of students who were proficient or non-proficient on the CASE21 assessment were also proficient or non-proficient on the EOG, respectively. The majority of students who were proficient on one assessment, but non-proficient on the other were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the CASE21 assessment.

Chart 11 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to the CASE21 by proficiency levels on the TRC. In general, these results suggest that students were much less likely to be proficient on the CASE21 than the EOG across all reading levels, but this was particularly so for students in the lowest three reading levels.

Chart 11. *Pass Rates on the EOG and CASE21 by TRC Proficiency Levels*



Summary of Findings. Given the lack of test specification information available for the CASE21, it is difficult to draw detailed and specific conclusions about this assessment. However, results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the CASE21 are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the CASE21 and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results of this study also suggest that that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the CASE21 and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that an achievement level of 3 or higher on the CASE21 may be too high, resulting in 3rd grade students being much less likely to be proficient on the CASE21 compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.

Discovery Education

Description. No information is available regarding the Discovery Education Grade 3 Summative Assessment. Information was located online from publications regarding Discovery Education predictive benchmarking assessments; this information is summarized here.

Grade 3 reading benchmarks published by Discovery Education can be taken up to four times per year with the results of each assessment offering a prediction of future performance on the EOG. As such, these benchmark assessments serve formative and predictive purposes. The assessments are aligned to CCSS as indicated in Table 21. The company is moving toward

the incorporation of technology-enhanced items into future test forms; it is unclear if the current forms are computer-adaptive. It appears as though the reading benchmarks contain around 35 items. Scores are reported on an equal interval vertical scale that allows for longitudinal tracking of absolute student achievement and growth. Linking studies are mentioned for many states and may be available for North Carolina. It is mentioned that previous subgroup studies support the use of these assessments in diverse student populations.

Intended Use(s) and Users. The benchmark assessments are described as predictive benchmarks that are directly tied to the prediction of performance on individual state tests. The purposes for the assessments seem to include: (1) longitudinal tracking of performance on an equal interval vertical scale, (2) district reporting for the comparison of schools to identify effective instruction, (3) teacher-level reporting to improve teaching and learning, (4) communication with parents, (5) growth over time, (6) response to intervention (RTI) planning, and (7) screening.

Constructs and Inferences. The technical manual for this test was unavailable for analysis despite attempts to retrieve such information from individual test users and the test developer. As such, the construct(s) of reading as measured by the Discovery Education benchmarks is unknown. It seems as though inferences may be made about CCSS, specifically those domains listed in Table 21.

Comparison to NC EOG. Both assessments claim to measure 3rd grade reading ability. The relationship between the two tests is challenging to conceptualize without further information.

Table 21. *Weight distributions for Grade 3 Reading Benchmarks by Discovery Education*

Domain	Percent	Items
Reading for Literature	24%	8
Reading for Information	24%	8
Reading Foundation Skills	12%	4
Writing	24%	8
Language	18%	6

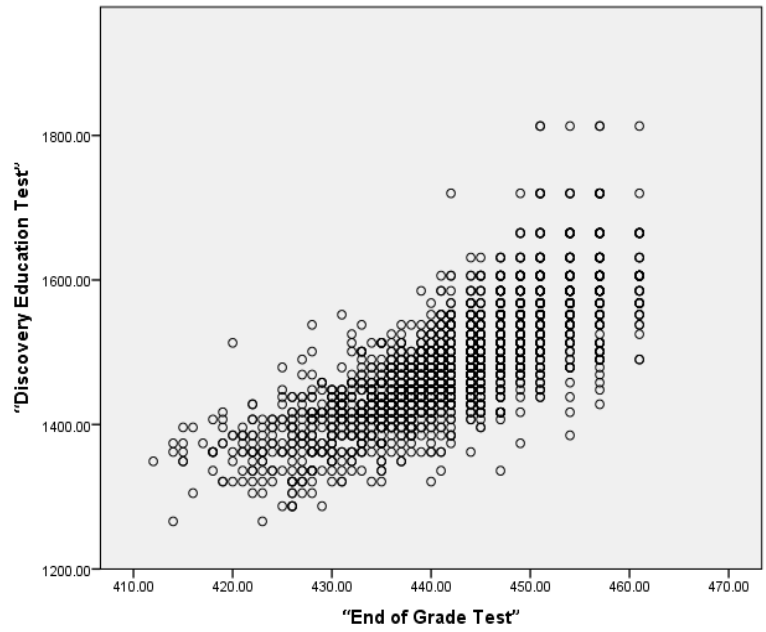
Note. Percentages are rounded and thus sum to >100%

Sources.

- Discovery Education Assessment. (2009). Research.
- Discovery Education Assessment. (2008). Assessment.
- Website.
- Discovery Education. (2013). Common Core Interim Benchmark Technical Manual.

Descriptive analysis. The analytic sample for the Discovery Education analysis includes 2,162 3rd grade students who took both the regular administration of the EOG and the Discovery Education assessment. The Pearson correlation between the Discovery Education and EOG was strong ($r = 0.77$, $p < .01$). Chart 12 presents the scatterplot between Discovery Education and EOG assessment scale scores. In general, as Discovery Education scores increase so does performance on the EOG assessment.

Chart 12. *Scatterplot of Discovery Education and EOG Assessment Scale Scores*



The Discovery Education assessment has been approved by the SBE since the 2013-14 school year, but the achievement level needed for passing the assessment changed in 2015-16. As such, we present results using the same analytic sample with both achievement levels. Table 22 presents the cross-tabulation of Discovery Education and EOG performance for 3rd grade students in the analytic sample according to proficiency status on each assessment using 2013-14 approved achievement levels. In 2013-14 the achievement level requirement that most LEAs adopted was a level 3 or 4. Tables 23 presents results using the 2014-15 and 2015-16 SBE approved achievement level that was changed to a scale score of 1505.

Table 22. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by Discovery Education at Level 3 Passing Scores*

	EOG		
DiscEd Level 3	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total

Non-Proficient	589 (27.2%)	358 (16.6%)	**947 (43.8%)**
Proficient	75 (3.5%)	1140 (52.7%)	**1215 (56.2%)**
Total	**664 (30.7%)**	**1498 (69.3%)**	**2162 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. Discovery Education = 79.9%

Table 23. *Distribution of NC EOG Passing Scores by Discovery Education at 1505 Scale Score Passing Scores*

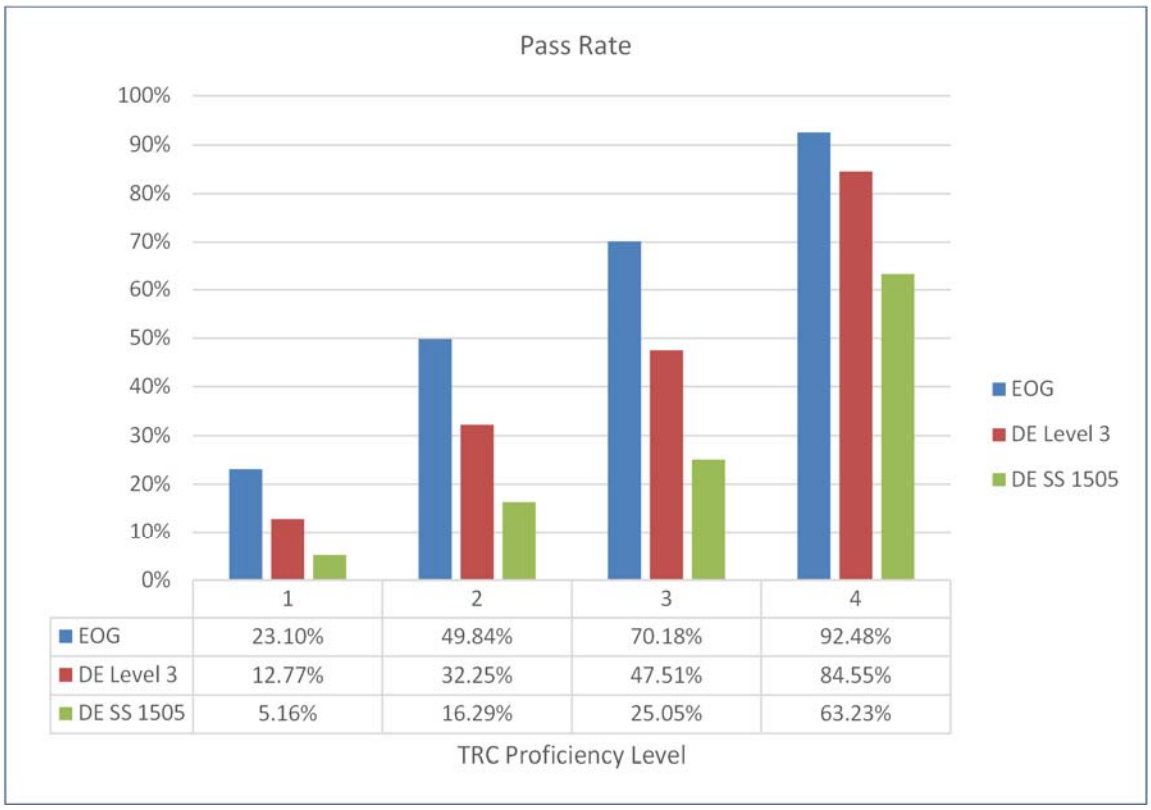
	EOG		
DiscEd SS 1505	Non-Proficient	Proficient	Total
Non-Proficient	644 (29.8%)	700 (32.4%)	**1344 (62.2%)**
Proficient	20 (0.9%)	798 (36.9%)	**818 (37.8%)**
Total	**664 (30.7%)**	**1498 (69.3%)**	**2162 (100%)**

Note. Shading indicates congruence on assessment outcomes. Discovery Education = 66.7%

Inspection of the frequencies presented in the tables above suggests that congruence between Discovery Education and EOG scores were higher using 2013-14 achievement levels than scores using levels approved in 2014-15. Both tables suggest that differences in assessment outcomes were more likely to occur as a result of students in the sample being proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on Discovery Education. Raising the achievement level to a scale score of 1505 in 2014-15 resulted in an increase in the proportion of students in the sample who were proficient on the EOG, but non-proficient on the Discover Education assessment.

Chart 13 presents the percent of students in the analytic sample who were proficient on the EOG compared to Discovery Education by proficiency levels on the TRC. In general, these results suggest that students were less likely to be proficient on the Discover Education assessment than the EOG across all reading levels, but this was particularly so for students in the lowest three reading levels.

Chart 13. *Pass Rates on the EOG and Discovery Education by TRC Proficiency Levels*



	1	2	3	4
EOG	23.10%	49.84%	70.18%	92.48%
DE Level 3	12.77%	32.25%	47.51%	84.55%
DE SS 1505	5.16%	16.29%	25.05%	63.23%

Summary of findings. Given the lack of test specification information available for the Discovery Education assessment, it is difficult to draw detailed and specific conclusions about this assessment. However, results of this descriptive study suggest that scores obtained on the Discovery Education are positively correlated with scores on the EOG, suggesting that the Discovery Education assessment and EOG evaluate similar constructs related to 3rd grade reading. However, results of this study also suggest that there is lack of alignment in proficiency levels between the Discovery Education assessment and EOG. Results of this analysis suggest that using the 2013-14 achievement level of 3 or higher that most LEAs adopted most likely resulted in the Discovery Education being more difficult for 3rd grade students to pass compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level. In 2014-15, the achievement level was raised to a scale score of 1505 by the SBE, making this assessment even more difficult for 3rd grade students to reach proficiency compared to the EOG when matched on TRC proficiency level.