



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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January 15, 2019

To: President pro Tempore of the Senate
Speaker of the House
Chairs and Members of the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee

From: Mark Johnson, State Superintendent

Subject: Initial Report on Testing Reductions (S.L. 2018-32, DPI Report 2019-67)

Thank you for your dedication to education and successful outcomes for the students of North Carolina. I am pleased to submit to you today my initial report on our efforts to reduce the testing burden on North Carolina's students and educators.

In a recent survey, more than 67,000 parents and educators across the state took the time to respond to us about over-testing. More than 3 out of 4 parents and teachers told us that North Carolina's students are tested too much.

We have collected data about the nature and extent of locally-required assessments, reviewed State policies, and focused first on reductions that do not require statutory changes. We have created an [interactive site](#) where legislators, educators, and members of the public can see how their local school district compares to others in key measures such as the number of assessments, the time required for assessment in each grade, and the type, reason, and source of each assessment. Some sample images from that site are attached.

We are just getting started reforming testing in North Carolina's public schools. This memo will provide an overview of the steps we are currently taking at the Department of Public Instruction, along with next steps and a timeline for final recommendations for legislative action.

Actions Already Taken:

- ✓ Eliminated separate "field tests" – tests that were given to students in some districts to develop items for future statewide tests
- ✓ Reduced the time and frequency of reading tests for Kindergarten through 3rd grade students

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Changes in Progress for the 2018-19 School Year:

- Reducing the number of questions on tests
- Reducing the time students must sit for tests
- Changing testing policies to reduce the stress at schools around testing time
- Working with local leaders to reduce the number of locally-required tests
- Working with the State Board of Education to eliminate tests not required by state or federal law
- Giving students other ways to show progress if they have a bad test day
- Using the appropriate amount of technology as a tool for students and teachers to personalize learning and eliminate tests

Next Steps for Spring 2019:

- Collaborate with local superintendents on reasonable goals for reducing the testing burden using the data we have collected on the variation in local testing approaches.
- Provide specific recommendations to the General Assembly on statutory changes to reduce the testing burden.
- Present a plan to the General Assembly to use new, personalized learning technology, which allows teachers to get the information they need about students' progress without high-stakes testing.

We look forward to continuing to work with local superintendents and state leaders to reform the system of over-testing, so that we can give the teachers the time to do what they entered the profession to do: teach.

We will submit a second report with recommendations this Spring. In the meantime, for up-to-date information on the progress of changes in testing, please visit:

www.NCSuperintendent.com/overtesting.

Sample Local Assessment Data – See [website](#) for more information

