



NORTH CAROLINA
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

North Carolina Personalized Assessment
Tool (NCPAT) Pilot

SL 2019-212 (SB 621), Section 2.(b)

Date Due: November 15, 2023
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2023–2024

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Introduction

This report addresses the requirements stated in Session Law 2019-212 (SB 621), Part II. Report on North Carolina Personalized Assessment Pilot:

SECTION 2.(a) It is the intent of the General Assembly that the State move toward a through-grade assessment model, in which all State-mandated assessments are administered in multiple short testing events throughout the school year rather than in a single long testing event at the end of the year.

SECTION 2.(b) The Superintendent of Public Instruction shall report by November 15, 2020, and annually thereafter until November 15, 2024, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee regarding the progress of the North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool (NCPAT) pilot. At a minimum, the report shall include the following, when available:

- (1) Demographic information for each school participating in the pilot.*
- (2) NCPAT performance, including proficiency and growth data, at the State, public school unit, and school level for students enrolled in participating schools. Such data shall be aggregated for all students and disaggregated for each subgroup of students identified in G.S. 115C-83.15(d1) without revealing personally identifiable information.*
- (3) End-of-grade assessment performance, including proficiency and growth data, at the State and public school unit level for students not enrolled in participating schools. Such data shall be aggregated for all students and disaggregated for each subgroup of students identified in G.S. 115C-83.15(d1) without revealing personally identifiable information.*
- (4) Feedback received from teachers, principals, unit-level staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the NCPAT pilot and a description of how such feedback was incorporated into the NCPAT pilot.*
- (5) Progress in scaling up the assessment system to additional public school units or schools measured against the Department of Public Instruction's latest time line submitted to the United States Department of Education. Page 2 Session Law 2019-212 Senate Bill 621*
- (6) Description of how the participation of any additional schools or public school units in that year contributed to progress toward achieving high-quality and consistent implementation across demographically diverse public school units.*
- (7) The most recent Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority Annual Performance Report submitted to the United States Department of Education.*
- (8) Any communications received from the United States Department of Education related to the NCPAT pilot.*
- (9) Progress in developing a plan to replace the science end-of-grade assessments in fifth and eighth grade with through-grade assessments after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.*
- (10) Progress in developing a plan to replace all end-of-course assessments with through-grade assessments for State-mandated high school assessments after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.*
- (11) Recommendations on any changes needed in State law to continue implementation of through-grade assessments statewide after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.*

SECTION 2.(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction may supervise and administer the NCPAT pilot in

fulfillment of the State's Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority granted by the United States Department of Education.

In June 2019, the U.S. Department of Education (USED) approved North Carolina for an Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA). Limited to only seven states at the time, North Carolina was the third state to receive the authority to develop an innovative assessment to pilot in lieu of the current statewide assessment for a subset of students. As the development of the innovative assessment progresses, participating students will take the innovative pilot test in reading and mathematics in grades 3–8.

The proposed IADA assessment, NCPAT, is a balanced assessment system that will provide granular data for immediate feedback about students' performance throughout the year and summative data at the end of the year for general accountability purposes. A primary goal is to design an assessment system that provides formative feedback data to educators throughout the school year and reduces the impact of test time and test anxiety for students and schools. This is consistent with North Carolina General Statute 2019-212, Part II, Section 2.(a):

“It is the intent of the General Assembly that the State move toward a through-grade assessment model, in which all State-mandated assessments are administered in multiple short testing events throughout the school year rather than in a single long testing event at the end of the year.”

With the IADA flexibility and the requirement in North Carolina state law that the State move toward a through-grade assessment model, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is engaged in developing the NCPAT assessment system; however, there has been an impact from COVID-19. With the spring 2020 statewide test administrations waived by the USED, the development timeline for the NCPAT had to be modified. Newly developed NCPAT items were embedded to be field tested in the spring 2020 statewide test forms. Without statewide tests administered in spring 2020, there were no field test data on those items to build NCPAT interims for 2020–21 administrations. The NCPAT interims pilot administrations scheduled for the 2020–21 school year were implemented the 2021–22 school year; NCPAT pilot summative administrations for grades 4 and 7 in reading and mathematics scheduled for the 2020–21 school year were implemented in the 2022–23 school year with statewide summative administrations to follow in the 2023–24 school year.

NCDPI's proposed timeline is to have the NCPAT system statewide in grades 3–8 in reading and mathematics in the 2024–25 school year, replacing the current end-of-grade assessments. Because of complications from the coronavirus health crisis that continued to affect the normal functioning of schools in the 2021–22 school year, the NCDPI modified its plan and timeline for piloting and scaling up the NCPAT system as outlined below:

- the 2021–22 school year: Grades 4 and 7 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims only);
- the 2022–23 school year: Grades 4 and 7 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims and multistage adaptive summative assessment) and Grades 5 and 8 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims only);
- the 2023–24 school year: Grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims and multistage adaptive summative assessment statewide) and Grades 3 and 6 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims only);

- the 2024–25 school year: Grades 3–8 Mathematics and Reading (administer interims and multistage adaptive summative assessment statewide).

As required, this report addresses the requirements in Session Law 2019-212.

Background and Overview

In December 2018, at the direction of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the NCDPI applied to the US Department of Education for Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority. In June 2019, North Carolina became one of only seven states awarded this authority, and in late August 2019 the North Carolina General Assembly passed legislation (S.L. 2019-212) endorsing the pilot, setting goals for expansion of the innovative assessments, and requiring annual reports on progress.

When the NCDPI initiated the application, three school districts committed to participating in the pilot for innovative assessments for fourth grade math, seventh grade reading, or both. Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, there were 187 schools across 14 districts and 8 charter schools committed to participating in the pilot for the 2020–21 school year. Some districts and charter schools withdrew from pilot participation for the 2021–22 school year resulting in participation of 77 schools across 10 districts, 6 charter schools, and the Cherokee Central Schools.

Participants for pilot volunteers in the 2022–23 school year included 189 schools from all North Carolina State Board of Education regions across 27 districts, 14 charter and lab schools, and the Cherokee Central Schools.

Session Law 2019–212 Report Requirements

Session Law 2019-212, Part II, Section 2.(b) requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to report by November 15, 2020, and annually thereafter until November 15, 2024, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee regarding the progress of the NCPAT pilot. The required specifics of progress in the development of the innovative assessment system, NCPAT, are provided in this section. The annual report submitted to the United States Department of Education on September 29, 2023, is included as Appendix A and the supporting appendices for the 2022–23 annual report as Appendix B and are referenced in several of the following responses.

- 1) Demographic information for each school participating in the pilot.

Demographic information for each volunteer pilot school is included in [Appendix B: USED 2022–23 Annual Report Appendices](#): Appendix III.A-01 2022–23 NCPAT School Demographic and Achievement Data.

- 2) NCPAT performance, including proficiency and growth data, at the State, public school unit, and school level for students enrolled in participating schools. Such data shall be aggregated for all students and disaggregated for each subgroup identified in G.S. 115C-83.15(d1) without revealing personally identifiable information.

Achievement information for each volunteer pilot school is included in [Appendix B: USED 2022–23 Annual Report Appendices](#): Appendix II-01: NCPAT EOG Results by Achievement Level (LEA and School).

The 2022–23 school year end-of-grade performance data, including school growth results, for all schools (including those in the pilot) is [available online](#). The NCDPI

administered the NCPAT summative assessments at grades 4 and 7 in the 2022–23 school year in pilot schools in place of the regular state assessment and results were included in accountability data.

- 3) End-of-grade assessment performance, including proficiency and growth data, at the State and public-school unit level for students not enrolled in participating schools. Such data shall be aggregated for all students and disaggregated for each subgroup of students identified in G.S. 115C-83.15(d1) without revealing personally identifiable information.

The 2022–23 school year end-of-grade performance data, including school growth results, for all schools (including those in the pilot) is [available online](#). The NCDPI administered the NCPAT summative assessments at grades 4 and 7 in the 2022–23 school year in pilot schools in place of the regular state assessment and results were included in accountability data.

- 4) Feedback received from teachers, principals, unit-level staff, students, parents, and other stakeholders regarding the NCPAT pilot and a description of how such feedback was incorporated into the NCPAT pilot.

The NCDPI gathered feedback from stakeholders throughout the 2022–23 school year. A summary of stakeholder feedback is included in [Appendix A: USED 2022–23 Annual Report](#) Section IV: Consultation and Feedback. Additional feedback will be gathered as the pilot progresses.

- 5) Progress in scaling up the assessment system to additional public-school units or schools measured against the Department of Public Instruction's latest timeline submitted to the United States Department of Education.

The requirements of the IADA do not allow all schools to participate in the pilot. The IADA uses the current state assessments as the comparison to ensure validity of the reported academic achievement levels for students. The number of students in the volunteer schools must reflect the demographics of the State and must support the outcomes of the statistical analysis necessary to build the NCPAT assessment system.

The NCDPI has continuously shared information with public school units to encourage participation in the pilot. To date, the pool of volunteers has grown substantially from the initial application that included assurances from three public school units. As reported in [Appendix A: USED 2022–23 Annual Report](#) (see Section I: Progress toward Plan and Timeline), after four years of developing and designing the system, a voluntary set of schools participated in the NCPAT pilot for grades 4 and 7 in reading and mathematics in the spring of 2023. The results from the pilot affirmed the technical requirements for transitioning to the multistage adaptive EOG, including comparability with the current EOGs. The NCPAT system will be implemented statewide at grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 in the 2023–24 school year.

- 6) Description of how the participation of any additional schools or public-school units in that year contributed to progress toward achieving high-quality and consistent implementation across demographically diverse public school units.

Overall, the voluntary districts and charter schools represent the diversity of North Carolina.

Participants for pilot volunteers in the 2022–23 school year included 189 schools from all North Carolina State Board of Education regions across 27 districts, 14 charter and lab schools, and the Cherokee Central School.

The NCPAT will be implemented statewide at grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 in the 2023–24 school year.

- 7) The most recent Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority Annual Performance Report submitted to the United States Department of Education.

On September 29, 2023, the NCDPI submitted the 2022–23 report to the USED (see [Appendix A: USED 2022–23 Annual Report](#)).

- 8) Any communications received from the United States Department of Education related to the NCPAT pilot.

The USED provided an updated template for submitting the 2022–23 report that is provided in Appendix A.

- 9) Progress in developing a plan to replace the science end-of-grade assessments in fifth and eighth grade with through-grade assessments after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.

The NCPAT pilot is currently a research proposal; assessment data, including proficiency and growth measures, will be reviewed throughout the pilot period. Following a successful outcome of the full pilot proposal and statewide implementation in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 in the 2023–24 school year, the NCDPI will develop a plan to replace the science end-of-grade assessments with the NCPAT assessment system.

- 10) Progress in developing a plan to replace all end-of-course assessments with through-grade assessments for State-mandated high school assessments after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.

The NCPAT pilot is currently a research proposal; assessment data, including proficiency and growth measures, will be reviewed throughout the pilot period. Following a successful outcome of the full pilot proposal and statewide implementation in grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 in the 2023–24 school year, the NCDPI may develop a plan to replace all end-of-course high school assessments with the NCPAT assessment system.

- 11) Recommendations on any changes needed in State law to continue implementation of through-grade assessments statewide after the completion of the NCPAT pilot.

Though there are not any specific needed changes currently identified, the NCDPI will continue to consider any needed changes to State law for successful implementation of the NCPAT.

Conclusion

Successful implementation of the NCPAT as allowed by IADA is dependent on the following factors: (1) the NCDPI's capacity to develop items and pilot the through-grade NCPAT system with a demographically representative sample of students, (2) the inclusion of public-school units, both as participating in the pilot administrations and as providing feedback, and (3) the ongoing psychometric analysis that will support a reliable and valid assessment system that meets technical requirements. In the fourth year of the five-year pilot, the NCDPI has administered interims for grades 4, 5, 7 and 8 mathematics and reading, administered multistage adaptive summative assessments for grades 4 and 7 mathematics and reading, delivered online reporting for NC Check-Ins 2.0 and the multistage summative assessment, and delivered online professional development courses to support data literacy and the use of NC Check-Ins 2.0.

On September 29, 2023, the NCDPI submitted the 2022–23 report to the USED (see [Appendix A: USED 2022–23 Annual Report](#)). This report provided detailed information on the design, development, and implementation of the NCPAT for the 2022–23 school year.

Appendices

Appendix A: *USED 2022–23 Annual Report*

- <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=10399&AID=372080&MID=14566>

Appendix B: *USED 2022–23 Annual Report Appendices*

- <https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/Meetings/Attachment.aspx?S=10399&AID=372079&MID=14566>