



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

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Statewide Testing Program and Local
Testing Programs, pursuant to S.L.
2016-94, Section 8.32(b) [HB 1030]

Date Due: October 15, 2016
Report # 20
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2016-2017

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Introduction

S.L. 2016-94 (HB 1030), Section 8.32(b) directed that G.S. 115C-174.12 be rewritten to read as follows (emphasis added):

"§ 115C-174.12. Responsibilities of agencies.

...

(d) By September 1 of each year, each local board of education shall notify the State Board of Education of any local testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit in its schools and the calendar for administering those tests. The local board of education shall include information on the source of funds supporting the local testing program.

(e) By October 15 of each year, the State Board of Education shall submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee containing information regarding the statewide administration of the testing program, including the number and type of tests and the testing schedule, and a summary of any local testing programs reported by local boards of education to the State Board of Education in accordance with subsection (d) of this section."

This report addresses the above legislative directives with respect to the current (2016-17) school year. The report has two sections, the first providing the required information regarding the statewide testing program, and the second providing the information gathered from local boards of education regarding local testing programs.

Statewide Testing Program

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's (NCDPI's) Accountability Services Division (NCDPI Accountability Services; www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/) ensures that North Carolina's statewide testing program meets the requirements of all applicable state and federal laws. These laws are designed to promote student academic achievement and to assist stakeholders in understanding and gauging this achievement against standards. To these ends, NCDPI Accountability Services endeavors to accomplish the following three main objectives:

- Design and development of reliable and valid assessment instruments
- Uniform implementation of and access to suitable assessment instruments for all students
- Provision of accurate and statistically appropriate reports.

To meet these objectives, NCDPI supports and/or administers an array of statewide standardized assessments ranging in purpose from placement to end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) summative measurement of academic achievement, and ranging in grade from kindergarten (e.g., Reading 3D) to grade 12 (e.g., NC Final Exams). NCDPI also ensures that all of these assessments are accessible to every North Carolina student, including students with disabilities. Most statewide summative testing occurs in the

spring, during the final five or ten instructional days of the school year, and, for grades 9-12, at the end of the fall or spring semesters. Placement testing occurs at the beginning of both fall and spring semesters, and college and career readiness testing, which includes Pre-ACT, ACT, ACT WorkKeys, and College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessments, occurs during set windows during the fall and spring.

The full North Carolina Statewide Testing Program Operational Calendar for the 2016-17 school year is listed below. It is important to note that some of the assessments listed are administered only to a subset of the student population. For example, the Pre-ACT and the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment is not administered to all students; students in grade ten take one of these assessments, not both. Likewise, although ACT WorkKeys is listed as having both an online administration and a paper/pencil administration, a student in grade twelve who is a Career Technical Education Concentrator takes either the online or the paper/pencil, not both.

2016-17 North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar

Summer 2016

Assessment	Testing Window
WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™) ¹	Initial assessment required within 30 calendar days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year or 14 calendar days if the student enrolls after the beginning of the school year.
READY End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments—Biology, English II, and NC Math 1	Final 5 instructional days of the summer school course
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments ²	July 18–July 29, 2016
Read to Achieve Test—Grade 3 ³	Locally determined date at the conclusion of reading camp

¹ Federal and state policies require all K–12 students identified as language minority students through the Home Language Survey (HLS) process upon initial enrollment be assessed for limited English language proficiency. The state instrument for identification of English Learner (EL) students is the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™). The identification and the subsequent placement of EL students in English as a Second Language (ESL) services are guided at the state level by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Curriculum and Instruction Division. All students identified as ELs must be administered the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs® during the annual English language proficiency testing window.

² Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which local education agencies (LEAs)/charter schools shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

³ Students who have not demonstrated reading proficiency appropriate for a third grader or have not qualified for a good cause exemption by the conclusion of reading camp are provided an opportunity to take the Read to Achieve Test on a locally determined day.

Summer School Administrations of End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Assessments for 2015–16 Accountability

Districts and charter schools having a summer school program must complete summer school testing and upload all test data to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) no later than **Thursday, June 30, 2016 by 5:00 p.m.** Scores from summer school administrations occurring later than June 30, 2016, will be used in 2016–17 accountability results. Summer school administration scores will be counted only for proficiency, not growth.

Fall 2016

Assessment	Testing Window
WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™) ¹	Initial assessment required within 30 calendar days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year or 14 calendar days if the student enrolls after the beginning of the school year.
Beginning-of-Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading Test ²	Begins on the 11 th day of the school year and continues through the 15 th day.
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments ³	September 12–September 23, 2016
PreACT® (Grade 10)	October 1–31, 2016
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) at Grade 10	October 1–31, 2016
ACT® WorkKeys—Online Administrations	November 14, 2016–February 17, 2017
ACT® WorkKeys—Paper-and-Pencil Standard and Accommodated Administrations	December 5–9, 2016
READY End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments—Biology, English II, and NC Math 1	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses)
NC Final Exams ⁴	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses)
Read to Achieve Test—Grade 3 ⁵	Locally determined date by November 1, 2016

Notes:

¹ Federal and state policies require all K–12 students identified as language minority students through the Home Language Survey (HLS) process upon initial enrollment be assessed for limited English language proficiency. The state instrument for identification of English Learner (EL) students is the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™). The identification and the subsequent placement of EL students in English as a Second Language (ESL) services are guided at the state level by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Curriculum and Instruction Division. All students identified as EL must be administered the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs® during the annual English Language proficiency testing window.

²The Beginning-of-Grade 3 English Language Arts/Reading Test is part of the North Carolina Read to Achieve program.

³Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which local education agencies (LEAs)/charter schools shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

⁴The grades 4 and 5 science and social studies NC Final Exams are only available for spring administrations.

⁵Students with a retained reading label are provided an additional opportunity to satisfy the Read to Achieve legislation by passing the Read to Achieve Test before November 1.

Spring 2017

Assessment	Testing Window
WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™) ²	Initial assessment required within 14 calendar days if the student enrolls after the beginning of the school year.
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® ¹	January 30–March 24, 2017
Alternate ACCESS for ELLs® ¹	January 30–March 24, 2017
ACT® WorkKeys—Online Administrations	November 14, 2016–February 17, 2017
ACT® WorkKeys—Paper-and-Pencil Standard and Accommodated Administrations	February 6–17, 2017
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments ²	February 15–February 28, 2016
ACT®—Initial Test Date (Paper/Pencil)	February 28, 2017
ACT®—Online Testing Window	February 28–March 14, 2017

Notes:

¹ Federal and state policies require all K–12 students identified as language minority students through the Home Language Survey (HLS) process upon initial enrollment be assessed for limited English language proficiency. The state instrument for identification of English learner (EL) students is the WIDA ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT™). The identification and the subsequent placement of EL students in English as a Second Language (ESL) services are guided at the state level by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) Curriculum and Instruction Division. All students identified as EL must be administered the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0® or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs® during the annual English language proficiency testing window.

² Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which local education agencies (LEAs)/charter schools shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

³ Students at grade 3 who failed to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for a third-grade student on the regular (first) administration of the EOG English Language Arts/Reading assessment may take the Read to Achieve Test and/or the EOG English Language Arts/Reading Retest as an option to satisfy the requirements of the Read to Achieve legislation.

Assessment	Testing Window
ACT®—Makeup Test Date (Paper/Pencil)	March 21, 2017
ACT®—Accommodations Testing Window	February 28–March 14, 2017
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11	February 28–March 14, 2017
<i>NCEXTENDI</i> Alternate Assessment—Grade 11	February 28–March 14, 2017
<i>NCEXTENDI</i> Alternate Assessment—Grades 3–8 NC Math 1 and English Language Arts/Reading, Grades 5 and 8 Science	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
<i>NCEXTENDI</i> Alternate Assessment—Biology, English II, and NC Math 1	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
READY End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments—Biology, English II, and NC Math 1	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses) Final 10 instructional days of the school year (yearlong courses)
READY End-of-Grade (EOG) Assessments—Grades 3–8 Math and English Language Arts/Reading and Grades 5 and 8 Science	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
Read to Achieve Test—Grade 3 ³	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
Grade 3 End-of-Grade (EOG) English Language Arts/Reading Retest ³	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
NC Final Exams	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses) Final 10 instructional days of the school year (yearlong courses)

2016-17 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Testing³

Assessment	Testing Window
NAEP Reading, Mathematics, and Writing at Grades 4 and 8	January 30–March 10, 2017

NCDPI Accountability Services also provides accurate and statistically appropriate reports for public consumption through the following websites:

- Accountability and Testing Results (www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/)
- NC School Report Cards (www.ncpublicschools.org/src/)

¹ The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selects a nationwide sample of schools and students for participation in NAEP 2016–17. Local education agencies (LEAs) and schools selected to participate will be notified by September 2016.

Local Testing Programs

Background

Since S.L. 2016-94 (HB 1030) was signed into law on July 14, 2016, there was a narrow window for collecting data to meet the requirements of the new legislated report on local testing programs. The bill directed that:

“By September 1 of each year, each local board of education shall notify the State Board of Education of any local testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit in its schools and the calendar for administering those tests. The local board of education shall include information on the source of funds supporting the local testing program.”

In an effort to standardize and make comparable the information submitted by LEAs in response to the legislation, NCDPI created a standard format and specific requirements for LEAs to use for their submissions. NCDPI then collected the LEA submissions from July 26 through end of the day on September 1. In the instructions and supporting materials NCDPI provided to LEAs, “local testing” was defined, for the purposes of this report, as follows:

- Testing that is administered in schools within local school administrative units as initiated by either the LEA or school, and administered either LEA- or school-wide (including for all students of one grade in a district or school)
- Testing that is initiated by classroom teachers was to be considered part of the teachers’ instructional practice and thus, not considered local testing for the purposes of this report.
- Testing that is required or recommended by the State (including testing that offers local discretion related to the particular “brand” or form used) was not considered local testing for the purposes of this report.

As directed by S.L. 2016-94 (HB 1030), “a summary of [the] local testing programs reported by local boards of education to the State Board of Education in accordance with [the legislation]” is provided below.

Information Submitted by Local Boards of Education

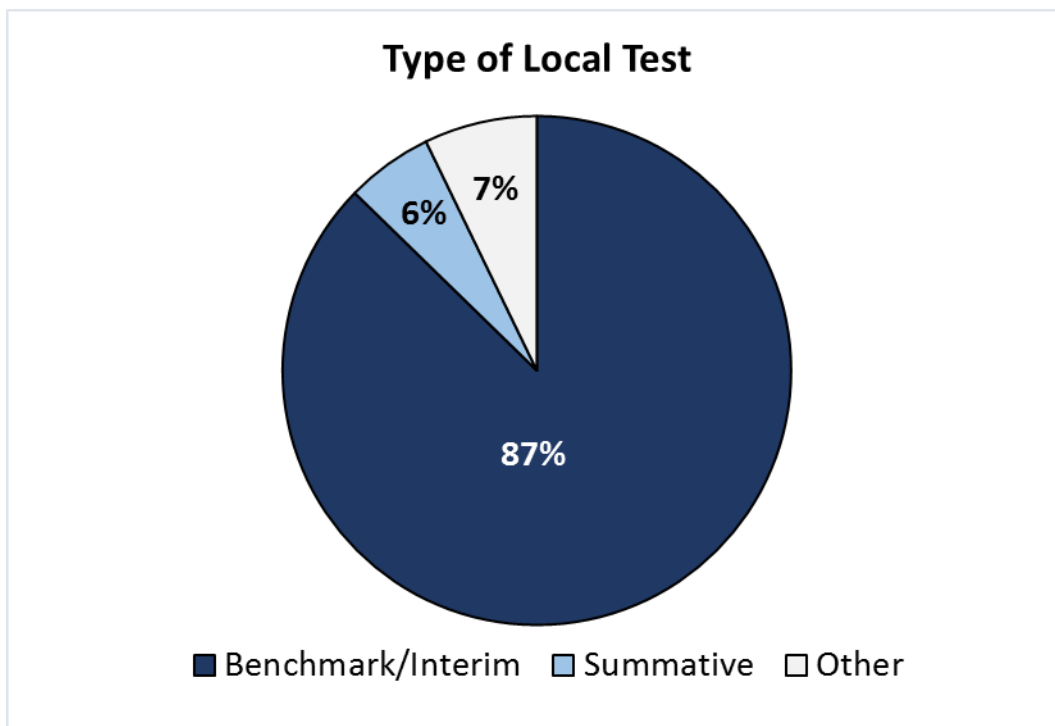
All 115 LEAs submitted information and reported at least one test to be counted as comprising the “local testing” program, as defined above. The extent of local testing appeared to vary widely across LEAs, but data quality challenges (typical of a first-time statewide data collection, particularly with a narrow collection window) made it difficult to draw any reliable conclusions from the data regarding the exact size of any one program. The data, therefore, should be interpreted with caution, but do provide some summary statistics that NCDPI use with a reasonable level of confidence to describe the following aspects of local testing (as required by the legislation):

- “local testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit in its schools”
- “the calendar for administering those tests”

- “the source of funds supporting the local testing program.”

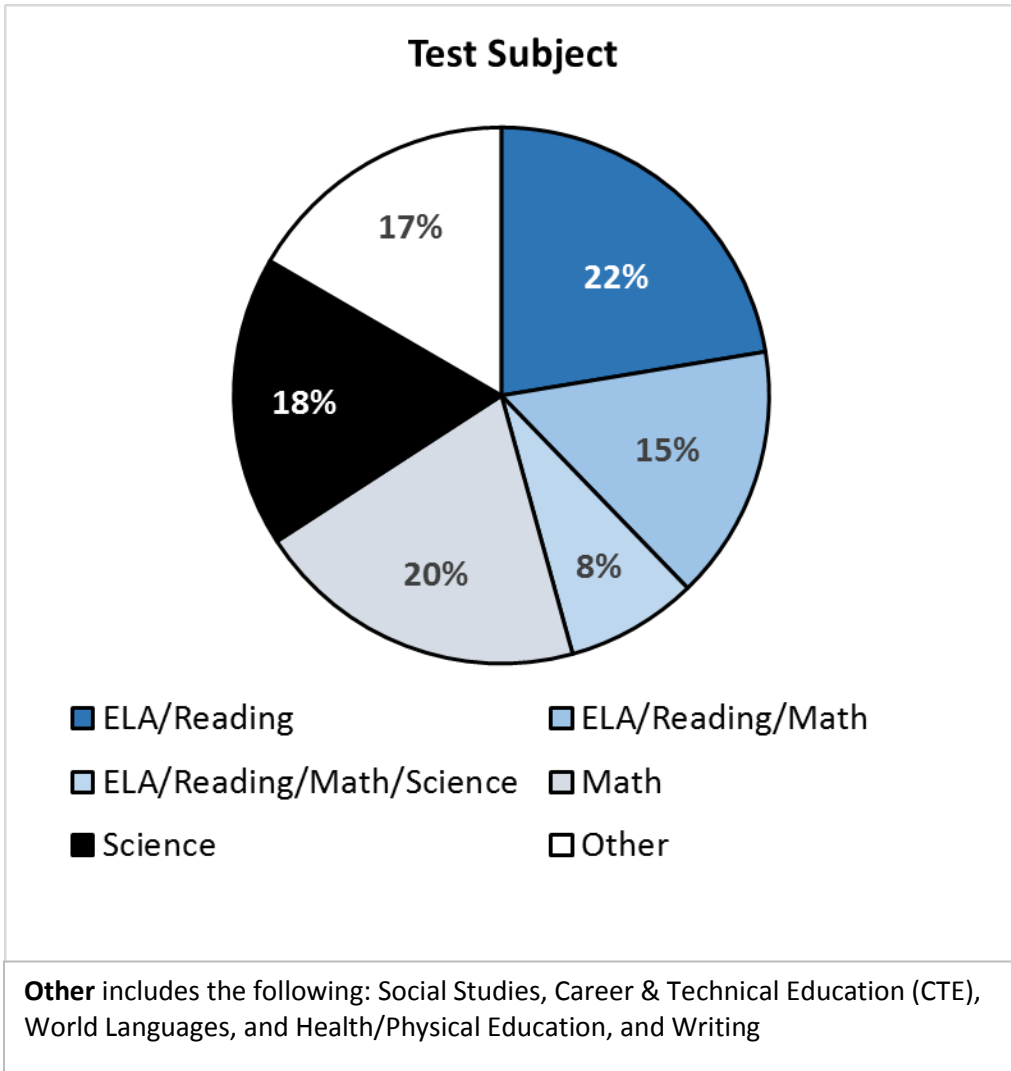
Local Testing: Type of Test, Test Subject

Across the 115 LEAs, the focus of local testing programs appears to be “benchmark/interim” testing, as 87% of all local testing reported for 2016-17 fell into this category. “Benchmark” and “interim” are two terms used typically, and often interchangeably, by district and school personnel to describe tests that are administered during, but before the end of, a school year. These tests, which are designed to measure at a point in time a student’s progress toward mastery of content, may or may not be directly aligned with State end-of-grade or end-of-course summative tests. Since some local districts use the term “interim” for this type of test, while others use the term “benchmark,” the local testing data collection offered LEAs either term as an option for describing local testing. As seen in the chart below, the terms are combined for purposes of understanding the type of local testing being conducted in North Carolina.



Other includes the following: Diagnostic/Placement, Academically & Intellectually Gifted/IQ, and College & Career Readiness Testing

The focus of this benchmark/interim testing appears to be on the core subject areas of English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, Mathematics, and Science. These subjects are the focus of the statewide end-of-grade and end-of-course tests used for State and federal school accountability purposes. The chart below illustrates the test subjects indicated by LEAs in their submissions.

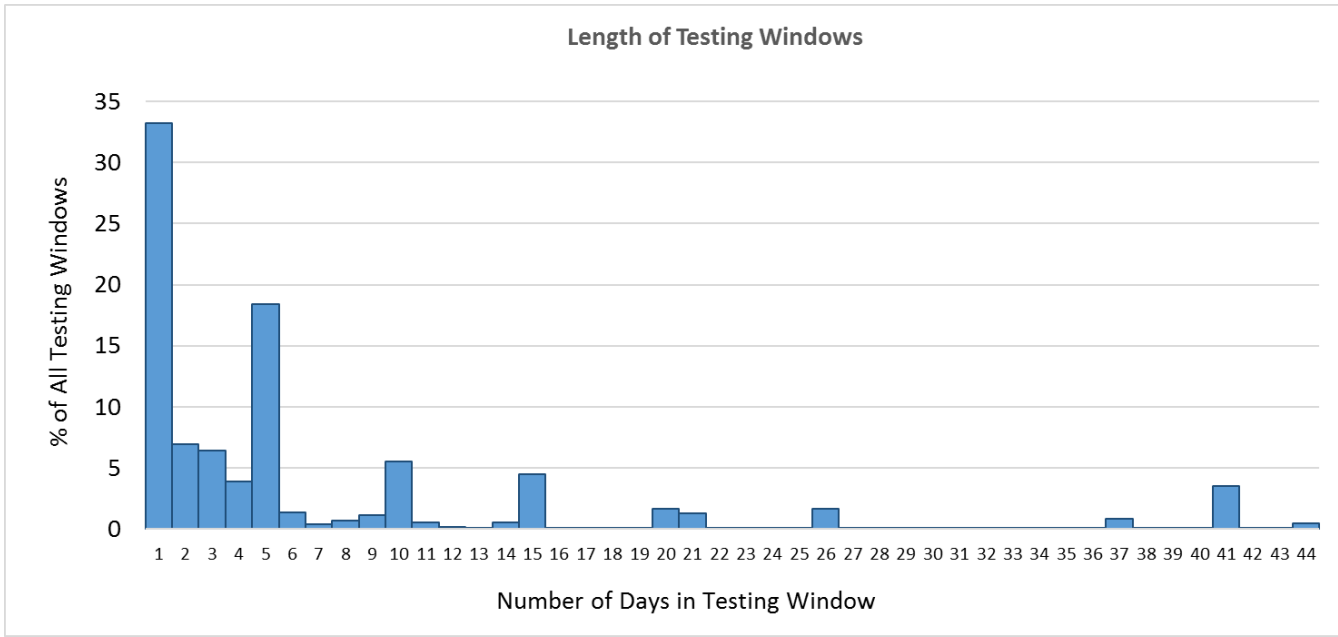


Calendar for Administering Local Testing

To administer local tests, LEAs establish “testing windows” during which each test is to be given either LEA-wide, sometimes staggered to occur at different times at particular schools, or for particular grades. These testing windows typically have a start date – the initial date on which students may be tested somewhere, if not everywhere, in the LEA – and then schools have discretion regarding when they schedule school- or grade-wide testing. Some of the testing may even be scheduled on a given day for students in small groups or for individuals, depending upon a school’s resources and/or the accommodations required by individual students. A testing window may therefore be many days long, so that all students in the target population can be tested, but that does not imply that each individual student undergoes testing more than once in the window or for an extended period of time. *For example, during a scheduled LEA testing window of 30 days for a particular benchmark/interim test, each student may undergo less than one full school day of testing.* That said, a summary of testing windows does provide insight into how much time LEAs are building into their academic calendars to administer their local testing programs.

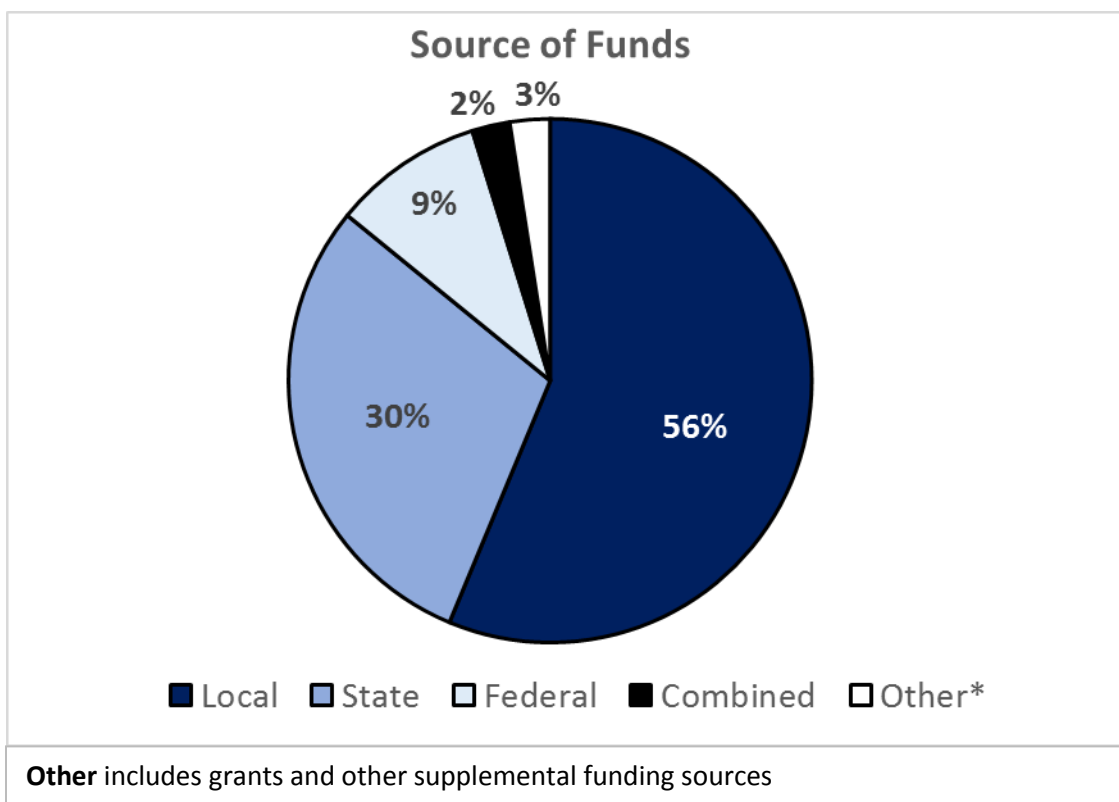
Statewide, in every month of the year, at least one local testing window is scheduled to begin. The most common months during which local testing windows begin are September and October (30%), January (13%), and March-May (30%).

The length of scheduled testing windows appeared to vary between one and 45 days, with one day being the most common number reported.



Source of Funds Supporting the Local Testing Program

Local funds appear to be the primary source of funds supporting local testing programs, followed by State and federal funds. The chart below illustrates this breakdown.



Conclusion

Based on the information submitted by LEAs to document their 2016-17 local testing programs, the following characteristics appear to characterize local testing across North Carolina:

- All 115 LEAs have local testing programs.
- Local tests are primarily benchmark/interim assessments (87%), followed by Summative (6%), and Other (7%), which includes diagnostic/placement, AIG/IQ screening, and college- and career-readiness assessments.
- Local testing focuses on the core subject areas of English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, Mathematics, and Science.
- Local testing occurs in every month of the calendar year, with the majority of “testing windows” beginning in September and October (30%), January (13%), and March-May (30%).
- Local testing windows typically last between one and five days (69%; 33% are one day)
- Local testing programs are primarily supported by local funds (56%), followed by State (30%) and federal funds (9%).

In order to gain further insight into the local testing programs, NCDPI anticipates modifying next year’s data collection to gather detail regarding the amount and timing of local testing for students of varying characteristics in the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans.