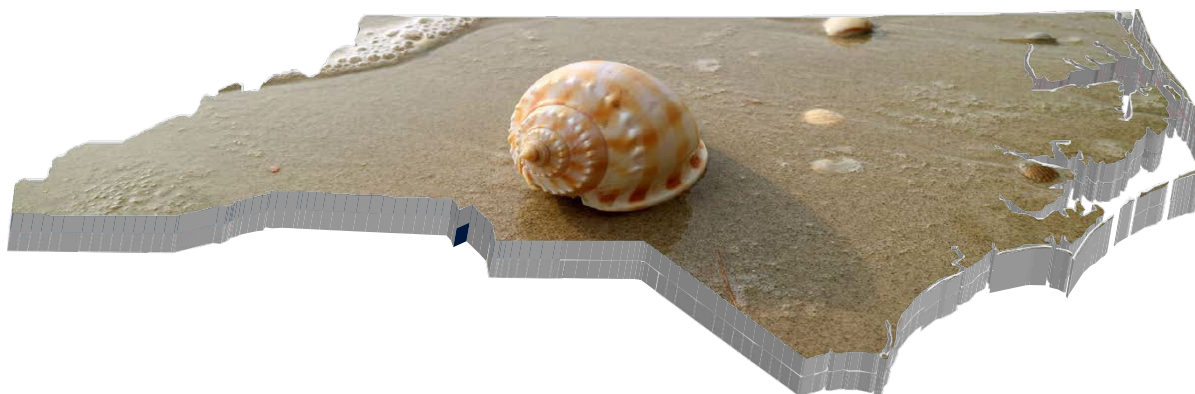


The 2024–25 Test Coordinators' Policies and Procedures Handbook is a reference to be used for all test administrations during the 2024–25 school year. This publication is provided to nonpublic school and Department of Juvenile Justice school test coordinators with key points highlighted. This guidance does not replace a thorough review and understanding of the entire publication and the test publisher's training and test protocol documents for each respective test, prior to the test administration.

– North Carolina – TEST COORDINATOR'S POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK



2024–25



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A. Introduction

Purpose of the North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook

The purpose of the *North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook* is to provide public school unit (PSU) test coordinators with a reference for implementing proper test administrations for the Annual Testing Program. This handbook provides information to ensure the integrity of the testing program is maintained, results generated from the program are valid, and any subsequent reporting is accurate and appropriate.

While reviewing this publication, it is important to note that a PSU is defined as a district, charter school, lab school, regional school, and residential school. The term PSU does not include a school within a district. It is also important to note that access to certain links included in this Handbook are only accessible to those with a [Testing News Network](#) (TNN) account, which are available to PSU test coordinators. For more information about how to gain access to TNN, contact your regional accountability office.

Fundamental Testing Premises

It is essential for school personnel to develop proper testing procedures in order to provide accurate test data for decision-making.

- **Fairness.** Be fair and consistent in following policies and procedures.
- **Equality.** Students must have equal opportunity when taking tests. Accommodations must be in accordance with the policies, procedures, and standardization expectations of the test, and must never be used for score enhancement.
- **Flexibility.** North Carolina-developed tests are designed to measure the objectives found in the state-adopted content standards. The tests are available in an online format (and a paper format when there is a documented accessibility need). All students are allowed ample opportunity to complete the tests. Students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners (ELs) may also receive approved accommodations to complete certain tests.
- **Security.** Test security must be maintained at all times. Test materials must be stored in a secure, locked storage facility when not in use. A trained test administrator must always be present during the test administration. The test administrator must conduct an unbiased administration of the test according to the policies, procedures, and directions in the test administration guide and any subsequent updates shared by the Office of Accountability and Testing. Awareness of proper testing procedures helps ensure the integrity of the testing program, provides accurate test data, and gives PSUs and schools the ability to use

test data confidently as decisions are made for the improvement of student learning and achievement.

Participation in the Annual Testing Program

As stated in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315 \(a\)](#), "All students enrolled in a public school unit (PSU) in grades 3 through 8 or in high school courses in which an end-of-course (EOC) assessment is administered shall participate in the State Annual Testing Program. PSUs shall report to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) test results for:

- (1) beginning of grade 3 reading proficiency;
- (2) grades 3 through 8 end-of-grade (EOG) English language arts/reading and mathematics;
- (3) grades 5 and 8 EOG science;
- (4) grade 10 EOC English II;
- (5) grade 11 EOC assessments in NC Math 1, NC Math 3, and EOC Biology;
- (6) grade 11 ACT; and
- (7) grade 12 Career and Technical Education Concentrators and WorkKeys."

Per State Board of Education (SBE) policy [ACCT-021\(1B\)](#), "For the accountability model, a school that does not assess at least ninety-five percent of its expected test population for the all students group and each subgroup of students will be deemed not to have met participation rate requirements."

There are three ways students may participate in the Annual Testing Program:

- (1) participation in the standard state test administration (i.e., without testing accommodations),
- (2) participation in the standard state test with testing accommodations, or
- (3) participation in a North Carolina alternate assessment, with or without testing accommodations.

Test administrators who provide accommodations for students with disabilities must refer to the most recent [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#) and any published supplements or updates.

The Test Development Process

The test development process involves multiple checks and balances guided by testing experts and professionals. The test development process begins after new content standards are adopted by the North Carolina SBE. Various stakeholders serve in advisory roles to the test development process.

Stakeholders include the following:

- North Carolina Educators and Administrators,
- NCDPI-Office of Academic Standards Specialists,

- North Carolina State University-Technical Outreach for Public Schools (NCSU-TOPS) Content,
- NCSU-TOPS Accessibility Specialists,
- NCSU-TOPS Production, Editing, and Copyright Staff, and
- Outside Content-Specific Experts.

Prior to the test development process, the standards to be measured are defined during test specification meetings. North Carolina educators collaborate and develop recommendations for a prioritization of standards indicating the relative importance of each standard, the anticipated instructional time, and the appropriateness of the standard for test design for each content area. Subsequently, test development staff from the NCDPI meet with various advisors to review the recommendations from the teacher panels and to adopt final weight distributions across the domains for each grade level.

Once test specifications are adopted, item writers and reviewers complete training on the new subject-specific content standards. The training also includes an overview of item writing, sensitivity, accessibility, and fairness guidelines. North Carolina educators start the item development process by creating new items with various advisors providing feedback on item quality throughout the eighteen-step test development process. The development process concludes with the NCDPI test measurement specialist evaluating the recommendations from all advisors and then finalizing and approving the item, reading selection, or test form.

Teachers interested in training to become an item writer or reviewer for the Annual Testing Program, should visit <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeR9185Py-rD80OmluFe8l-hzBTT4i8pTDO6ySYjfcvx9IQw/viewform> for more information.

For an in-depth explanation of the test development process, see <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/test-development-process-eog-eoc-and-ncextend1>.

Protocol for Communication

To keep individuals well informed regarding topics related to test development and policy, as figure 1 shows, the Annual Testing Program supports two-way exchanges between communication levels that include ongoing dialogues at each level. Program questions and information should be channeled through the appropriate testing staff at each successive level. Staff members at the school level are encouraged to share questions related to testing and accountability (e.g., questions pertaining to the EOG and EOC tests, testing students identified as ELs and students with disabilities, and testing accommodations) with the school test coordinator. If necessary, the

PSU test coordinator will share these questions with the regional accountability office, which will contact the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing.

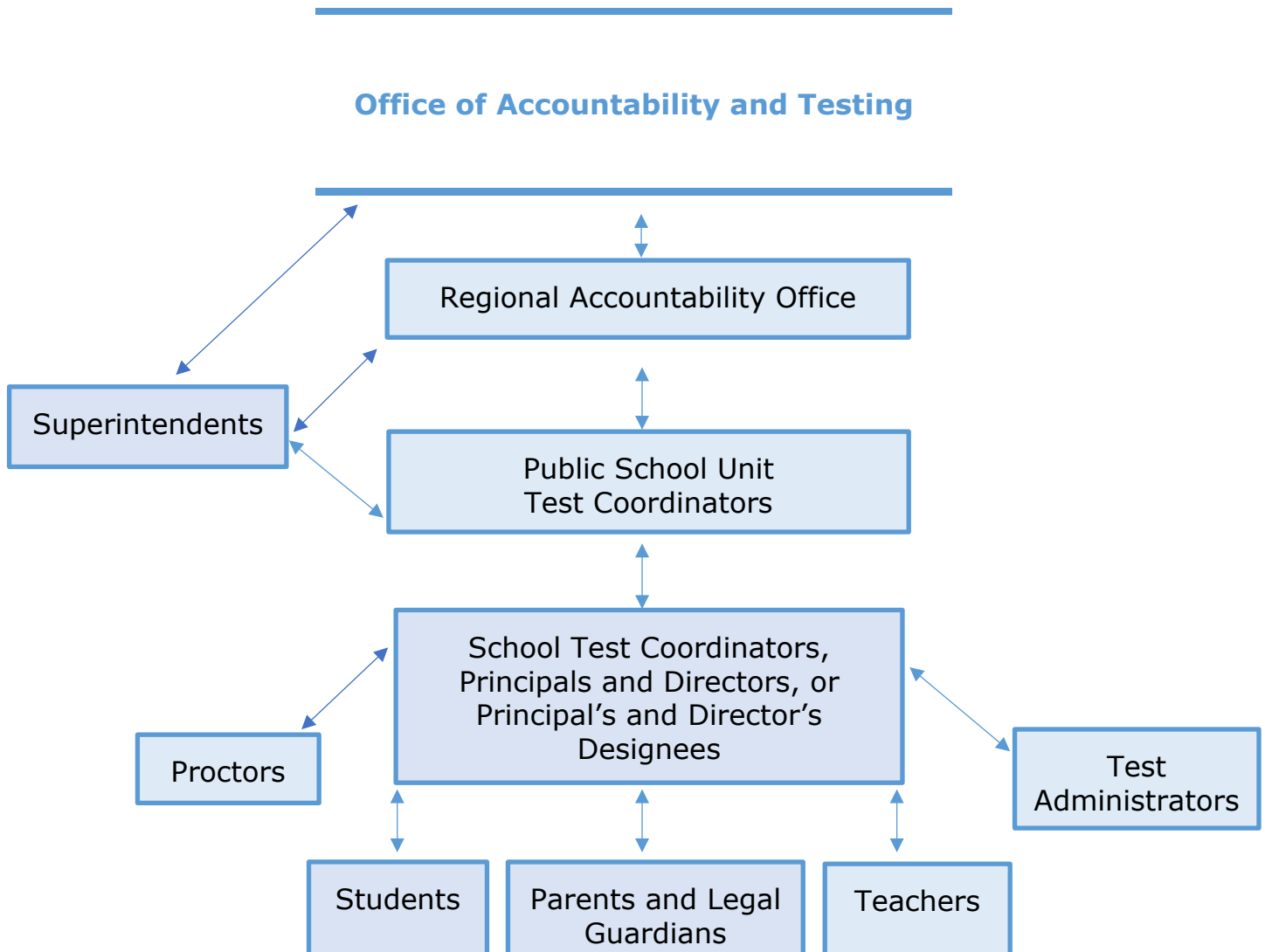


FIGURE 1. Communication protocol for North Carolina testing information.

NCDPI Contact Information

[Mailing Address, Physical Address, and General Phone Numbers](#)

NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing Directory

Contact information for the sections found within the Office of Accountability and Testing staff may be found at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/accountability-and-testing>. The directory includes the following:

- Accountability and Testing Director's Office,
- Analysis and Reporting,
- Test Development,
- Testing Policy and Operations,
- Regional Accountability Coordinators (RACs) and Regional Computing Consultants (RCCs), and
- IT staff.

Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange (EDDIE)

[EDDIE](#) is a public-facing website containing district and school information such as district numbers, school numbers, select administrative contacts, addresses, grade levels, calendar types, and more. EDDIE does not contain individual teacher or student information. EDDIE is the authoritative source for North Carolina (NC) public school codes and demographic information, and it is used by multiple systems, including [The Office of Accountability and Testing](#), PowerSchool or the [NC Student Information System \(NCSIS\)](#), and [NC School Report Cards](#). EDDIE is also used to meet federal reporting requirements. PSUs are responsible for ensuring that EDDIE is kept up to date throughout the year.

The test coordinator for districts and schools must be listed in EDDIE. The line titled "Accountability" is where district test coordinators are listed and the line titled "School Testing/Accountability Coord" is where test coordinators for schools within a district or charter, lab, regional, and residential schools are listed. If the test coordinator changes during the school year, PSUs must notify the RAC and ensure EDDIE is updated immediately to reflect the newly designated test coordinator for the district or school. To ensure continuity and consistency, it is recommended that the individual listed in the test coordinator role at the district and school level remains the same throughout the school year.

Testing News Network

The [TNN](#) is a closed information and collaboration site where important testing information and updates are posted by the Office of Accountability and Testing. The primary users of this site are district, charter, lab, regional, and residential schools testing and accountability staff. Test coordinators

should check TNN News on this site daily for testing information and updates.

TNN's dual purpose is to:

- provide secure dissemination of information to local school system test coordinators, and
- index critical events, policies, reports, communications, process details, and software upgrades for the testing programs of North Carolina Public Schools.

Information is placed on the TNN site for electronic access by PSU test coordinators, NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing staff, and TOPS staff at North Carolina State University. Other staff roles requesting access must obtain written permission from the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing to access and use this information.

NCDPI Accountability and Testing Website

The [Accountability and Testing](#) website is a public resource that provides information about state tests, policies and procedures for testing, and accountability results.

Nonpublic Schools Testing Service

The Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services provides access to secure state test materials to nonpublic schools through the Nonpublic Schools Testing Service program. All questions regarding nonpublic school testing should be directed to Brian Swiger at (919) 515-3642. For more information on the NPSTS, see

<https://center.ncsu.edu/wp/main/educational-services/>.

Help Desk

A Help Desk is available for NC Education and NCTest Admin support if a problem cannot be resolved locally. The incident should be reported to the Help Desk using one method of communication (i.e., email, phone call). Email requests are preferred for Help Desk communications.

- Email: ncdesk@ncsu.edu
- Phone: (919) 515-1320
- Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (excluding holidays)

Test Administration Guides, Publications, Handbooks, and Administrative Documents

Test administration guides, publications, handbooks, and administrative documents are available online within TNN under "Administrative Documents" and in print for each state-mandated test. These publications provide information and directions for administering tests and preparing

documents for return to the test coordinator. Administration guides are not considered secure test materials.

Testing Code of Ethics

The *Testing Code of Ethics* ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#)) stresses the importance of maintaining test security at all times and addresses appropriate professional practices for central office staff, school administrators, test coordinators, teachers, test administrators, and proctors in the areas of securing tests; administering tests; and scoring, reporting, and interpreting test results.

A copy of the *Testing Code of Ethics* is in [Appendix Q](#) of this handbook and is also printed in the appendix of all North Carolina test administration guides. Before each test administration, test administrators and proctors (if utilized) must read and review thoroughly the *Testing Code of Ethics* and its sanctions, paying careful attention to section (q)—unethical testing practices—and section (r)—sanctions for violations of the *Code*. This document has the effect of law in North Carolina. Following the *Testing Code of Ethics* helps ensure testing is conducted in a fair and ethical manner in every classroom across the state. The *Testing Code of Ethics* is part of Title 16 of the Administrative Code and must not be removed from this document. A copy may be requested from the PSU or school test coordinator for reference.

Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel

The [Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel publication](#) may be found on the NCDPI website. This publication is provided to principals, teachers, and other school personnel as a reference for implementing secure, uniform test administrations in North Carolina schools.

Released Test Questions

The Annual Testing Program has released tests available for most state-mandated tests. Released tests that are aligned to previously adopted standards are retired and no longer available. Released test forms reflect the currently adopted content standards and can be found by searching for the type of test at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/testing-documents>.

To navigate this site,

1. select a test type from the "Type of State Test" dropdown box,
2. select "Released Tests," from the "Resource" dropdown box, and then
3. select "Apply."

Released questions may also be accessed through the secure browser, NCTest apps. for Chromebook and iPad, and via

<https://data.ncsu.edu/nctest/Destination.html> by selecting the released items icon.

Released questions and assessments are copyrighted by the NCDPI and cannot be uploaded into third party applications. These materials must not be used for personal or financial gain.

Preventing Test Security Breaches

PSUs, schools, and the Annual Testing Program are responsible for working together to maintain the integrity of state tests and test security to ensure the fidelity of student test scores. Any content discovered and suspected of containing test questions, answers, or information from secure tests (e.g., copies of documents, links, images) of which the origin is unknown, must be reported to the Annual Testing Program through the RAC before use in a district or school.

The *Testing Code of Ethics* includes information about the importance of test security, as well as possible sanctions if the Rule is compromised, "(r) In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

- (1) withhold any monetary incentive awards;
- (2) file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
- (3) seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and
- (4) in accordance with the provisions of 16 NCAC 06C .0312, suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation."

Annual Testing Calendars and Required Testing Charts

The following Annual Testing Program calendars and other required testing charts for the 2024–25 school year are available on the NCDPI website.

- [2024–25 North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#)—a comprehensive chart that includes all operational state-mandated tests by grade level, test name, and test administration dates.
- [2024–25 North Carolina Annual Testing Program Overview](#)—an overview document that summarizes key facts about each state-mandated test.
- [2024–25 North Carolina Required Testing](#)—a color-coded chart that denotes (1) federal testing requirements, (2) state testing requirements, and (3) inclusion of schools' test results in the state's accountability model.

- [2024–25 Required Testing \(Alternate Assessments\)](#)—a chart that includes all state-mandated tests with the corresponding alternate assessments, if available.
- [2024–25 Testing for Read to Achieve at Grade 3](#)—a list of tests associated with the Read to Achieve legislation ([G.S. § 115C-83.1](#)).

Assessment Briefs

Assessment Briefs are publications that contain information related to testing and accountability and may be helpful when explaining certain aspects of the Annual Testing Program to staff, students, parents, and legal guardians. Assessment Briefs can be found on the NCDPI's website at the following address: <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/testing-policy-and-operations/assessment-briefs>.

Test Specification Information

Test specification documents are available for each state-mandated test administered by the Annual Testing Program. These documents provide technical information about the tests, such as types of questions, number of questions, delivery mode, assessed standards, and the weight distribution (percentage) of each assessed domain. Test specification information for state-mandated tests is located at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/technical-information-state-tests>.

Information about Test Questions

North Carolina state tests contain a small portion of field test questions, which do not count toward or against a student's score. These questions are indistinguishable from operational questions and should not interfere with students' test-taking experiences. The NCDPI does not share field test questions embedment information with regional accountability offices, schools, parents, legal guardians, or students.

B. Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals in the testing community play a vital role in maintaining a secure testing environment at every level—from test development to administration of the tests, to scoring and reporting. Section B of this handbook outlines the roles and responsibilities of key individuals who are responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Annual Testing Program. The following responsibilities reflect in detail the duties established in the [Testing Code of Ethics](#).

Responsibilities of the NCDPI

The NCDPI shall develop, revise, publish, and provide timely updates to PSUs on the policies and procedures required for proper test administrations. These guidelines shall be provided through the regional accountability offices.

The NCDPI shall supply required tests and supporting materials to the PSUs. The NCDPI shall develop, procure, distribute, and bear the cost of such testing materials necessary for the administration of tests mandated by the SBE. The NCDPI shall score or have scored all tests in the Annual Testing Program and shall provide scoring and interpretative services to the PSUs.

In the event there is a stand-alone field test, an internal committee of directors or their designee for the Offices of Academic Standards, Exceptional Children, Charter Schools, Federal Programs, Advanced Learning and Gifted Education, as well as the Superintendent's Principal Advisor and the Superintendent's Teacher Advisor, reviews any submitted appeals from participation. The resulting recommendation(s) is presented to the SBE for approval or denial.

Test Administration Training Format

The Annual Testing Program utilizes the train-the-trainer model for test administration training. The Office of Accountability and Testing expects the trainings delivered by both district and school test coordinators follow the same format. Test administration trainings may be delivered in-person or virtually but must be facilitated and delivered by the test coordinator. For tests created by the Annual Testing Program (i.e., EOGs, EOCs, RtA, CCRAA, NCEXTEND1), it is not permissible for testing staff to be trained via a locally created online course. A digital test administration guide may be used during training; however, each test administrator must have a printed copy of the appropriate test administration guide before and during the test administration.

The test administrator must thoroughly read and study the guide (electronic or hard copy) before attending the training session, so the school test coordinator can answer any questions the test administrator may have.

Training Expectations

PSU and school test coordinators must ensure testing staff are trained annually, as appropriate, on these resources:

- [Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel publication](#)
- [Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel video](#)
- [Online Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course](#)
- [Paper Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course](#)
- [The Proctor's Guide or The Proctor's Guide Online Training Video](#)
- [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#)
- [Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners](#)
- *Testing Code of Ethics*

Please note that this is not an all-inclusive list but a summary of specific resources that require annual training and verification of completion. Training on test administration guides must occur prior to the test administration with all testing staff.

Verification of training. Test coordinators are permitted to collect digital signatures (e.g., scanned document with handwritten signature, ADOBE signature, DocuSign). Other applications or software with digital signature capability are permitted if the signature is not typed. Typed signatures and initials are not permitted.

Expectations for the *Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel Publication*

Annual training of school personnel on the *Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel* publication must occur before testing begins by using either the

- *Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel* publication, or the
- *Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel* video.

It is best practice to review the video as part of a group training. A group setting provides an opportunity for staff to ask questions of the school test coordinator about test security.

School personnel must complete training annually, which includes (1) signing a training roster verifying training completion and (2) signing a confidentiality and test security agreement. These documents must be kept on file at the school during the current school year.

Documentation of training is an important part of an investigation following any security issue and serves as evidence of compliance during state-assessment monitoring visits.

Expectations for the *Policies and Procedures Training Courses*

The Office of Accountability and Testing provides two virtual training courses. One course includes policies and procedures related to online test administrations, and the other provides policies and procedures related to paper test administrations. School staff facilitating, overseeing, or administering either an online test, paper test, or both, are expected to complete the appropriate training course(s). It is suggested that district and school test coordinators complete the training course(s) at the beginning of the school year; however, districts and schools may locally determine the timeframe for completion. It is recommended that test administrators complete the course as close to the test window as is possible.

Certificates of completion are generated upon successful completion of each course.

- Regional accountability coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for PSU test coordinators to complete the course(s). RACs are expected to locally store course certificates of completion for the current school year (either via paper or electronically) for all test coordinators in their region.
- District test coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for school test coordinators to complete the course(s). District test coordinators are expected to locally store certificates of course completion (either via paper or electronically) by a deadline determined locally for the current school year.
- School test coordinators will establish an appropriate timeline for school test administrators to complete the course(s). School test coordinators are expected to locally store certificates of course completion (either via paper or electronically) by a set deadline for the current school year.
Note: Course certificates for test administrators who completed the course(s) the previous school year are valid through September 30, 2024.

Staff are **not** permitted to administer tests required by the Annual Testing Program without a valid certificate of completion on file.

2024–25 course opening date. The *Policies and Procedures Training Courses* will be available July 19, 2024. Directions for accessing the courses can be found in [Appendix A](#) of this handbook.

Expectations for *The Proctor's Guide* and Video

The PSU test coordinator will conduct annual training with school test coordinators on *The Proctor's Guide* publication or *The Proctor's Guide Online Training Video* published by the Annual Testing Program. It is a local decision to use proctors, but when used, they must be trained. For additional information, refer to the subheading in this section, [Duties of Proctors](#).

Required Test Coordinator Credentials

Test coordinators will need access to the NCTest Admin platform each year to carry out their duties. A username and password are required for access.

New test coordinators must create a new account at <https://center.ncsu.edu/ncauth> and verify the email address. The regional accountability staff will then assign the test coordinator to the appropriate organization and assign applicable user roles in NCTest Admin. NCTest Admin will enable the test coordinator's access to TNN News, administrative documents, the test materials ordering system, the secure shell, and to other test administration resources. For additional information about NCTest Admin, refer to the *NCTest Admin Guide* posted on TNN > NC Education and NCTest Admin Guidance.

Selection and Training of District Test Coordinators

"The local superintendent in a local education agency (LEA) shall act as or appoint an LEA test coordinator to assist in the local administration, reporting, and interpretation of results of any 'secure test,' . . . administered in the Annual Testing Program" ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \[a\]](#)).

As outlined in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \(b\)](#), "LEA test coordinators shall attend required monthly test administration training sessions provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on subjects including proper test administration, test security, appropriate use of accommodations, scanning and scoring answer sheets, and preparation of test materials for scoring at a central site."

Duties of District Test Coordinators

District test coordinators oversee school test coordinators within their district. After receiving test administration training from the NCDPI regional accountability office, "LEA test coordinators shall in turn conduct training in the Annual Testing Program for any school test coordinators" ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308 \[c\]](#)). The district test coordinator will train local personnel who are responsible for all (vendor and non-vendor) test administration procedures. This training shall include procedures for test administrations that require accommodations and shall emphasize the need to follow the directions outlined by the test publisher. The district test

coordinator is responsible for managing and monitoring all state tests (BOG3, EOGs, EOCs, RtA, WIDA Screeners, ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, ACT, WorkKeys, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to school test coordinators during all state test administrations.

District test coordinators shall perform or oversee the following procedures:

- Annually read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Annually sign the confidentiality and test security agreement that must be kept on file with the RAC. The required [District Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Attend training sessions conducted by the RAC and test vendor(s) on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
- Check TNN on a daily basis and disseminate information to principals and school test coordinators as appropriate.
- Ensure an annual written testing plan for the district is developed and distributed to each school before the beginning of the school year. The overall testing plan must include, but is not limited to, policies and procedures for test administrator training, test security, proper testing environment, administering secure tests, auditing test administrations, preparing and returning secure test materials, and processes for reporting testing irregularities. A copy of the testing plan must be submitted annually to the RAC. A sample [Public School Unit Annual Testing Plan](#) is included in [Appendix E](#) of this handbook and can be modified to fit the needs of the district.
 - If selected for a state assessment monitoring visit, the district's annual testing plan must be provided to the monitor and will be reviewed during the monitoring process.
- Coordinate with state representatives in the event of an audit or monitoring visit to ensure testing policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.
- Oversee the planning and implementation of training for school test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors.
 - It is a local decision to have proctors serve as additional monitors who help the test administrator assure testing occurs fairly.
- Maintain accurate attendance records for all training sessions and keep these records on file in the district testing office.
- Develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in accordance with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher.
- Ensure the security of test materials and the integrity of the Annual Testing Program are maintained at all times.

- Provide information about test security and inform all appropriate staff of sanctions, penalties, or other possible consequences for test security violations.
- Investigate all reports of testing irregularities and violations of ethical testing practices and immediately report them to the superintendent, principal or director, and RAC.
 - Determine the seriousness of reports of test security breaches, loss of test materials, failure to account for test materials, unauthorized reproduction or retention of test materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures.
- Declare a test misadministration when appropriate, using the appropriate procedures and documentation, and ensure students are administered a different, secure form of the test, if available. All misadministrations must be reported to the superintendent, principal or director, and the RAC, using the appropriate documentation and notification procedures.
 - When a retest occurs due to an irregularity, the first test score is not used for accountability purposes.
- Use and follow all procedures in the Online Testing Irregularity Submission System ([OTISS](#)) to document and report all testing irregularities within five days of the occurrence.
- Ensure access to test materials is restricted to appropriate staff at the district and school staff. Ensure all appropriate staff receive training in procedures for providing approved accommodations for state-mandated tests to students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
- In conjunction with program administrators, ensure the need for test accommodations are appropriately documented.
- In conjunction with program administrators, monitor to ensure all documented accommodations are provided to students and ensure [Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms](#) are used during testing to help determine the extent the accommodations are used by the students during the test administrations.
- Monitor to ensure the district and school plans for administering tests under secure conditions are implemented appropriately.
- Prohibit district and school staff from disclosing the general content of the tests or specific questions contained in the tests.
- Prohibit the reproduction of any or all parts of the tests. No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of the test publisher.
- Train all school personnel on the appropriate use of test materials, test security, the *Testing Code of Ethics*, the [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#) and published supplements, and the [Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners](#) document and published supplements.
- Ensure all eligible students are tested.

- Maintain accurate records of student membership and assist in identifying all students who are eligible to take the test in order to secure the appropriate quantity of materials.
- Order enough copies of test materials (i.e., test administration guides, supplemental testing materials). Only order paper materials for students with a documented accessibility need.
- Account to the NCDPI for all test materials received.
 - Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are first received.
 - Report immediately to TOPS any discrepancies in the number of materials received.
- Develop a system of checking out and checking in of test materials to ensure that at each level of distribution and collection all secure materials are tracked, returned, and accounted for.
- Account to TOPS for all test materials returned.
 - Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are returned.
 - Verify with TOPS that the number of secure materials returned matches the count taken when the materials were first received.
- Ensure that student placement decisions are not solely based on test scores (SBE policy [SCOS-016](#)).
- Per [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(g\)](#), at the beginning of each school year, provide information to principals, teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians advising them of the local and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, the information provided to parents or legal guardians must include whether the SBE or local board of education requires the test(s).
- Assist the principal at each school in understanding the duties and responsibilities related to the Annual Testing Program and the implementation of state tests.
- Ensure that all school principals and directors read and study annually the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure that all school principals and directors read and sign annually the [Principal/Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either electronically, or in a paper format) with the district test coordinator. The required *Principal/Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* can be found in Appendix D of this handbook.
- Ensure that all school test coordinators read and study annually the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure that all school test coordinators read and sign annually the [School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either via paper or

electronically) with the district test coordinator. The required *School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.

- Ensure school test coordinators have a copy of the [Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) for test administrators participating in training for the administration of North Carolina state-mandated tests and that they are aware all test administrators at their school must sign the form before administering a test. The required *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure school test coordinators and test administrators are in compliance with the test administration information included in [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(a\)\(1\)\(2\)](#).
- Ensure each school has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored, and staff clearly understand test material handling and storage procedures. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel when secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff) must not have access to the storage facility.
- Ensure each school establishes procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with the test publisher's guidelines.
- Ensure each school test coordinator:
 - develops and documents in writing a schoolwide testing plan for administering tests under secure conditions.
 - receives and stores test books, and other testing materials in a secure manner.
 - implements a system of checking out and checking in test materials to ensure all materials are returned and accounted for.
 - ensures all test administrators sign the *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* at every test administration training session, and the signed forms are kept on file (either via paper or electronically) at the school.
 - To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested.
 - Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.

Best Practices and Considerations When Selecting School Test Coordinators

Per [16 NCAC 06D .0311\(h\)](#), "the principal or the principal's designee shall serve as school test coordinator." The principal, if not serving as the school test coordinator, should select a candidate who intends to remain in the position for the duration of one school year or longer. The principal should also consider if the candidate has the ability to accomplish the following duties as part of their job responsibilities:

- Knowledge of privacy laws and how to protect students' and teachers' personal information and data that is collected and used.
- Ability to respond to phone calls and emails in a timely manner.
- Maintain strong organization, communication, and computer skills.
- Capability to work with school administration to select and train a back-up school test coordinator in case of emergency.
- Ability to collaborate with other staff members (e.g., EC, CTE, EL) in the school when creating the annual site testing plan.
- Availability to attend all meetings and trainings with the district test coordinator (applies to school test coordinators within a district only).
- Capability to manage and oversee all vendor and non-vendor state test administrations (BOG3, EOGs, EOCs, RtA, WIDA Screeners, ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, ACT, WorkKeys, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1).
- Availability during the entire school day on testing days with limited non-testing related duties interfering with the planning, training, and oversight of testing in the school building.
- Knowledge of specific testing processes and procedures.

Duties of Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential School Test Coordinators

The principal or director for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools shall either serve as or designate a school test coordinator. The test coordinator at these schools is responsible for managing and monitoring all vendor and non-vendor state tests (BOG3, EOGs, EOCs, RtA, WIDA Screeners, ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, ACT, WorkKeys, CCRAA and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations. If testing will occur at one or more location there must be a trained site coordinator at each location for the duration of the testing sessions. Due to these requirements, the school test coordinator or trained site coordinator must not be responsible for administering or proctoring a test. If only one test session occurs at the school, the school test coordinator may serve as the test administrator for this session. (If the school test coordinator will not be available during testing the principal or director must assign an appropriate, trained, backup

test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.)

Test coordinators at charter, lab, regional, and residential schools must perform or oversee the following procedures and responsibilities:

- Adhere to the test administration windows established by the NCDPI.
- Attend training sessions conducted by the RAC and test vendor(s) on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
- Annually read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Check TNN daily and disseminate information to principals or directors and school test coordinators as appropriate.
- Annually read and sign the [School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) that must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the RAC. The *School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is required for school test coordinators who report directly to their RAC and is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure an annual written testing plan for the school is developed and disseminated to the school principal or director and appropriate staff before the beginning of the school year. The annual testing plan must include, but is not limited to, policies and procedures for test administrator training, test security, proper testing environment, administering the secure tests, auditing test administrations, and preparing and returning secure test materials, and processes for reporting testing irregularities. A sample [Public School Unit Annual Testing Plan](#) is located in [Appendix E](#) of this handbook and can be modified to fit the needs of the school. A copy (either via paper or electronically) of the school testing plan must be submitted annually to the RAC.
 - If selected for a state assessment monitoring visit, the school's annual testing plan must be provided to the monitor and will be reviewed during the monitoring process.
- Coordinate with state representatives in the event of an audit or monitoring visit to ensure testing policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.
- At the beginning of each school year, collaborate with other school officials to provide information to teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians advising them of the state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents or legal guardians must include whether the state or the local school board requires the test(s).
- Ensure the security of test materials and the integrity of the Annual Testing Program are maintained at all times.

- Establish any needed school policies and procedures to assure maximum test security in accordance with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher, and inform staff of sanctions, penalties, or other possible consequences for test security violations.
- Assist the school principal or director in understanding his or her duties and responsibilities relative to the Annual Testing Program and the implementation of state tests.
- Ensure that the school principal or director reads and studies annually the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure that the school principal or director reads and signs annually the [*Principal or Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement*](#). The original signed copies must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the school test coordinator. The required *Principal or Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook.
- Ensure all test administrators read and study annually the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Ensure all test administrators attend or complete training before any test administration and sign the required [*Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement*](#) at the end of every training session. The *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in [Appendix D](#) of this handbook and must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the school test coordinator. Copies of these agreements should be available during any assessment monitoring process. For vendor tests, required test training documentation or certification must be completed according to the vendor's policies (e.g., ACCESS, WIDA Screeners).
- Establish procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with the test publisher's guidelines.
- Select test administrators who meet the following criteria:
 - Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307\(a\)](#), "Only current or retired professional educators as defined in [G.S. §115C-270.1\(2\)](#) or teachers who
 - (1) are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
 - (2) have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in Rule .0308 of this Section shall administer secure tests."
 - To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested.
 - Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.
- Ensure access to test materials is restricted to appropriate staff.

- Ensure the school has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored and staff clearly understand test material handling and storage procedures. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel when secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff) must not have access to the storage facility.
- Train all school personnel on the appropriate use of test materials, test security, the *Testing Code of Ethics*, the [*Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook*](#) and published supplements (as appropriate), the [*Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners*](#) document, and published supplements (as appropriate).
- Prohibit the reproduction of any or all parts of the tests. Emphasize to all school personnel, that no person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of the test publisher.
- Prohibit school employees from disclosing the general content of the tests or specific questions contained in the tests.
- Inform school employees that if there is a breach of security, loss of test materials, failure to account for test materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures that it must immediately be reported to the school principal or director and the school test coordinator, who in turn will inform the RAC.
- Monitor to ensure plans for administering tests under secure conditions are implemented appropriately.
- Prepare the physical conditions for the testing room, including rooms to which students may be relocated.
- Cover or remove bulletin boards and instructional displays that contain content being measured or test-taking strategies.
- Cover or remove all reference materials on testing rooms' walls, students' desks, devices, or workstations.
- Oversee the planning and implementation of training for test administrators and proctors (if utilized).
 - Maintain accurate attendance records for all training sessions and keep these records on file at the school.
- Ensure all appropriate staff receive training in procedures for providing approved accommodations for state-mandated tests to students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
 - In conjunction with program administrators, ensure the need for test accommodations is documented and that *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms* are completed during testing.
 - In conjunction with program administrators, monitor to ensure all documented accommodations are provided to students and to what extent the accommodations are used by the students during the test administrations.

- Ensure all eligible students are tested.
 - Maintain accurate records of student membership and assist in identifying students who are eligible to take the test.
- Ensure every student participating in the online test(s) has completed the online assessment tutorial at least one time before the test administration.
- Order enough copies of test materials (e.g., guides, supplemental materials). Only order paper materials for students with a documented accessibility need.
- Account to the NCDPI (or the vendor, if appropriate) for all test materials received.
 - Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are first received.
 - Report immediately to TOPS (or the vendor, if appropriate) any discrepancies in the number of materials received.
- Develop a system of checking out and checking in of test materials to ensure that all secure materials are tracked, returned, and accounted for at each level of distribution and collection.
- Distribute test materials immediately before the test administration ([16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0311](#)) unless otherwise authorized by the NCDPI or the vendor.
- Before the test administration, accurately count and verify with each test administrator the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials received.
- Immediately after each test administration accurately count and verify with each test administrator the number of secure test materials, (including supplemental materials), that are returned to the secure, locked storage facility.
- Account to TOPS (or the vendor, if appropriate) for all test materials before they are returned to the secure, locked storage facility.
 - Verify with TOPS (or the vendor, if appropriate) that the number of secure materials returned by the school matches the count taken when the school first received the materials.
- Maintain the confidentiality of individual student scores when reporting test results to the public and the media.
- Prohibit the reclassification of students or the assignment of a grade of "F" or "I" for the sole purpose of excluding students from any state test.
- Ensure that student placement decisions are not solely based on test scores.
- Use and follow all procedures in the [OTISS](#) to document and report all testing irregularities within five days of the occurrence.
- Immediately report irregularities to the school director or principal and RAC. Submit completed and signed Irregularity Investigation Checklists, investigation summaries, and all pertinent investigation documentation to

the NCDPI within five business days of the occurrence (or the date the incident was identified).

- Notify the school director or principal and the RAC for consensus before deciding whether to declare a misadministration.
 - When a retest occurs due to an irregularity, the first test score is not used for accountability purposes.

Duties of School Test Coordinators within Districts

According to [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0308 \(d\)](#), "School test coordinators shall conduct training in the Annual Testing Program for any test administrators or proctors." The school test coordinator is responsible for managing and monitoring all vendor and non-vendor state tests (BOG3, EOGs, EOCs, RtA, WIDA Screeners, ACCESS, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, ACT, WorkKeys, CCRAA, and NCEXTEND1) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations; therefore, the school test coordinator should not be given the responsibility of proctoring or administering a test. If only one test session occurs at the school, the school test coordinator may serve as the test administrator for this session. (If the school test coordinator will not be available during testing the principal or director must assign an appropriate, trained, backup test coordinator to manage testing responsibilities while the test coordinator is not available.)

The school test coordinator within a district must perform the following:

- Adhere to the district testing plan and test administration schedules established by the NCDPI and the district test coordinator.
- Attend training sessions conducted by the district test coordinator and test vendor(s) on policies and procedures for conducting secure test administrations and reviewing and processing test materials.
- Annually read and study the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
- Annually read and sign the *School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement*. The original signed copies must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the district test coordinator. The *School Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in Appendix D of this handbook.
- Ensure an annual written school testing plan is developed and disseminated to the school principal and appropriate staff before the beginning of the school year. The annual testing plan must include, but is not limited to, policies and procedures for test administrator training, test security, proper testing environment, administering the secure tests, auditing test administrations, preparing and returning secure test materials, and processes for reporting testing irregularities. A sample *Public School Unit Annual Testing Plan* is located in Appendix E of this handbook and can be modified to fit the needs of the school. A copy

(either via paper or electronically) of the school testing plan must be submitted annually to the district test coordinator.

- If selected for a state assessment monitoring visit, the school's annual testing plan must be provided to the monitor and will be reviewed during the monitoring process.
- Develop test-specific plans for each test administration that include test session information (e.g., room assignments, test administrator names, standard and accommodated test session counts, accommodated test session types, make-up testing information).
- Coordinate with district and state representatives in the event of an audit or monitoring visit to ensure testing policies and procedures are implemented appropriately.
- At the beginning of each school year, collaborate with other school officials to provide information to teachers, students, and parents or legal guardians advising them of the state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during the school year, the dates the tests will be administered, and how the results from the tests will be used.
- Ensure the security of test materials and the integrity of the Annual Testing Program are maintained at all times.
- Implement the district's testing policies and procedures and initiate any additional school policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested.
- Provide information about test security and inform staff of sanctions, penalties, or other possible consequences for test security violations.
- Train all school personnel on the appropriate use of test materials, test security, the *Testing Code of Ethics*, the *Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook* and published supplements (as appropriate), the *Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners* document, and published supplements (as appropriate).
- Prohibit the reproduction of any or all parts of the tests. Emphasize to all school personnel, that no person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials in any manner or for any reason without the written consent of the test publisher.
- Prohibit school employees from disclosing the general content of the tests or specific questions contained in the tests.
- Inform personnel that any person who learns of any breach of security, loss of test materials, failure to account for test materials, or any other deviation from required security procedures must immediately report that information to the principal and school test coordinator, who in turn will inform the district test coordinator.
- Monitor to ensure plans for administering tests under secure conditions are implemented appropriately.
- Prepare the physical conditions for the testing room, including rooms to which students may be relocated.

- Cover or remove bulletin boards and instructional displays that contain content being measured or test-taking strategies.
- Cover or remove all reference materials on testing rooms' walls, students' desks, devices, or workstations.
- Oversee the planning and implementation of training for test administrators and proctors (if utilized).
 - Maintain accurate attendance records for all training sessions and keep these records on file at the school.
- Ensure all appropriate staff receive training to provide approved accommodations during test administrations to students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
 - In conjunction with program administrators, ensure the need for test accommodations is documented.
 - In conjunction with program administrators, monitor to ensure all documented accommodations are provided to students and to what extent the accommodations are used by the students during the test administrations.
 - Ensure *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms* are completed before testing, provided to test administrators during test sessions, and are complete when returned from test administrators.
- Ensure all test administrators attend or complete training before any test administered as part of the Annual Testing Program and sign a confidentiality and test security agreement at the end of every training session. These agreements must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the school test coordinator for the current school year and should be available during the test monitoring process. The required *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in Appendix D of this handbook. For vendor tests, required test training documentation or certification must be completed according to the vendor's policies (e.g., ACCESS, WIDA Screeners).
- Establish procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with the test publisher's guidelines.
- Select test administrators who meet the following criteria:
 - Per 16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307(a), "Only current or retired professional educators as defined in G.S. §115C-270.1(2) or teachers who
 - (1) are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
 - (2) have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in Rule .0308 of this Section shall administer secure tests."
 - To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested.

- Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.
- Ensure all eligible students are tested.
 - Maintain accurate records of student membership and assist in identifying students who are eligible to take the test.
- Ensure every student participating in the online test(s) has completed the online assessment tutorial at least once before the test administration.
- Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, when the materials are first received from the district test coordinator (or vendor, as appropriate). Report immediately to the district test coordinator (or vendor) any discrepancies in the count.
- Store test materials in a secure, locked facility. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel while secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff) must not have access to the facility.
- Ensure test materials are distributed immediately before the test administration unless otherwise authorized by the Annual Testing Program.
- Before the test administration accurately count and verify with each test administrator the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, received. Immediately report any discrepancies in the count to the district test coordinator or vendor.
- Immediately after each test administration, accurately count and verify with each test administrator the number of secure test materials (including supplemental materials) that are returned to the secure, locked storage facility. Immediately report any discrepancies in the count to the district test coordinator or vendor.
- Return all test materials to the district test coordinator or vendor, as directed, immediately following the completion of the test administration.
- When returning test materials to the district test coordinator, count and verify that the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials returned by the school, matches the count taken when the materials were first received.
- Maintain the confidentiality of individual student scores when reporting test results to the public and the media.
- Prohibit the reclassification of students or the assignment of a grade of "F" or "I" for the sole purpose of excluding students in a state test.
- Ensure that student placement decisions are not solely based on test scores.
- Use and follow all procedures in the [OTISS](#) to document and report all testing irregularities within five days of the occurrence.
- Immediately report irregularities to the school principal and district test coordinator (or vendor, if appropriate). Submit completed and signed

Irregularity Investigation Checklists, investigation summaries, and all pertinent investigation documentation to the district test coordinator within five business days of the occurrence (or the date the incident was identified).

- Consult with the school principal and the district test coordinator for consensus before deciding whether to declare a misadministration.

Public School Unit Test Coordinator's Responsibilities for Ordering State Test Materials

The Annual Testing Program works closely with TOPS to manage the ordering and delivery of secure state test materials. State test materials (BOG3, EOG, EOC, CCRRA, and NCEXTEND1) are ordered via the North Carolina Testing Program Order System maintained by TOPS on the TNN website. Test materials ordering and delivery methods include the following:

- ordering via NC Education (TNN order system), and
- auto shipping to PSUs based on student membership data.

Test coordinators receive notification and training for tests that use ordering methods other than the TNN order system (i.e., WIDA, ACT).

For all state tests, RAC approval is required before paper orders are shipped.

When ordering state test materials, PSU test coordinators shall:

- Provide accurate contact and shipping information within TNN so testing shipments are delivered to the correct address, and TOPS and NCDPI staff can contact the appropriate testing personnel, as necessary.
- Provide accurate test participation dates in the ordering system based on the PSU's testing calendar. Inclusion of participation dates ensures receipt of materials in a timely manner. Ordering pages are not available until the participation dates are entered and training has been completed.
- Prepare estimates of the quantities of materials necessary for each test that is part of the Annual Testing Program. Estimates of guides and supplemental materials should be based on student membership. Paper test orders should be based on students' documented accessibility needs.
- Carefully read the instructions, including any special instructions, on ordering pages before placing orders.
- Order the appropriate number of test materials in a timely manner.
- Attend RAC trainings each month to obtain important information about upcoming tests, such as testing windows, and student eligibility.
- Check TNN regularly for notices regarding test materials and disseminate information from TNN to principals and school test coordinators as appropriate.
- Ensure copies of any errata sheets or supplemental pages that are posted on TNN are provided to test administrators, as appropriate. Ensure

accommodation forms (i.e., *Braille*, *Large Print*, *One Test Item Per Page [OTIPP]*, *Large Print One Test Item Per Page*) are ordered at least thirty school days (forty school days for Braille) before the test administration date (or as soon as the ordering system becomes available, if fewer than thirty days before testing).

- Establish an alternate point of contact so that materials can be received without incident or breach of security on days when the test coordinator may be out of the office and unavailable to receive shipments. Test security must be maintained at all times.
- Ensure each school has a secure, locked facility in which test materials will be stored, and the school staff clearly understands test material handling and storage procedures. Access to the storage facility must be limited to one or two authorized school personnel while secure materials are being stored. Unauthorized personnel (e.g., cleaning staff) must not have access to the storage facility where secure materials are stored.
- Inventory test materials upon arrival and inform TOPS immediately via email (group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu) or fax (919-515-4622) of any discrepancies in the shipment.
- Report nonreceipt of any materials to the RAC as soon as possible. The test coordinator must make every effort to ensure that materials are ordered so that they arrive in time to meet the demands of the testing schedule.
- Ensure receipt of test materials delivered to PSUs. The PSU test coordinator should receive test materials two weeks before the beginning of testing. Test administration guides for the EOC and EOG tests are generally delivered three weeks before the beginning of testing.
- Account to the NCDPI for all test materials received by checking in all materials upon their arrival.
- Follow the appropriate requirements in Section I (for districts) and Section J (for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools) of this handbook for the return of test materials, the secure destruction of test materials, and the secure storage of test materials.

Duties of School Counselors

Duties of school counselors are outlined in [G.S. § 115C-316.1](#) as follows:

- (a) "School counselors shall implement a comprehensive developmental school counseling program in their schools. Counselors shall spend at least eighty percent (80%) of their work time providing direct services to students. Direct services shall consist of:
 - (1) Delivering the school guidance curriculum through large group guidance, interdisciplinary curriculum development, group activities, and parent workshops.
 - (2) Guiding individual student planning through individual or small group assistance and individual or small group advisement.

- (3) Providing responsive services through consultation with students, families, and staff; individual and small group counseling; crisis counseling; referrals; and peer facilitation.
- (4) Performing other student services listed in the Department of Public Instruction school counselor job description that has been approved by the State Board of Education.
- (5) Coordinating and providing training for students in peer-to-peer student support programs that address areas such as conflict resolution, general health and wellness, and mentoring. The Center for Safer Schools will support school counselors in the administration and delivery of peer-to-peer student support programs.

(b) School counselors shall not assist with the coordination or administration of standardized testing. (2013-360, s. 8.35(a); 2014-100, s. 8.33(a); 2023-78, s. 3(b); 2023-134, s. 7.27(e))."

This law does not apply to charter schools, lab, regional, or residential schools.

Duties of Test Administrators

Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307\(a\)](#), "Only current or retired professional educators as defined in [G.S. §115C-270.1.2](#) or teachers who
(1) are employed by local education agencies (LEAs); and
(2) have training in the Annual Testing Program as required in [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0308](#) of this Section shall administer secure tests."

The North Carolina test administration guides outline the full test administrator's responsibilities; however, primary responsibilities include:

- Prepare for and attend a test administrator training session(s) conducted by the PSU test coordinator or school test coordinator before each test administration.
- Attend training on the *Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook*, and the *Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners* publication, and published supplements and updates when accommodations will be provided to students.
- Follow the established procedures to facilitate the provision of accommodations during test administrations for students with disabilities and students identified as ELs.
- Read and sign the *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* (provided by the school test coordinator) at the end of every test administration training session. All signed test security agreements must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) with the school test coordinator and should be available during the monitoring process.

The required *Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement* is included in Appendix D of this handbook.

- Read and study thoroughly the appropriate test administration guide before the test administration. Review the student directions (script) and be prepared for the variations required by the testing conditions.
- Read and study thoroughly the *Testing Code of Ethics* before the test administration.
- Maintain test security at all times.
- Ensure each student tested has access to the appropriate test materials as specified in the test administration guide.
- Follow procedures for the distribution and collection of any supplemental materials as specified in the test administration guide.
- Count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, before and after the test administration. Notify the school test coordinator or principal immediately of any discrepancies in the counts.
- Ensure students' personal belongings are not accessed during testing.
- Ensure all cell phones (i.e., cell phones belonging to students, test administrators, and proctors) are turned off, and they, or any other electronic devices, are not accessed at any time during the test administration, including breaks.
- When testing students online, usernames and passwords should never be shared (e.g., test administrator credentials given to students or written on the board). User accounts are confidential.
- Before beginning an online test administration, confirm the student's name and the appropriate test's name is correctly identified on the student's device.
- Administer the test to all eligible students.
- To avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest and to protect test administrators from allegations of impropriety, a test administrator should not be assigned to administer a test in a room where his or her relative or ward is tested and/or where the proctor is a personal family member or close acquaintance.
 - Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the test administrator's guardianship.
- Conduct an unbiased administration of the test according to the policies, procedures, and directions in the test administration guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher.
- Read directions to the students as they are written in the test administration guide.
- Monitor the test administration by moving quietly and frequently throughout the room and scanning the students' work areas to ensure students follow the test directions, perform the required tasks, do not

share responses, and those eligible have access to required accommodations.

- Do not, at any time, modify, change, alter, or tamper with students' responses in a test book or on device screens during or after the test administration.
- Do not, at any time, read test questions from students' tests or take notes or photographs of secure items or post them on the internet or social media.
- Assist students with emergencies (e.g., illness, necessary restroom breaks) during the test administration.
- Remain in the room throughout the entire test administration unless there is an emergency. If an emergency arises and the test administrator must leave the room, the school test coordinator must be notified to arrange for another trained test administrator to be present for the duration of testing.
- Prohibit visitors from entering the classroom during the test administration, except when required for state or local monitoring of test administrations or under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations).
- Avoid distracting behaviors (e.g., reading, conducting other personal or professional duties, talking or texting on cell phones, working on any other electronic device).
- Follow the directions specified in the test administration guides for returning all used and unused testing materials and supplemental materials to the school test coordinator.
- On the day of the occurrence, immediately document and report testing irregularities to the school test coordinator, who will ensure the irregularities are submitted in the OTISS.

Duties of Proctors

It is a local decision whether to require proctors during state testing. As referenced in ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311 \[n\]](#)), "proctors serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test."

For vendor-made assessments, test coordinators must ensure the proctor guidelines from the test publisher are followed.

For PSUs and schools that opt to assign proctors for state tests, the following best practices should be considered:

- Proctors should be school staff or responsible adult community volunteers (i.e., age eighteen or older and not enrolled as a student in the PSU).
- Proctors can be either (1) a one-on-one, full-time proctor (i.e., one proctor assisting one test administrator in a single testing room) or (2) a

roving proctor (one proctor assisting up to three test administrators in three testing rooms).

- A proctor should not be assigned to proctor in a room where his or her relative or ward is to be tested. Relatives and wards include children, stepchildren, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, siblings, in-laws, and persons under the proctor's guardianship.
- Proctors should not be assigned to proctor with a test administrator who is a personal family member or a close acquaintance.
- Students should be informed before the day of the test administration that a proctor will be assisting the test administrator in monitoring their test administration.

Proctor Training Expectations

If proctors are utilized, they must attend a proctors' training session before proctoring a test administration and understand and agree to perform the duties described. After receiving training by the PSU test coordinator, the school test coordinator is expected to conduct proctor's guide training with proctors at the school either on a day before testing or the morning of the test administration.

Training at the school must include the following:

- watch [The Proctor's Guide Online Training Video](#);
- review the *Testing Code of Ethics*,
- provide an electronic or paper copy of [The Proctor's Guide](#), and
- complete the [Proctor Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#) form.

This form must be completed each testing cycle (e.g., BOG3 reading test, fall EOC testing, spring EOC testing) and signed at the conclusion of proctor training. A copy of this signed form must be kept on file (either via paper or electronically) at the school for each proctor serving in any test administration for the school year.

C. Policies and Procedures for Statewide Tests That Are Not Provided by a Vendor

This section of the *North Carolina Test Coordinator's Policies and Procedures Handbook* includes policy guidelines and procedures that apply to the administration of all tests in the Annual Testing Program except those tests provided by a vendor (e.g., ACT, WIDA™). RACs and test coordinators are expected to ensure all appropriate staff are trained on this information before administering a test. School personnel must ensure the policy guidelines and procedures outlined in this section are implemented appropriately. All non-vendor tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on regularly scheduled school days or staff workdays.

Policies and Procedures Training Courses

Expectations for the [Policies and Procedures Training Courses](#) are detailed in Section B of this handbook.

Before Testing

Read and follow test security procedures. “(e) The principal shall store test materials in a locked facility to which only the principal has access. The principal shall not allow anyone access to the test materials except as necessary for administration.” “(i) The principal shall ensure the school test coordinator maintains test security and accountability of test materials...” ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311 \[e\]\[i\]](#)).

The following test security procedures must be studied and discussed during test administrator training:

Copying secure or copyrighted test materials

- Secure or copyrighted tests, including all test materials and test questions, must not be reproduced in any manner.
- Secure or copyrighted tests must not be copied, filed, or used directly in instructional activities, or posted on the internet or social media.
- No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials in any manner for any reason without the prior written consent of the Annual Testing Program.

Classroom instruction and study guides

- Excerpts from secure tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides.
- Instructional materials (online or paper copies) that contain sample test questions (whether generated locally or obtained from another school

system) must be shared with the principal and school system test coordinator before use.

- Teachers are not permitted to discuss any information in the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or to ask students about test questions.

Displays

- Displaying information (e.g., bulletin boards, instructional displays, and reference materials printed or attached to student desks or devices) that contains content being measured or test-taking strategies (e.g., "Tips for Taking Tests," displays, thinking maps, word lists, word walls, definitions, writing formulas, multiplication tables, number lines, mathematical formulas, theorems) in any manner or form in the room during a test administration may result in a misadministration. These displays must be covered or removed prior to testing.

Testing environment

- All rooms designated for testing must be quiet, orderly, comfortable, with adequate seating, lighting, and heating or cooling.
- A "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign should be posted on the door of the testing room.
- A clock must be visible for students to manage their work time during testing. A projected, digital clock is permitted, as long as it makes no noise and has no alarms. The clock must display the time and cannot be a countdown timer.
- Each student must have enough space in which to work.
- To protect test security, students are not permitted to use physical writing or drawing tools to mark on their device screen (e.g., dry erase marker) during testing. Students may only use the online embedded writing or drawing tools available in NCTest to mark on their screen during testing.
- Seating must be arranged to discourage students from sharing responses.
- For online testing, ensure spare devices and power sources are available, if needed.
- Ensure that study carrels or privacy shields are permitted only under the following circumstances:
 - the students' assigned seats are multi-student desks (i.e., desks that seat two or more students), or
 - the student has the *Testing in a Separate Room* accommodation (i.e., in a one-on-one or small group setting).
- Test administrators must contact the school test coordinator before the test administration if they have questions related to the testing environment.

- Students may remain in the testing room and read non-instructional reading materials (e.g., magazines) while the other students continue working to complete the test. (Students are not permitted to use electronic reading devices while there are students still testing in the same room.)

Accounting for and storing test materials

- The test administrator must count and record the number of secure test materials and supplemental materials.
 - when the materials are first received,
 - before the distribution of materials to students,
 - after the test administration, and
 - when the materials are returned to the school test coordinator.
- The test administrator must immediately report any discrepancies in the count to the school test coordinator or principal.
- For online testing, devices that are open and display the students' start screens, test material, or are paused, are considered secure and must not be left unattended by the test administrator at any time.
- For online testing, any information from the online test saved or cached on any network appliance or device must be purged or deleted immediately following the completion of the test administration.
- Immediately following the test administration, the test administrator must return all testing materials to the school test coordinator according to the directions specified in the test administration guide.
- The school test coordinator shall collect, count, and return all test materials to the secure, locked facility.

Access to secure tests and materials

- Access to secure tests must be limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need.
- For online testing, NC Education usernames and passwords must remain secure and must not be shared or compromised.
- Access codes, if used, are secure and must be counted along with other secure materials before distribution and upon return.
- School personnel must not disclose the contents of secure tests, discuss with each other or with students any of the test questions or information contained within the tests, or write about them or post them on the internet or on social media.
- Visitors to the classroom are prohibited during the test administration except when required for state or local monitoring of test administrations or under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations).

Read aloud or signing/cueing test administrations

- Test administrators who provide read aloud or signing/cueing accommodations have the added responsibility of maintaining confidentiality because of the access they are granted for these types of accommodations. It is prohibited for test administrators who give these administrations to divulge the contents of the test, generally or specifically, to anyone or to copy or record test questions.

Know local testing procedures. During test administrator training, test administrators must be informed of the following local testing policies and procedures:

- for providing additional time to students needing more than the estimated time to complete the test,
- for contacting the school test coordinator during the test administration, if needed,
- for returning students to the regular school schedule at the conclusion of testing, and
- for reporting a testing irregularity.

Prohibited items in the testing room. On days before testing, teachers are expected to announce to students which items cannot be accessed in the testing room. (Test administration guides include information about the use of prohibited items in the testing room.) The use of prohibited items may constitute a misadministration or violation of the *Testing Code of Ethics*.

During Testing

Monitor students during the test. Test administrators and proctors must remain attentive to their testing responsibilities throughout the entire test administration. A primary responsibility is monitoring the test administration, which requires the test administrator and proctor to quietly and frequently walk throughout the room and scan the students' work areas to ensure students are following the test directions, performing the required tasks, are not sharing responses, and those eligible have access to required accommodations.

After Testing

Complete special codes and accommodations used during testing.

After administering any online test, designated school personnel must complete the special codes in NCTest Admin under the Special Codes tab on test day before 7:00 p.m. Refer to the *Complete the Special Codes* section of the specific test administration guide for additional information.

Transcription instructions. For students with a documented need to record test answers in a manner other than directly entering them into the

online testing system (e.g., paper test administration, audiotape recording, assistive technology device, braille writer/braille paper), after completion of a paper test administration, the test administrators or other designated school personnel must transcribe and verify the students' answers from the test book into the online testing system. If the responses are not transcribed into the online testing system, the student will not receive a score. Test administrators or other designated school personnel may transcribe student's responses if they have completed all training that is required for the test.

Responses to gridded-response questions for the mathematics tests and the constructed response questions for the English II EOC test must be transcribed in the manner specified in the test administration guides.

Transcription and verification must occur under secure conditions in a group setting (i.e., three or more school personnel):

- one individual transcribes the student's responses,
- a second individual verifies the transcription, and
- A third individual acts as an objective observer of the process.

When transcribing a student's answers from the test book to the online system, the following steps must be followed:

- **Step 1.** Ensure the SIQ is set for Transcribe Online in NCTest Admin.
- **Step 2.** Launch the NCTest Secure Browser or app. and click on the **NCTest Login** button.
- **Step 3.** Enter an NC Education username and password and click **Login**. (Student access codes cannot be used when transcribing student responses.).
- **Step 4.** Choose the appropriate test from the Test Type drop-down menu.
- **Step 5.** Choose the appropriate test name from the Test Name drop-down menu and click **Continue**.
- **Step 6.** Select the Course (if applicable) from the drop-down menu and click **Select Course**.
- **Step 7.** Select the appropriate student from the list presented on the screen and click **Select Student**.
- **Step 8.** Ensure the screen is set to the start page with the correct student's name, student's ID number, test name, and school name near the top of the screen.
- **Step 9.** Click the **Start** button.
- **Step 10.** Confirm the student information on the screen in the pop-up box and click **OK**.
- **Step 11.** Begin transcribing the student's responses.

- The individual verifying responses checks each response as it is entered in the system by the transcriber, while the third individual observes the process. For mathematics tests only, all of the transcribed calculator inactive responses must be verified prior to transitioning into transcribing the calculator active section.
- **Step 12.** After all responses are recorded and verified, click the **End Test** button. A stop sign will appear on the screen after the second **End Test** button has been clicked and the test has been closed.
- **Step 13.** All three individuals completing the secure transcription process must sign the transcription box on the front cover of the student's test book. Ensure that all scratch and graph papers are labeled with the student's first and last name and are inserted in the student's test book, if applicable.
- **Step 14.** The test administrator or principal's designee must purge any electronic files associated with the test administration immediately following the completion of the transcription process.
- **Step 15.** Return the student's test book with scratch and graph papers (inserted inside) to the school test coordinator.

When to enter technical issues into OTISS. When a student(s) is not able to successfully complete the test due to online test connectivity and/or technical problems, schools must report these problems in the [OTISS](#) on the day of the occurrence.

On the day of the technical issue, schools must enter the following information about each incident into the OTISS:

- test name (subject and grade level),
- test form number (available at the top of the screen),
- description of the incident,
- number of students involved,
- names of all students involved,
- error message(s) (document the words verbatim),
- specific question number(s), if applicable,
- secure platform being used (e.g., NCTest Chrome app. (Android app., if available) on Chromebooks, NCTest Secure Browser, or NCTest iPad app.),
- steps taken locally to resolve the issue,
- Help Desk ticket number (If the Help Desk does not provide a ticket number, the caller should request one),
- advice or solution offered by the Help Desk, and
- whether the issue was resolved or not resolved.

When the same technical issue is reported for multiple students during the same test administration on the same day, only one OTISS report should be submitted. However, a list of all students affected should be attached to the OTISS report.

Reports do not need to be entered for students who successfully complete the test despite a technical issue.

Return and storage of test materials for accommodations. Upon completion of test administrations with approved accommodations, test administrators must

- return all completed [Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Form\(s\)](#) to the school test coordinator to keep in the students' Individualized Education Program (IEP) folders, Section 504 Plans, EL Plans, or transitory impairment documentation; and
- return all test materials for accommodations (e.g., original student responses recorded in the test book, and original scribe recordings of student responses if not recorded directly in a test book) to the school test coordinator.

Pack and return paper test materials. Information for district test coordinators about storing, returning, or destroying test materials can be found in [Section J](#) of this handbook. Charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators should refer to [Section K](#) for requirements about storing and returning test materials.

D. Non-Vendor Required State Tests

This section of the handbook includes a brief overview of the tests that are produced and managed by the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing and are required as part of the Annual Testing Program. Additional information about each test can be found in the specific test administration guide. All non-vendor tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on scheduled school days or staff workdays.

- [Beginning-of-Grade 3 \(BOG3\) Reading Test](#)
- [Read to Achieve \(RtA\) Test](#)
- [Grade 3 Reading Retest](#)
- [End-of-Grade \(EOG\) Tests](#)
- [End-of-Course \(EOC\) Tests](#)
- [North Carolina Alternate Assessments](#)

BOG3 Reading Test

Purposes of the Test

[Article 8 Chapter §115C](#) of the General Statutes includes Part 1A, the *North Carolina Read to Achieve Program*. The goal of this program “is to ensure that every student read at or above grade level by the end of third grade and continue to progress in reading proficiency so that he or she can read, comprehend, integrate, and apply complex texts needed for secondary education and career success.” The BOG3 Reading Test is linked to the Read to Achieve (RtA) Program and serves several purposes:

1. It establishes a baseline measure of beginning third-grade students’ reading comprehension.
2. It satisfies the requirements of the RtA legislation for students who score achievement level 3 or higher on the test. Students who are not proficient on the EOG test but were proficient on the BOG3 Reading Test count as proficient in the performance composite and school performance grades.
3. It is used for school accountability growth and student growth for teachers and administrators.
4. It serves as a teacher-growth tool for determining those teachers who are well-suited to teach reading camps ([G.S. §115C-83.3\[4a\]](#)).

Eligible Students

All students in membership at grade 3 (according to the PowerSchool/NCSIS) are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the BOG3 Reading Test. The only exceptions are as follows:

- Students with disabilities who, according to their IEP documentation, participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment in accordance with state policies.
- Transfer students who were administered the BOG3 Reading Test at the former school before moving must not be readministered the test. For school accountability purposes, students must not be tested two or more times with secure statewide tests unless the school system discovers a misadministration.

Testing Formats

All standard administrations of the BOG3 Reading Test must be completed online in NCTest. A paper format is available for students with a documented accessibility need.

Testing Window

- Traditional schools: first fifteen days of the school year (days 1–15)
- Year-round schools: first fifteen days of the school year beginning July 19, 2024

- For year-round schools opening before July 19, 2024: July 19th is day one of the fifteen-day BOG3 test administration window. NCTest does not open until July 19, 2024.
- For year-round schools opening after July 19, 2024: the first day of school is considered the first day of the fifteen-day BOG3 test administration window.

Testing Schedule

- The BOG3 Reading Test must be administered in one day (except for accommodated administrations, such as *Multiple Testing Sessions*).
- Schools do not need to administer the test to all students in grade 3 at the same time on the same day.
- The Annual Testing Program recommends schools schedule the BOG3 Reading Test early in the school day; however, afternoon administrations are permitted. All students, including students with the *Scheduled Extended Time* accommodation, must be allowed to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.
- No BOG3 Reading Test administration may exceed the maximum time allowed (except those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time*).

The BOG3 reading test is structured similarly to the grade 3 EOG reading test and the RtA Test. The test passages are divided into two parts with questions following each part.

Preparing Students for Testing

Before the designated test administration date, teachers must ensure students are familiar with the test format.

- If students are taking the BOG3 Reading Test online, they must complete the [BOG3 reading tutorial](#).
- If students are taking the BOG3 Reading Test on paper, they must complete the BOG3 Reading Test Practice Activity.

Note: There are two online assessment tutorial requirements for third-grade students. Students in grade three must complete the BOG3 online assessment tutorial prior to administration. These students must also complete the grades 3–12 online assessment tutorial prior to the EOG test administration.

RtA Test

Purposes of the Test

[General Statute §115C-83.7\(a\)](#) states that the SBE “shall require that a student be retained in the third 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 third-grade students.” Students may, however, be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause by demonstrating reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the SBE. The Read to Achieve (RtA) Test is a valid and reliable standardized alternative assessment of reading comprehension that has been approved for good cause by the SBE.

Eligible Students

Students who have not satisfied the grade 3 reading proficiency requirements of the RtA law are eligible to take the RtA Test.

Students who have satisfied the requirements of the RtA law through one of the following options, or who have a good cause exemption, are not eligible to participate in the RtA Test.

- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the BOG3 Reading Test.
- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the first administration of the grade 3 EOG Reading Test.
- The student passed the retest of the grade 3 EOG Reading Test.

Testing Formats

All standard administrations of the RtA Test must be completed online in NCTest. A paper format is available for students with a documented accessibility need.

The RtA Test is structured similarly to the BOG3 Reading Test and the grade 3 End-of-Grade Reading Test. The test passages are divided into two parts with questions following each part.

Testing Window

There are three testing windows available for the administration of the RtA Test.

1. Spring—after the first administration of the grade 3 EOG Reading Test during the last ten days of the school year.
 - Schools must offer the RtA Test, the grade 3 EOG Reading retest, or both, to eligible students during the spring window.
2. Summer—at the end of reading camp on a day designated by the PSU.

- Districts, residential schools, and regional schools must offer at least one opportunity for both students participating and not participating in a reading camp to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on the RtA Test, DIBELS 8 reading camp assessment, or the local alternative assessment approved by the SBE. If a student does not demonstrate proficiency on the DIBELS 8 reading camp assessment, the student should be given the opportunity to take RtA Test at the end of reading camp.
 - Charter and lab schools are not required to offer reading camp or the RtA Test at the end of reading camp.
 - Students do not have to attend any instructional days of reading camp to be eligible to take the RtA Test during the summer window. PSUs (not including charter schools) must offer at least one opportunity for students not participating in a reading camp to demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on the RtA Test, or the local alternative assessment approved by the SBE.
3. Fall—by the November 1 midyear promotion of students placed in a transitional third- and fourth- combination class or a fourth-grade accelerated class.
- Schools must offer the RtA Test or the SBE-approved alternative assessment to eligible students during the fall window. Students in a transitional third- and fourth- combination class or a fourth-grade accelerated class can demonstrate proficiency and have the retention label removed by passing the RtA Test, passing the local alternative assessment approved by the SBE, or having evidence of a completed student reading portfolio by November 1.

Testing Schedule

- The RtA Test must be administered in one day (except for administrations involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Multiple Testing Sessions*).
- Schools do not need to administer the test to all eligible students at the same time on the same day.
- The Annual Testing Program recommends schools schedule the RtA Test early in the school day; however, afternoon administrations are permitted. All students, including students with the *Scheduled Extended Time* accommodation, must be allowed to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time.
- No RtA Test administration may exceed the maximum time allowed (except those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as *Scheduled Extended Time*).

Good Cause Exemptions

[General Statute §115C-83.7\(b\)](#) reads, "(Applicable beginning with the 2022-23 school year) Students may be exempt from mandatory retention in third grade for good cause, but shall continue to be eligible to participate in reading camps and receive literacy interventions appropriate for their age and reading level. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:

1. Limited English Proficient students with less than two school years of instruction in an English as a Second Language program.
2. Students with disabilities, as defined in [G.S. §115C-106.3\(1\)](#), and whose individualized education program indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a two school year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive literacy interventions for at least two school years.
3. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on an alternative assessment approved by the State Board of Education.
4. Students who demonstrate, through a student reading portfolio, reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students. Student reading portfolio and review processes used by local school administrative units shall be approved by the State Board of Education.
5. Students who have (i) received literacy interventions and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades."

Schools must determine which students will receive a good cause exemption(s) by the end of the third-grade year. Students with retained reading labels cannot receive good cause exemptions during a transitional third- and fourth- class combination or fourth-grade accelerated class. However, students in a transitional third- and fourth- combination class or a fourth-grade accelerated class can demonstrate proficiency and have the retention label removed by passing the RtA Test, achieving a 725 Lexile on the DIBELS 8 assessment during benchmark period, passing the local alternative assessment approved by the SBE, or by having evidence of a completed student reading portfolio by November 1.

After the November 1 deadline, the student with a retained reading label can complete a reading portfolio, pass the local alternative assessment, achieve a 725 Lexile on the DIBELS 8 assessment during a benchmark period, or pass the grade 4 EOG reading test by the end of the year and have the retained reading label removed.

In rare cases, students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency or condition and are unable to participate in the options used to satisfy requirements of the RtA law may be granted a medical exception. If a student is granted a medical exception for the first

administration of the grade 3 EOG reading test, it becomes the local board's decision as to how the student will progress in accordance with the RtA law.

Students who transfer into a North Carolina school and are enrolled in fourth grade are not held to the requirements of the RtA law and do not need to participate in the fall administration of the RtA test.

Grade 3 Reading Retest

Purposes of the Test

[General Statute §115C-83.7\(a\)](#) states that “the State Board of Education shall require that a student be retained in the third 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 third grade students.” (i.e., EOG test of reading comprehension). “The test may be readministered once prior to the end of the school year.”

Eligible Students

All students enrolled in grade 3 who failed to demonstrate reading proficiency on the first administration of the EOG reading test and have not satisfied the requirements of the Read to Achieve law through another pathway (e.g., qualify for a good cause exemption), may take the test again.

Students who have satisfied the requirements of the Read to Achieve law through one of the following pathways shall not participate in a retest of the grade 3 EOG Reading Test if any of the following apply.

- The student scored achievement level 3 or higher on the BOG3 Reading Test.
- The student passed the RtA Test administered at the end of the third-grade year (after the initial administration of the EOG reading test). Additional information about the Read to Achieve program can be found on the [NCDPI website](#).
- The student qualifies for a good cause exemption. Schools must determine all good cause exemptions no later than the end of the third-grade year. Good cause exemptions shall be limited to the following:
 1. Limited English proficient students with less than two school years of instruction in an English as a second language program.
 2. Students with disabilities, as defined in [G.S. §115C-106.3\(1\)](#), whose current IEP indicates (i) the use of the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment, (ii) at least a two-school-year delay in educational performance, or (iii) receipt of intensive reading interventions for at least two school years.
 - A grade 3 student who qualifies for an IEP after the EOG reading test does not qualify for a good cause exemption. To qualify for this exemption, the IEP must be in place before the student takes the EOG reading test.
 3. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students on the alternative assessment approved by the SBE.

4. Students who demonstrate reading proficiency appropriate for third-grade students through a student reading portfolio. A local student reading portfolio and review process shall be approved by the SBE.
5. Students who have (i) received reading intervention and (ii) previously been retained more than once in kindergarten, first, second, or third grades.

In rare cases, students deemed medically fragile because of a significant medical emergency or condition may be unable to participate in the options used to satisfy requirements of the Read to Achieve law. If the student is granted a medical exception for the first administration of the EOG reading test, it becomes the local board's decision as to how the student will progress in accordance with the Read to Achieve law.

Testing Formats

All standard administrations of the EOG Reading Grade 3 Retest must be completed online in NCTest. A paper format is available for students with a documented accessibility need.

Testing Window

The EOG Reading Grade 3 Retest administrations occur during the last ten days of the school year. When school systems adjust their school schedules due to adverse weather conditions or other emergencies, the testing schedule should be adjusted to still occur within the final ten days of the school year.

Scoring and Reporting

Only scores from the first administration of the EOG reading test are used in school accountability results and school performance grades. Test results from retest administrations are uploaded to PowerSchool/NCSIS; however, they are not used for school accountability reporting.

EOG Tests: Reading and Mathematics Grades 3–8 and Science Grades 5 and 8

Purposes of the Tests

- The grades 3–8 EOG reading and mathematics tests measure students' proficiency on the *North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS)* for reading (adopted by the SBE in April 2017) and mathematics (adopted by the SBE in June 2017).
- The grades 5 and 8 EOG science tests measure students' proficiency on the *NCSCOS*, adopted by the SBE in July 2023.
- Test results for EOG test scores are used for school and district accountability in the accountability model and for federal reporting purposes.

Eligible Students

Reading and mathematics. All students in membership at grades 3–8 (according to PowerSchool/NCSIS), including students who have been retained in grades 3–8, are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the EOG tests in reading and mathematics.

Science. All students in membership at grades 5 and 8 (according to PowerSchool/NCSIS), including students who have been retained in grades 5 and 8, are expected to participate with or without accommodations in the administration of the EOG science tests.

The only exceptions to these eligibility requirements are students with disabilities who, according to their IEP documentation, participate in the NCEXTEND1 alternate assessment.

Off-Level Testing

Off-level testing (e.g., administering the grade 4 EOG test to students not in membership as fourth graders according to PowerSchool/NCSIS) is not permitted.

Testing Formats

All standard administrations of EOGs must be completed online in NCTest. A paper format is available for students with a documented accessibility need.

Testing Window

The EOG tests must be administered during the final ten days of the school year. When school systems adjust their school schedules due to adverse

weather conditions or other emergencies, the testing schedule should be adjusted to still occur within the final ten days of the school year.

TABLE 1. Testing schedule for EOG tests

| Online and Paper Administrations |
|--|
| Testing combinations. All EOG subject testing combinations must be approved by the RAC before they can be used for standard or makeup testing. Combinations of paper and online test administrations in the same room are not permitted. |
| Mixed mode. Students can be administered the EOGs in mixed mode formats. For example, if a student is administered the mathematics test in the paper format, the reading test can be administered in the online format. |
| Non-school day administrations. Testing is only permitted on regular school days during instructional hours or staff workdays. Testing is not permitted after school, on holidays, or on weekends. |
| Consecutive school days. Administrations of the EOG tests do not have to occur on consecutive school days. |
| Administering more than one EOG in one school day. The EOG tests should be administered as early in the school day as the schedule permits. Schools may elect to administer either one or two EOGs in one school day (i.e., reading and science, or mathematics and science, or reading and mathematics); however, caution must be taken when scheduling testing to ensure that the maximum time allowed for these tests does not interfere with lunch or bus schedules. All students must be permitted to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time. |
| Testing window. Schools do not have to test all students in the same grade starting on the same day or the same time, but all students must be tested within the state approved testing window. |
| Exceeding maximum time. No EOG test administration (except for those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as <i>Scheduled Extended Time</i>) may exceed the maximum time allowed. |

EOC Tests: Biology, English II, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3

Purposes of the Tests

The EOC tests are used to measure students' knowledge of subject-related concepts as specified in the NCSCOS for English II, NC Math 1, NC Math 3, and Biology to provide an estimate of the student's mastery of the material in the content area. The EOC tests were initiated in response to the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Reform Act of 1984 passed by the North Carolina General Assembly.

Eligible Students

According to 16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309:

- "(d) PSU students who are enrolled for credit in courses in which an EOC is required shall take the EOC.
- (e) PSU students who are exempt from final exams by local board of education policy shall not be exempt from the required EOC.
- (f) PSU students shall take the EOC the first time the student takes the course requiring the EOC.
- (g) PSU students shall take the EOC at the end of the course regardless of the grade level in which the course is offered.
- (h) PSU students who are identified as failing a course for which an EOC is required shall take the EOC."

Students enrolled for credit in courses in which EOC tests are required and do not have a proficient EOC test score. Students enrolled in courses that require the administration of the EOC test but have not obtained a proficient score on the EOC test prior to enrolling in the course (i.e., student is repeating the course), must take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course.

Students enrolled for credit in courses in which EOC tests are required and have a proficient EOC test score. Students enrolled in courses that require the administration of the EOC test and have obtained a proficient score (i.e., student is repeating the course), "... Level 3, 4, or 5 on the associated EOC assessment may elect either to retake the EOC or use the previous passing EOC score as at least 20% percent of their final grade. If the student retakes the EOC, the higher of the two scores will be used in the calculation of the final grade." (SBE policy CCRE-001).

Advanced Placement (AP) Biology, International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology, Cambridge Biology II, Biology II, and General Biology II courses. Students enrolled in AP Biology, IB Biology, Cambridge Biology II, Biology II, and General Biology II courses must be administered the EOC

Biology Test at the completion of the course with the exception of students who have (1) previously obtained a test score from the EOC test or (2) transferred from out-of-state or from a nonpublic school in which the principal authorized course credit for having participated in the test by recording the appropriate reason code in PowerSchool/NCSIS. Students meeting these exceptions are not eligible to take the EOC Biology Test.

Repeating a course for credit. According to SBE policy CCRE-001, "The term 'repeating a course for credit' ... [refers] to a high school course repeated via any delivery method when the entire ... [NCSCOS] for that course is being taught to the student for a second time. Students are permitted to repeat a course for credit when they have failed a course. [However], local boards of education may develop policies that define specific circumstances when students other than those who fail a course may repeat a course for credit. Students repeating a course for credit shall receive a grade and take the associated End-of-Course (EOC) assessment. Those students who have already scored at Level 3, 4, or 5 on the associated EOC assessment may elect either to retake the EOC or use the previous passing EOC score as at least 20% percent of their final grade. If the student retakes the EOC, the higher of the two scores will be used in the calculation of the final grade. . . . For students who initially fail a high school course and repeat the course for credit, upon completion of the repeated course, the new course grade shall replace the previous grade for the course. When a student repeats a course for credit and passes the course, the student only earns credit towards graduation once."

Credit recovery. Per SBE policy CCRE-001(6), credit recovery refers "to a block of instruction that is less than the entirety of the Standard Course of Study for that course. Credit recovery delivers a subset of the Standard Course of Study or blueprint of the original course in order to specifically address deficiencies in a student's mastery of the course and target specific components of a course necessary for completion. . . . When credit recovery is exercised, the original record of the course being completed and failed will remain on the transcript. The LEA shall allow a grade pass or fail for each credit recovery course. The mark will not affect the student's GPA. . . . The End-of-Course (EOC) exam associated with the credit recovery course may be administered no later than 30 days upon the completion of the credit recovery course."

EOC Results Used as Twenty Percent of the Final Grade

16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309(c) states that "PSUs shall adopt policies and use results from all EOCs as a minimum of twenty percent of the student's final grade for each respective course with the exception of:

1. students whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) created under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 33 U.S.C. 1414, and regulations adopted pursuant to that Act, exclude their EOC results from their final grades;
2. English Learner (EL) students, as defined in 25 CFR 30.101, in their first year in a United States school; or
3. students enrolled in a course during the initial implementation year of the new EOC for that course where proficiency scores are not available due to standard setting."

Withdrawal from an EOC Course

Per 16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309(i), "PSU students may drop a course with an EOC within the first 10 days of enrollment in a semester block schedule or within the first 20 days of enrollment in a yearlong traditional schedule. Students who are enrolled for credit after the 10 or 20 days shall not drop a course with a required EOC and shall participate in the EOC administration at the completion of the course."

Any changes in EOC enrollment after the tenth or twentieth day must follow the Process for Notification of Withdrawals that can be found in the *2024–25 Annual Testing Program and Accountability Requirements* memo. All notifications of withdrawals are to be submitted in accordance with the memo. Any necessary schedule changes for EOC enrollment should take place following notification of the decision from the Office of Accountability and Testing.

Testing Window

Test administrators must administer the EOC test during the last five days (4 x 4, semester courses, and summer school) or the last ten days (traditional yearlong schedule) of the instructional period. When school systems adjust their school schedules due to adverse weather conditions or other emergencies, the testing schedule should be adjusted to still occur within the final five days (4 x 4 or semester) or last ten days (yearlong) of the school year. Any student absent (i.e., not present) from the test administration must make up the test. The PSU test coordinator will specify how tests are to be handled at the school and will schedule dates and times for completing makeup tests in each school so that all makeups are completed within the five- (semester) or ten-day (yearlong) testing window.

Testing Formats

All standard administrations of EOCs (i.e., English II, Biology, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3) must be completed online in NCTest. A paper format is available for students with a documented accessibility need.

PSUs should prioritize scheduling the online administrations of the EOC tests in the following order: English II, NC Math 1, Biology, and NC Math 3 to ensure timely return of test scores.

TABLE 2. Testing schedule for EOC tests

| Online and Paper Administrations |
|--|
| Morning and afternoon administrations. The EOC tests should be administered as early in the school day as the school permits; however, afternoon administrations are permissible. |
| Two tests administered in one school day. Schools are permitted to schedule two EOC test administrations in one day. When scheduling two tests in one day, caution must be taken to ensure that the maximum time allowed for these tests does not interfere with lunch or bus schedules. All students must be permitted to eat lunch during the school day and travel home at their regularly scheduled time. |
| Non-school day administrations. Testing is only permitted on school days during instructional hours or staff workdays. Testing is not permitted after school, on holidays, or on weekends. |
| Combining courses. Different EOC subject tests cannot be administered in the same room. Online and paper EOC tests cannot be administered in the same room. All EOC subject tests and formats must test separately. |
| Exceeding maximum time. No EOC test administration (except for those involving students with documented needs requiring accommodations, such as <i>Scheduled Extended Time</i>) may exceed the maximum time allowed. |

North Carolina Alternate Assessments

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315\(c\)](#), all students with disabilities are required to participate in the statewide testing program by taking either the standard state-mandated tests with or without accommodations or by participating in North Carolina alternate assessments with or without accommodations. To participate in alternate assessments, students must meet specific eligibility criteria established by the Annual Testing Program, and the decision to participate in the alternate assessments must be documented in the students' current IEPs.

NCEXTEND1 Grades 3–8, 10, and 11 Alternate Assessments

The NCEXTEND1 reading and mathematics alternate assessments (grades 3–8 and 10) and the science alternate assessments (grades 5, 8, and 10) measure the *North Carolina Extended Content Standards* adopted by the SBE. The NCEXTEND1 at grade 11 is provided as an alternate to The ACT test as required per [G.S. § 115C-174.11\(c\)\(4\)](#). The grade 11 assessment includes English Language Arts (ELA)/reading, mathematics, and science questions.

NCEXTEND1 Assessor Requirements

All NCEXTEND1 assessors must:

- have training in the specific content area being assessed and the contents of the alternate assessment administration guide,
- be familiar with the *North Carolina Extended Content Standards*,
- be the student's primary teacher for the assessed content area, and
- have routine contact with the student during classroom instruction.

College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessments (CCRAA) at Grades 10 and 11

The CCRAA at grades 10 and 11 are available for students with disabilities who are following a course of study that, upon completion of high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree. The CCRAA at grade 10 is an alternate assessment for the PreACT; the CCRAA at grade 11 is an alternate assessment for The ACT.

For additional information about the NCEXTEND1 grades 3–8, 10, and 11 Alternate Assessments, or the CCRAA at grades 10 and 11, refer to the [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#).

WIDA Alternate ACCESS

For information about the WIDA Alternate ACCESS assessment, refer to the [WIDA Assessments section](#) of this handbook.

E. Required State Tests Provided by Vendors

This section of the handbook includes a brief overview of the tests that are required as part of the Annual Testing Program and provided to schools by external vendors. Additional test administration information, testing policies, test security, and training requirements for vendor tests are specified in vendor test administration manuals and resources. Vendor tests included as part of the Annual Testing Program may be subject to different training requirements for testing staff than state tests. School test coordinators should consult the vendor's test administration publications for specific guidance on permitted training practices. In situations where test administrators only administer vendor tests, they are not required to complete the *Online Policies and Procedures Training Course* provided by the Annual Testing Program.

All tests required as part of the Annual Testing Program must be administered during instructional hours on school days. The exception to this requirement applies to the WIDA Screener because schools may elect to screen newcomers and kindergarten students up to 30 days before the school year begins.

The school test coordinator must manage and monitor all state vendor tests (WIDA Screen for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener Online, ACCESS for ELLs, WIDA Alternate ACCESS, PreACT, The ACT, and ACT WorkKeys) and must be accessible to test administrators during all state test administrations. School test coordinators (and site coordinators, where applicable) must not be given the responsibility of administering or proctoring a test.

The required state tests provided by vendors include the following:

- [WIDA Assessments](#)
 - [WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#)
 - [WIDA Screener Online](#)
 - [ACCESS for ELLs®](#)
 - [WIDA Alternate ACCESS](#)
- [ACT Assessments](#)
 - [PreACT](#)
 - [The ACT](#)
 - [ACT WorkKeys](#)

WIDA Assessments

Participation in the Annual Testing Program

Per SBE policy [TEST-011\(II, A\)](#), "students identified as ELs shall participate in the statewide testing program using either the standard test administration or the standard test administration with accommodations." The SBE shall adopt "tests for grades three through 12 that are required by federal law or as a condition of a federal grant. These tests shall be designed to measure progress toward reading, communication skills, and mathematics for grades three through eight, and toward competencies for grades nine through 12"([G.S. § 115C-174.11\[c\]\[1\]](#)).

Identification of English Learners

Per SBE policy TEST-011, "to be identified as English Learners (ELs), students indicating a language other than English on the Home Language Survey (HLS) must be assessed using the state EL identification test at initial enrollment. Thereafter, all students identified as ELs must be annually assessed using the state EL proficiency test."

WIDA Screener for Kindergarten

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten is the state-identified EL proficiency identification test given to students in kindergarten and in the first semester of grade 1.

WIDA Screener Online

The WIDA Screener Online is the state-designated EL proficiency identification test given to students in grade 1 (second semester) through grade 12.

Screener Administration Window

Initial assessment of both the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten and the WIDA Screener Online is required within thirty calendar days of enrollment. Note: PSUs and schools also have the option to initially assess language-minority students up to thirty calendar days before the start of school.

WIDA Screener Paper

The WIDA Screener is available in paper format; however, the paper format is permissible only to individual students with disabilities who have documented accommodations in their IEPs or Section 504 Plans that dictate a paper format is necessary for accessibility. Test materials must be requested through and approved by the RAC.

ACCESS for ELLs®

The ACCESS for ELLs is the state-designated EL proficiency test administered annually to kindergarten through twelfth-grade students who have been identified as ELs.

Test design. All students identified as ELs are administered four domain tests (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) annually, during the state-designated testing window.

Testing window. Annual testing must occur during the state-designated testing window, which is January 13, 2025–March 14, 2025.

Paper tests. Online administration is required for ACCESS for ELLs testing; however, the paper format is permissible for individual students with disabilities who have documented accommodations in their IEPs or Section 504 Plans that dictate a paper format is necessary for accessibility. Note: Kindergarten ACCESS is only available in paper format.

WIDA Alternate ACCESS. The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is the alternate assessment for the ACCESS test. The WIDA Alternate ACCESS is for students in grades 1–12 who are identified as ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevents meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs test. Additional information on the WIDA Alternate ACCESS can be found at <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/alt-access> or located in the [*Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook*](#) or the [*Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners*](#) publication.

Test Administrator Training

The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, WIDA Screener (online and paper), ACCESS for ELLs, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS training courses are not provided by the Annual Testing Program; they are provided by the vendor in the WIDA Secure Portal. Each training course has specific certification requirements. Test administrators must obtain certification annually for each test administered during the test window. Certification includes the completion of the specific training course, all associated modules, and any quizzes. For example, if a test administrator will test (1) EL students who are kindergartners, (2) online test takers in grades 1–12, and WIDA Alternate ACCESS test takers in grades 1–12, the test administrator must be fully certified for the following:

- Kindergarten ACCESS
- Online ACCESS for ELLs grades 1–12
- WIDA Alternate ACCESS

School test coordinators are responsible for ensuring test administrators are certified for each test and mode administered prior to the opening of the annual test window. Refer to the [North Carolina State Specific Guidance for WIDA Assessments](#) for training specifics for each assessment.

ACT Assessments

All North Carolina tenth graders take the PreACT, eleventh graders take The ACT, and students who are identified as Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators take the ACT WorkKeys assessment.

PreACT

- The PreACT is administered annually to all eligible tenth graders via paper or online format. Test format is a local decision.
- The PreACT is a state required test per [G.S. § 115C-174.22](#).
- The PreACT simulates The ACT testing experience. It is shorter than The ACT but has the same four subtests: English, reading, math, and science.
- The multiple-choice test is designed to provide both current achievement scores and projected ACT test scores on the 1–36 ACT score scale.
- Detailed reports help to identify students' specific strengths and weaknesses. Additional reporting includes science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), career readiness, and understanding complex texts.
- The PreACT assessment is designed to help parents or legal guardians and educators identify areas where students may need additional academic support or remediation during the tenth-grade year.
- The PreACT can help initiate conversations between parents or legal guardians and schools regarding dual enrollment decisions, identifying curriculum gaps, implementing interventions on behalf of students, and choosing AP classes.
- The test administration window for the PreACT is October 7, 2024–November 15, 2024.

The ACT

- The ACT is a required state assessment for all eligible eleventh graders per [G.S. § 115C-174.11\(4\)](#). (Retained eleventh graders who do not have a score from their first year in eleventh grade are expected to test during the state-sponsored administration of The ACT during their second year in eleventh grade.)
- The ACT is a curriculum- and standards-based assessment that evaluates students' college and career readiness in English, mathematics, reading, and science.
- Each section of The ACT is multiple-choice and is scored on a 1–36 point scale. The composite score is the average of the four subject test sections.
- The ACT may be used for college admissions, placement, and scholarships. It is accepted by most colleges and universities in the United States.
- The ACT provides a path to increase student access to postsecondary and workforce opportunities.

- Additional reporting includes STEM, career readiness, and understanding complex texts.

Test dates for The ACT. Three test dates and windows are available for spring 2025 testing. Refer to table 3 for The ACT test dates.

- Schools are expected to offer both an initial and makeup test date.
- It is recommended that test date one and window one are used for the initial test date(s) and test dates two and three and test windows two and three are reserved for makeup test dates.
- No additional test dates will be available, and schools should plan accordingly.

TABLE 3. Spring 2025 test dates for The ACT

| Spring 2025 Test Dates for The ACT | Test Date 1 | Test Date 2 | Test Date 3 |
|---|---|--|---|
| Paper Testing: Standard Administration | March 11, 2025 | March 25, 2025 | April 8, 2025 |
| Paper Testing: Accommodations Windows | March 11–14 and March 17–21, 2025 | March 25–28, March 31, and April 1–4, 2025 | April 8–11 and April 14– 18, 2025 |
| Online Testing: Standard and Accommodations Windows | March 11–14 and March 17–21, 2025 | March 25–28, March 31, and April 1–4, 2025 | April 8–11 and April 14– 18, 2025 |

Results from the statewide administrations of The ACT are available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/act-reports>.

ACT WorkKeys

- The WorkKeys assessments are required for all eligible CTE concentrators per [G.S. § 115C-174.25](#).
- The three WorkKeys assessments, Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents, are the basis of the WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate (WorkKeys NCRC).
- The Applied Math test measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning, and problem-solving techniques for situations that occur in today's workplace.
- The Graphic Literacy test measures the skills needed to locate, synthesize, and use information from workplace graphics. Workplace graphics come in a variety of formats, but all communicate a level of information. From charts to graphs, diagrams to floor plans, identifying what information is being presented and understanding how to use it are critical to success.
- The Workplace Documents test measures the skills people use when they read and use written text such as memos, letters, directions, signs, notices, bulletins, policies, and regulations on the job. The assessment is defined through a combination of the text complexity level of a reading passage and the skill elicited by the item.
- Students who achieve qualifying scores on the Applied Math, Graphic Literacy, and Workplace Documents assessments can earn a WorkKeys NCRC at the Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels of readiness. The nationally recognized certificate provides employers with information on the skill levels of potential employees and aids with employment, promotion, and training decisions.
- The WorkKeys standard and accommodated testing windows are as follows:
 - Fall 2024: November 4, 2024–December 6, 2024
 - Spring 2025: February 10, 2025–March 14, 2025
- All WorkKeys testing must be administered online unless a paper format is necessary for students with a documented need for accessibility purposes. Paper test materials must be ordered through ACT during the appropriate test material ordering window.
- Results from the statewide administrations of WorkKeys are available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/act-reports>.

F. National Assessment of Educational Progress

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative and continuing assessment of what America's students know and can do in various subject areas. The NAEP has two types of assessments, main and long-term trend. Main assessments are conducted in a range of subjects with fourth, eighth, and twelfth graders across the country. Assessments are given most frequently in mathematics, reading, science, and writing. Other subjects, such as the arts, civics, economics, geography, and U.S. History, are assessed periodically.

Long-term trend (LTT) assessments measure student performance in reading and mathematics, using some questions repeatedly to ensure comparability across the years. The LTT assessments allow the performance of today's students to be compared with those from more than forty years ago and inform the development of new assessment instruments that reflect current educational content and assessment methodology. The LTT assessments are administered every four years.

Since NAEP assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test questions across the nation, NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and select urban districts. The assessments stay the same from year to year, with only carefully documented changes. This uniformity permits the NAEP to provide a clear picture of student academic progress over time.

Participation and Sampling

In accordance with the ESSA, NAEP administrations in reading and mathematics (which began in 2003) are required at grades 4 and 8 every other year in all states. In North Carolina, [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(i\)](#) requires all selected schools to participate in the NAEP; however, at the student level, participation in the NAEP is voluntary. ESSA allows either students, parents or legal guardians to refuse to participate.

For each main NAEP administration, a sample of students is drawn from both public and nonpublic schools at grades 4, 8, and 12. (ESSA requires reading and mathematics assessments at grade 12 on a nationally representative basis at a minimum of every four years.) For each LTT assessment, a sample of students at ages 9, 13, and 17 is drawn from both public and nonpublic schools. All sampling for the NAEP assessments is conducted at the national level. The sample of schools and students is chosen in a two-stage sampling process. First, the sample of schools is selected by probability sampling methods. Then, within the participating schools, random samples of students are chosen.

To ensure the integrity of the NAEP, every effort must be made to include selected students in the test administrations. The NCDPI recommends IEP teams and Section 504 committees use the accommodation(s) listed in the District and State Assessment section of the respective plans during the administration of the NAEP. Although the NAEP is a required assessment for schools, students' scores are not included in the school's accountability results. Using the documented accommodations listed in the *District and State-Assessment* section of the IEPs and Section 504 Plans will provide increased access for students with disabilities.

NAEP accommodation procedures. The IEP team or Section 504 committee refers to the accommodations listed in the District Assessment section of the plan and determines if those accommodations are appropriate and allowable according to the NAEP guidelines. To determine the allowable accommodations according to the test publisher (i.e., the National Center for Education Statistics), contact the school test coordinator for the most recent list of approved accommodations designated by the NAEP.

If the team or committee determines, after consulting with the school test coordinator, that a student cannot access the NAEP, a student may be excluded from participating in the administration of the NAEP. Before excluding a student based on an accommodation need, the school test coordinator is to send an email to the North Carolina NAEP State Coordinator, Dr. Andrea Faulkner, at Andrea.Faulkner@dpi.nc.gov. The email should include the school's name, the school test coordinator's contact information, and a summary of the student's accommodation needs. Confidential student-identifying information should not be included in the email. The NAEP State Coordinator will review the email and respond with a follow-up email or phone call to discuss the student's accommodation needs.

The NCDPI is committed to including as many students as possible in the NAEP. The NAEP results for North Carolina should represent the entire student population. The IEP team and the Section 504 committee should consider ways to offer accommodations for students to enable participation in NAEP, and every effort should be made to identify an accommodation that will facilitate students' participation. The NAEP publicly reports highlight results at the state level. Student and school reports are never shared publicly.

NAEP Test Results

The NAEP test results include data on subject-matter achievement, instructional experiences, and school environment for populations of students (e.g., all fourth graders) and groups within those populations (e.g., female students, Hispanic students). The NAEP does not provide scores for

individual students or schools, although states can report NAEP results for selected, large urban districts. NAEP results are based on representative samples of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the main assessments or samples of students at ages 9, 13, and 17 years for the LLT assessments. These grades and ages were selected because they represent critical junctures in academic achievement.

NAEP Assessment Schedule

All Trial Urban District Assessments (TUDA), main, and state assessments take place from mid-January through March. All LLT assessments take place from October through May. Results for NAEP assessments are reported in [The Nation's Report Card](#). Results are published for math, reading, science, and writing assessments six months to a year after the assessment is complete.

Additional Information on NAEP

More information about NAEP is available on the following websites:

- <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>,
- <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/schools.aspx>, and
- <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/state-tests/national-assessment-educational-progress-naep>

G. Preparation for the Test Administration

Annual Testing Plans

The PSU must ensure an annual, written testing plan is developed and distributed to the school(s) before the beginning of the school year. The plan must include, but is not limited to, rules for test administrator training, test security, proper testing environment, secure test administrations, test administration audits, and preparation and return of secure test materials. Plans should also be available in electronic format and include "sample" documents that are used as supports for the testing plan. An electronic copy of the testing plan must be submitted annually to the RAC. See Appendix E of this handbook for a sample [*Public School Unit Annual Testing Plan*](#).

School Testing Environment

All test administrations must be conducted in a fair and uniform manner. It is essential the scores for all tests represent the best estimate of the students' knowledge and mastery of the concepts. All rooms designated for testing must be quiet, orderly, and comfortable, with adequate seating, lighting, and heating or cooling.

Some teachers use flexible seating options in their classrooms such as, standing desks, stability and yoga balls, sitting on the floor, sitting on a couch, or sitting on a floor mat at a table. If the students use flexible seating options in the classroom on a regular basis, and PSU test coordinators would like to use these rooms for testing, permission must be granted from the RAC. If approved, students must be positioned appropriately for testing so that they are unable to see each other's tests.

The Annual Testing Program strongly discourages large-scale administrations (e.g., those that occur in a library or cafeteria) that include large groups (multiple classes) of students. If testing is to take place in a facility other than a classroom, special effort may be required to establish and maintain a standardized testing environment and maintain security of the tests.

Visitors to the classroom are prohibited during the test administration except when required for state or local monitoring of test administrations or under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations).

During all administrations of North Carolina tests, displaying information regarding content measured or test-taking strategies in any manner or form in the room, whether printed or attached to student desks or devices, may result in a misadministration. These displays must be covered or removed. Examples include, "Tips for Taking Tests" displays, word lists, thinking maps,

word walls, definitions, writing formulas, multiplication tables, number lines, and mathematical formulas and theorems. Test administrators must contact the school test coordinator before the test administration if they have questions related to the testing environment.

Monitoring Students during Test Administrations

A primary responsibility of the test administrator is to monitor the test administration. Each student must complete the test without assistance for the scores to reflect the student's ability. During training, test administrators must be made aware of the types of student assistance they are permitted to provide during the test. More information about how test administrators should monitor students during testing can be found in the [*Testing Security Protocol and Procedures for School Personnel*](#) publication.

Test Forms

Different versions of a test are assigned to students. All test forms are equated statistically and are aligned to the same content blueprint so that comparisons of performance within and across test administrations can be made.

Test Materials

Paper format for documented needs. All students with a documented need for a paper format will mark their answers in the test book. When testing is complete, the test administrator or principal's designee will transcribe the student's answers from the test book to the online testing system. Additional information about the transcription process is located in the [*Transcription Instructions*](#) subsection of this handbook.

Test administrations guides. Test administrators must use a paper copy of the appropriate test administration guide when conducting test sessions unless otherwise directed by a vendor.

Distribution of test materials. The PSU test coordinator provides schools with the test materials specified in the appropriate test administration guide. In turn, school test coordinators provide test administrators with the appropriate test administration materials. Test administrators must be provided with a paper version of the test administration guide before administering the test and follow the instructions in the guide when distributing materials to students. All other test materials must be distributed to test administrators immediately before each test administration and returned to the principal or school test coordinator at the end of each test administration. Test administrators are responsible for test security while materials are in their care.

To administer tests in a fair and equitable manner, only the testing materials that are specified in the appropriate test administration guide or are part of an approved accommodation or designated feature are allowed during the test administration.

Except for scratch paper, graph paper, periodic tables, writing utensils, and student access codes (if used), the test administrator should not give students additional materials during the test administration, unless they are materials associated with an accommodation or a designated feature, without the prior written consent of the Annual Testing Program. Only supplemental materials specified in the appropriate test administration guide (or published supplements or updates) may be used during the test administration. Students must turn off and appropriately store all cell phones and other electronic devices during the test administration. Books, bookmarks, multiplication tables, notes, number lines, cameras, cell phones, personal learning devices, personal computers (if not used for testing), smart glasses, smart pens, smartwatches, or anything not approved by the Annual Testing Program are prohibited during the administration of any test. Students are not permitted to use electronic reading devices while there are students still testing in the same room.

At no time are proctors to be alone with secure test materials, including devices with tests open on the screen (e.g., start screen, pause screen, questions displayed). Proctors must not pick up test materials from or return test materials to the school test coordinator at the beginning or the end of testing. Every effort must be made to minimize unauthorized access to secure state tests before and after each test administration.

Calculator Use

Students should use calculators that are routinely used during classroom instruction and on classroom tests during the school year when taking state tests. Students who routinely use more than one calculator during classroom activities may be permitted to use more than one calculator during the test administration. Students may use calculators with more than the minimum requirements (e.g., fraction keys, graphing capabilities), if those additional features are not prohibited. However, school systems should be cautioned that the use of these features without prior training may confuse students and adversely affect their performance during the test administration. An online calculator is available for students testing online. The online calculator meets the minimum calculator requirements for the specific test. Both a scientific calculator and a graphing calculator are available online for grade 8 mathematics. A handheld calculator is not required for online test administrations; however, students who routinely use a handheld calculator during classroom instruction and on similar classroom tests or have not had

enough practice using the online calculator should be provided a handheld calculator during the test administration. A student may also require a handheld calculator for accessibility purposes, when appropriate.

The online calculators available during state testing can be found at the links provided below.

- four-function calculator
<https://www.desmos.com/testing/northcarolina/fourfunction>
- scientific calculator www.desmos.com/testing/northcarolina/scientific
- graphing calculator www.desmos.com/testing/northcarolina/graphing
- calculator practice environment
<https://data.ncsu.edu/nctest/Tutorial.html#StudentSignIn>

All online calculators are free to use and are accessible for students who are visually impaired or blind. For more information, visit www.desmos.com/accessibility.

Calculator restrictions. Students are not allowed to share calculators during test administrations, nor are they allowed to use calculators with the following functionalities:

- calculators with wireless communication technologies (e.g., Bluetooth, Infrared, or Wi-Fi),
- calculators with built-in computer algebraic systems (CAS) capable of doing symbolic algebra (e.g., factoring, expanding, or simplifying given variable output) or symbolic calculus,
- calculators built into cell phones or other electronic communication devices (Cell phones and electronic devices are not permitted during state test administrations.),
- calculators in pen input or stylus-driven devices (e.g., palm-based devices, tablets, laptops, notebooks, computers),
- calculators requiring access to an electrical outlet (except for students approved via an [Accommodation Request Form](#)),
- calculators that make noises of any kind that cannot be disabled (except for students approved via an *Accommodation Request Form*),
- calculators that use a QWERTY (typewriter-style) keyboard, or
- calculators that use paper tape.

Students requiring the use of a calculator via a handheld device (e.g., tablet or notebook computer) or laptop must be approved via an *Accommodation Request Form*. Pocket organizers with a calculator function are not permitted.

The following list includes calculators not permitted for use on North Carolina tests. The list is not all-inclusive. If the PSU or school test coordinator

believes calculator brands other than those listed below may need to be restricted, then the RAC must be contacted for confirmation before excluding them.

- Texas Instruments: All model numbers that begin with TI-89 or TI-92, Voyage 200, Nspire CAS (TI-Nspire CX CAS and TI-Nspire CAS with touchpad).
- Hewlett-Packard: HP 48GII and all models that begin with HP 40G, HP 49G, or HP 50G.
- Casio: Algebra fx 2.0, ClassPad 300, and all models that begin with CFX-9970G.
- virtual calculators, downloaded calculators, calculator apps.
- calculators accessible by desktop, laptop, or other devices (e.g., iPad and Chromebook).

Texas Instruments TI-Nspire calculators without CAS are allowed only in the following two cases:

1. with the TI-84 Plus keypad, or
2. with the Nspire keypad using operating system 1.7 or higher with both "limit geometry functions" and "disable function grab and move" invoked in Press-to-Test mode.

NumWorks calculators are allowed if using operating system 21.1.0 or higher with "Exact results," "Equation solver," and "Grapher details" disabled in Press-to-Test mode.

Before beginning and immediately following a test administration that requires calculator use, the test administrator or principal's designee must clear the calculator memory and all applications (including preloaded) from all calculators that will be used during each administration of the test. Only the test administrator or principal's designee is permitted to carry out this procedure. Procedures for clearing the calculator memory (including standard memory, ROM, and Flash ROM) that are appropriate for the specific calculator model(s) must be used. The test administrator or principal's designee should use caution when clearing calculators because different calculators require different procedures. In some cases, the calculator's memory and applications are cleared or disabled and in others, they are permanently deleted.

Because the memory and all applications must be cleared and all data stored in the calculator erased, students who wish to use their own calculators must be told before test day to back up all data and programs that they wish to save. After the test administration, the test administrator or principal's designee should enable the memory and applications of the students' calculators.

Comprehensive clearing procedures for calculators most frequently used in the state are available in the applicable test administration guides. In addition, major calculator vendors have support teams who assist test administrators in clearing calculators. Vendor contact information can be obtained through the PSU test coordinator.

Minimum Calculator Requirements

The minimum calculator requirements for each state test that requires calculator use are listed in table 4. Additional features (e.g., fraction keys, graphing capabilities) are permitted, but are not required. The NCDPI does not endorse any brand of calculator.

TABLE 4. Minimum calculator requirements

| Test | Minimum (At Least) Calculator Requirements |
|---|--|
| EOG mathematics grades 3–5 | four-function calculator with memory key |
| EOG mathematics grades 6–7 | any four-function calculator with a square root function, y^x , π (pi), and algebraic logic (scientific) |
| EOG mathematics grade 8 | a graphing calculator and any four-function calculator with a square root function, y^x , π (pi), and algebraic logic (scientific) |
| EOC NC Math 1 and NC Math 3 | graphing calculator |
| NCEXTEND1 mathematics grades 6–8, NC Math 1 at grade 10, and grade 11 | four-function calculator with memory key |
| CCRAA grades 10 and 11 | four-function calculator with memory key |

For additional information on the Annual Testing Program's calculator requirements, refer to the *North Carolina Calculator Requirements Assessment Brief*, available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/testing-policy-and-operations/assessment-briefs>.

Instruction Before Test Day

During the school year, teachers should provide instruction that meets or exceeds the state-adopted content standards to give students an opportunity to learn the objectives measured by the tests.

Before the designated test administration date, and according to the *Testing Code of Ethics*, teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by “(1) helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content, (2) teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions, (3) helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests, and (4) using resource materials, such as test questions from test item banks and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.”

Before the day of the test, teachers should explain to students that the test administrator (and proctor, if utilized) will move quietly and frequently throughout the room to scan the students' work areas to ensure students are following the test directions. While monitoring online and paper test administrations, test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) are not to read test questions from students' test books or from devices with test questions displayed on the screen, nor are they to take photographs of, or notes about the test questions, or otherwise create a record of information contained within them. Test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) must be made aware of what they can and cannot do to assist students during the test administration.

Teachers must not jeopardize the security of the test forms. Teachers are not permitted to discuss specific questions from the tests with students or colleagues before, during, or after the test administration or to ask students questions about the test. If students approach a teacher to ask about a test question(s), teachers should remind them that they are not permitted to share any of the test questions or information contained within the test or to write about them on the internet or on social media. Teachers must not use test questions or information from students as the basis for additional instruction or review. Instead, teachers should provide instruction and review on the state-adopted content standards. Excerpts from the tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides.

Notifying Parents or Legal Guardians of Required State Tests

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(g\)](#), “LEAs shall, at the beginning of each school year, provide information to students and parents or legal guardians advising them of the districtwide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year. In addition, LEAs shall advise students and parents or guardians of the dates the tests will be administered and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents shall include whether the State Board of Education or the local board of education requires the test(s).”

On days before testing, the school should inform the students and parents or legal guardians about the purpose of the test and that students:

- are scheduled to take a test(s) that will gauge their knowledge and mastery of skills as specified in the state-adopted content standards.
- should attempt each question or prompt on the test.
- should bring a writing utensil.
- should not bring books, bookmarks, multiplication tables, notes, number lines, cameras, cell phones, personal learning devices, personal computers (if not used for testing), smart glasses, smart pens, smartwatches, or anything not approved by the Annual Testing Program during the administration of any test.
- should bring a novel or other reading material (e.g. magazines) that is not a textbook or contains instructional content to read after they complete the test administration.
- are not permitted to use electronic reading devices while there are students still testing in the same room.

Suspended Students

Short-term suspension. According to [G.S. § 115C-390.5](#), "the principal shall have authority to impose short-term suspension on a student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct authorizing short-term suspension. . . . A student subject to short-term suspension shall be provided the following:

- the opportunity to take textbooks home for the duration of the suspension;
- upon request, the right to receive all missed assignments and, to the extent practicable, the materials distributed to students in connection with the assignment; and
- the opportunity to take any quarterly, semester, or grading period examinations missed during the suspension period."

Students with short-term suspensions are required to take the appropriate state-mandated test(s). The school must arrange to test these students in a location (e.g., central office) that is mutually agreeable to the school and the parents or legal guardians. The school test coordinator must ensure test security is maintained and all procedures contained in the test administration guide are followed throughout the test administration(s).

Long-term suspension. According to [G.S. § 115C-390.7](#), "a principal may recommend to the superintendent the long-term suspension of any student who willfully engages in conduct that violates a provision of the Code of Student Conduct that authorizes long-term suspension. Only the superintendent has the authority to long-term suspend a student."

The PSU decides if it will provide students with long-term suspensions the opportunity to take the appropriate state-mandated test(s); however, a long-term suspended student who is still enrolled in the school and is not tested will count against school participation rates.

If the opportunity is provided, the school must arrange to test these students in a location (e.g., central office) that is mutually agreeable to the school and the parents or legal guardians. The school test coordinator must ensure test security is maintained and all procedures contained in the test administration guide(s) are followed throughout the test administration(s). If a long-term suspended student is still enrolled in the school and is tested, the test results will be official and will be included in the student's record and in accountability results.

Hospital and Homebound Testing

PSUs must establish policies and procedures for providing hospital and homebound services to public school students who are temporarily confined at home or in a health care facility. PSUs must ensure that students who receive hospital and homebound services participate in all state-required test administrations. Medical exceptions may be submitted, if appropriate. (All medical exceptions must be approved by the Annual Testing Program.) For accountability purposes, the test results of a hospital or homebound student must be included in the accountability results at the base school.

Hospital or home testing is subject to the same policies and procedures and test security as in-school test administrations.

It is recommended that two, trained school staff members are present on-site for the test administration. It is a local decision as to which staff members are assigned to the off-site test administration.

For vendor tests, additional procedures and measures of test security may be required. Schools should consult testing resources from the vendor for specific guidance.

Scheduling. Hospital and homebound testing must occur during the state-designated testing windows.

Training. Staff members administering a test to a hospitalized or homebound student must be included in the school's test administrator training and must review the test administration guide before the test administration. The PSU test coordinator is to be contacted if there are any questions regarding the test administration.

Before test day. The test administrator or the school test coordinator must ensure the parent or guardian is aware of the following testing policies and procedures as they relate to test security and the testing environment:

- For the protection of both the student and the teacher, the presence of a responsible adult is required on-site (not in the testing room).
- If a parent, guardian, or other responsible adult is not present on-site, then the test administrator must terminate the testing session.
- The parent, guardian, or responsible adult must stay on-site for the entirety of the test session.
- All pets, except for service animals, should be confined before the arrival of the school staff.
- Home security system cameras must not record the test session.

Test day.

- During the test, only the test administrator, the proctor (if utilized), and the student being assessed are permitted in the testing room.
- Under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations, medical treatment breaks) the parent, guardian, or responsible adult may enter the testing room.
- If a test administration must be paused because of a bathroom break or emergency, the test administrator must follow the procedures in the test administration guide for taking a break. Test materials must always remain secure.
- Electronic devices, cell phones, recording, listening, scanning, or photographic devices are prohibited in the testing room.
- The testing room should be quiet, without outside interruptions, and have appropriate supplies (e.g., table, chair).
- An effort should be made to eliminate any distractions during the test administration (e.g., doorbells, televisions, music, telephones, outside noises, siblings, pets).

Note: There may be unique circumstances that dictate the need for testing to occur outside the hospital or home setting. Test administration location decisions must be made on an individual basis. The location, such as a library conference room or a school office, should be mutually agreed upon by the school and the parent or guardian. The hospital or homebound teacher or the test administrator is not required to transport the student anywhere for testing purposes.

Materials. The test administrator must check out test materials from the school test coordinator, administer the test on the designated test date, and return the materials to the test coordinator at the end of testing each day. Test materials must not be checked out overnight. All materials must be accounted for each day.

Note: On the day of a test administration, the test administrator must notify the school test coordinator immediately of any change in the student's status or in the home or hospital conditions that may necessitate rescheduling or cancelling the test administration.

Testing in a North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center

PSUs must establish policies and procedures for providing services to public school students who are temporarily confined in a North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center (NCJDC). Students are often still listed on base school enrollment when served by a NCJDC and then move into the school enrollment of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention after adjudication. PSUs must ensure that students who are housed in NCJDCs participate in all state-required test administrations. Medical exceptions may be submitted, if appropriate. For accountability purposes, the test results for a student in a NCJDC must be included in the accountability results at the base school. Testing in a NCJDC is subject to the same policy and procedures as school-based test administrations.

Scheduling. Testing must occur during the state-designated testing windows.

Training. Staff members administering a test in a NCJDC must be included in the school's test administrator training and must review the test administration guide before the test administration. The PSU test coordinator is to be contacted if there are any questions regarding the test administration. It is recommended that two, trained school staff members are present on-site for the test administration. It is a local decision as to which staff members are assigned to the NCJDC test administration.

Test day. During the test, only the test administrator, the proctor (if utilized), or an additional trained school staff member, and the student being assessed are permitted in the testing room. Under extreme circumstances (i.e., emergency situations, medical treatment breaks) another adult may enter the testing room.

If a test administration must be paused because of a bathroom break or emergency, the test administrator must follow the procedures in the test administration guide for taking a break. Test materials must remain secure at all times.

The testing room should be quiet, without outside interruptions, and have appropriate supplies (e.g., table, chair). An effort should be made to eliminate any possible distractions during the test administration.

Materials. The test administrator must check out test materials from the school test coordinator, administer the test on the designated test date, and return the materials to the test coordinator at the end of testing each day. Test materials must not be checked out overnight. All materials must be accounted for each day.

Note: On the day of a test administration, the test administrator must notify the school test coordinator immediately of any change in the student's status that may necessitate rescheduling or cancelling the test administration.

Unexpected School Closings, Inclement Weather, or Student Dismissals and Testing Requirements

Unexpected school closures and student dismissals are determined locally. The NCDPI recognizes the health and safety of the school community comes first. In the event a PSU is unable to administer state tests according to designated testing windows because of unexpected school closings, inclement weather, or student dismissals, the PSU should adhere to the following procedures:

1. The PSU test coordinator must notify the RAC of the school closing, impending weather condition, or student dismissal.
2. State tests should be rescheduled as soon as possible after the school returns to a normal schedule.
3. The PSU must submit all scores to the NCDPI by the data submission deadline unless an exception is requested and granted.
 - a. The PSU may request an extension for submitting scores if it has evidence that shows the unexpected school closing, inclement weather, or dismissal affected its ability to meet the NCDPI data submission deadline. The PSU superintendent, principal, or director must submit the request via receipted mail to the Senior Director of the Office of Testing and Accountability at the following address:

Tammy Howard, Senior Director
Office of Accountability and Testing
NC Department of Public Instruction
6307 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

The request must include the following information:

- the name of the PSU,
- the PSU code,
- an explanation why the unexpected school closing, inclement weather, or student dismissal affected the ability to submit scores by the NCDPI data submission deadline, and

- the earliest date when all scores can be submitted to the NCDPI.

The superintendent, PSU test coordinator, principal or director is to contact the RAC with any questions regarding these procedures.

PreACT, The ACT, and WorkKeys testing.

Paper ACT test dates. In the event a PSU is unable to administer the paper ACT tests on the designated testing day because of unexpected school closing, inclement weather, or student dismissals, the PSU must reschedule testing on one of the remaining ACT permitted paper test dates. If no additional ACT permitted paper test dates are available, the PSU should contact their RAC.

Testing Windows. The online PreACT, the paper PreACT, online ACT, ACT with accommodations, and WorkKeys assessments are tested within a testing window. Extensions are not granted to these testing windows for any reason.

Testing Window

Per [G.S. § 115C-174.12\(a\)\(4\)](#), "all annual assessments of student achievement adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-174.11\(c\)\(1\)](#) and (3). . . shall be administered within the final ten instructional days of the school year for yearlong courses and within the final five instructional days of the semester for semester courses. Exceptions shall be permitted to accommodate a student's individualized education program and section 504 (29 U.S.C § 794) plans and for the administration of final exams for courses with national or international curricula required to be held at designated times."

All state-mandated tests have a designated test date or testing window. The testing window is outlined in the [North Carolina Operational Testing Calendar](#), which is posted on the NCDPI's Accountability and Testing website. Failing to administer the secure tests on the test date or during the testing window designated by the Annual Testing Program results in a testing irregularity.

Request to Test a Student Outside the Testing Window

Schools should make every effort to test all students in the testing window. If a student is absent on the day his or her test is scheduled, the school should make every effort to ensure the student makes-up the test within the approved window. However, there are certain circumstances that may require a student to test outside of the window. For more information about the testing outside the window procedure, PSU test coordinators should contact their regional accountability office.

English Learners' First Year in United States (US) Schools

State Board policy [ACCT-021 \(1\)\(D\)\(1\)](#), states that "students identified as English Learners (ELs) shall participate in the statewide testing program using either the standard test administration or the standard test administration with accommodations. . . . ELs must participate in state assessments beginning with their first year in a US school; however,

- For the first year, the requirement is for participation and for reporting (e.g., NC School Report Card), not the accountability model.
- For year two, ELs' test scores will be included in the growth analysis for the accountability model.
- For year three and beyond, ELs' test scores will be included in growth and the achievement indicator of the accountability model."

Grade 8 Students Enrolled for Credit in NC Math 1

State Board policy [ACCT-021 \(1\)\(A\)](#) states, "all eligible students in membership at grade 8 enrolled for credit in NC Math 1 shall take the EOC assessment at the completion of the course. Schools shall not assess these students on the grade 8 mathematics EOG assessment. These students will take the NC Math 3 EOC assessment for federal accountability in high school." Students in membership at grade 8 who have an NC Math 1 EOC score (e.g., granted credit from an earlier grade level) should only be assessed on the test matching the currently enrolled course (e.g., NC Math 3). These students do not take the grade 8 mathematics EOG.

North Carolina Standardized Testing and Opting Out

All students in North Carolina (including students with disabilities and students identified as ELs) are required to participate in the Annual Testing Program per state and federal requirements. North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required testing unless there are extenuating circumstances, related to serious health conditions. [N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#) requires all students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) participate in the Annual Testing Program.

The [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\)](#) requires each state educational agency to implement in each district and school, a set of high-quality academic tests that includes, at a minimum, annual tests in mathematics, reading or language arts, and science. Mathematics and reading or language arts tests are to be administered in each of grades 3 through 8 and at least once in grades 9 through 12. Science tests are to be administered at least once during grades 3 through 5, grades 6 through 9, and grades 10 through 12. Furthermore, as amended by 1005 of Public Law 114-95, ESSA requires state tests to "be the same academic assessments used to measure the achievement of all public elementary school and secondary school students in the State." ESSA requires all states to "provide for the participation in

such assessments of all students.” These federal requirements do not allow students to be excluded from statewide tests. Rather, they define the legal requirement that all students in the tested grades must be tested.

Parents or legal guardians who request that their students not be tested or refuse to allow their students to test must be informed of the state’s testing requirements and any possible academic outcomes when not permitting their students to test. If eligible students are present in the classroom on test day (including make-up test days), the test administrator must administer tests to all eligible students in membership. If a student attends a test session but chooses not to start the online test or if a student starts a test but does not answer any test questions, he or she will be assigned the lowest possible score. Schools do not have the option to remove a student’s test from scoring. The student’s grade for the course and overall grade point average calculation may be negatively affected by receiving the lowest possible score.

[Appendix B](#) provides a sample letter that PSUs may use to address parents’ or legal guardians’ concerns regarding testing mandates.

Virtual Schools and Remote Instruction

Any school providing virtual or remote instruction to students (whether the school operates virtually full-time or operates a hybrid model of in-person and remote instruction) must adhere to all testing policies, procedures, and requirements as documented in public school laws of North Carolina in General Statutes, the N.C. Admin. Codes, SBE policies, and all Office of Accountability and Testing test administration guides and handbooks.

H. Online Testing

Online Test Format

All test questions are formatted specifically for online testing and presented on the screen one test question at a time. Online tests provide several tools for all students to use while testing, which include: reset, flag, strike, highlight, change highlight color, unhighlight, clear highlight, notepad, electronic pen, and help. Also, navigation buttons (i.e., first, back, pause, next, and review) are located at the bottom of the screen. Scroll bars appear on test questions as needed, based on the length of the test question or font size. Students can also increase the display by clicking "ctrl," "shift," and "+" keys at the same time. Students have an opportunity to practice using these tools when completing the online tutorial.

The [*Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook*](#) includes information about online tools available to students with accommodations or for use as designated features.

Online Assessment Tutorials

An online assessment tutorial is available for North Carolina-developed online tests through the NCTest Chrome app. (Android app., if available) for Chromebooks, NCTest Secure Browser, NCTest iPad app. or by accessing <https://data.ncsu.edu/nctest/Destination.html>.

The following rules apply for students' participation and completion of the online assessment tutorials.

- Schools must ensure every student participating in an online state test has completed the online assessment tutorial.
- Students must complete the tutorial at least one time per school year before the test administration.
- Students can complete the tutorial either before test day or on the same day as the test administration.
- Students can complete the tutorial either in-school or as part of remote instruction.
- **Third-grade students.** There are two online assessment tutorial requirements for third-grade students. Students in grade three must complete the BOG3 Reading Tutorial prior to administration. These students must also complete the Grades 3–12 Tutorial prior to the EOG test administration.

Checklist for Online Testing Readiness

Schools should use the following readiness checklist before test day to prepare school test coordinators, test administrators, and students for online

testing. This checklist is not all-inclusive, and schools may modify it as needed.

1. Test coordinators are expected to do the following for testing.

- Check that all devices used for testing meet the minimum technical requirements for 2024–25.
 - Check that the secure browser is updated, and the appropriate configuration has been installed.
 - Check that the iPad app. is updated. Unsupported versions will no longer be permitted. The app. will open in Automatic Assessment Configuration.
 - Ensure that Chromebooks are managed with settings and login processes that restrict a student's ability to access additional resources during the test administration (kiosk mode). Directions for Chromebooks can be found in the technical requirements for NCTest.
- Disable emoji and other special keyboards on devices.
- Disable screen savers.
- Ensure test administration windows are scheduled in NC Education. The test window scheduler must be set no later than the day before the test administration date.
- Ensure all students who are participating in online testing are listed in the Enrollment tab list for the correct test in NC Education. Students who are no longer in membership may appear on this list. Test administrators should disregard students who are no longer in membership but are still listed in NC Education.
- Verify accommodations and accessibility features in NCTest Admin are accurate before the day of testing.
- SIQs must be completed before test day. Designated school personnel must review and edit the SIQs for students who need the following interface options or documented accommodations for online testing.
 - Student Interface Options
 - alternate background color
 - large font
 - test read aloud (in English)
 - Accommodations Required by the Student
 - transcribe online (for paper administrations)
 - *Multiple Testing Sessions*
 - *Test Read Aloud (in English)*
 - Other required accommodations
- Create a plan for:
 - distributing devices and ensuring the school will have enough devices available to administer all tests within the five- or ten-day window.
 - tracking students who have not completed testing.

- providing each room with the appropriate number of charged devices.
 - ensuring devices stay charged throughout the administration,
 - distributing materials required for online testing (e.g., calculators, headphones).
 - setting volume controls for students requiring the *Test Read Aloud (in English)*.
 - printing, distributing, and collecting access codes (if applicable).
2. Test administrators are expected to:
- Verify that their NC Education account login (username and password) works successfully, that it provides access to the appropriate tests and student information pages, and that the password will not expire before the end of testing (<https://center.ncsu.edu/ncauth>).
 - For questions about NC Education accounts, school test coordinators should contact the Help Desk at ncdesk@ncsu.edu or (919) 515-1320.
 - Turn on all devices used for testing and connect them to the network before test day. (This will ensure any updates or software deployment needed for testing are complete before test day.)
3. Students are expected to:
- complete the required online assessment tutorial.
 - practice using the released tests found in NCTest.
 - practice using the online calculator, if applicable.

Internet Security, Security of Test Materials, and Online Content

Test administrators, proctors, technology staff, and students must follow rules and procedures that ensure online content is not made available to anyone for any other purpose than to administer the test. For more information about the policies and procedures to maintain internet security and security of online test materials and content, refer to the *NCTest Admin Guide* posted on TNN > NC Education and NCTest Admin Guidance.

Acceptable Devices for Online Administrations

All devices used for online testing, whether school-issued or student-owned, must have a pointing device included. This may be a touch screen, touchpad, external mouse, or other pointing device with which the student is familiar. It is a local decision to permit the use of a student-owned pointing device such as a hardwired or Bluetooth mouse. Schools must ensure that external pointing devices are compatible with the device utilized for testing. Pointing devices with recording capability are prohibited. In addition, schools must ensure that reference material attached to student devices containing content being measured or test-taking strategies are covered or removed prior to testing.

School-issued devices. When accessing an online test, the Annual Testing Program recommends that students use devices that are school-issued with NCTest already loaded by the school.

Student-owned devices. When necessary, schools may permit students to use personally owned devices. Parents, legal guardians, and students should collaborate with the school test coordinator for instructions on how to download NCTest to their personal devices. Directions for downloading NCTest to student-owned devices can be located via <https://center.ncsu.edu/ncinstruct/>. This link may be shared with parents, legal guardians, and students. Technical support will not be available at the NCDPI level and must be provided locally. Schools must not share the TOPS Help Desk phone number or email address with students, parents, or legal guardians.

Request to use an alternate device. Prior written permission from the NCDPI's Office of Accountability and Testing is required to use any device that does not meet the required device guidelines. Authorized device guidelines can be found at <https://center.ncsu.edu/nct>. PSUs that would like to request the use of an alternate device must email the Senior Director of the NC Annual Testing Program, Tammy Howard, at Tammy.Howard@dpi.nc.gov.

Technical Specifications for NCTest

To ensure students receive a valid and reliable test administration, schools must meet specific technical requirements. The technical specifications for NCTest, which is used to deliver the online tests, are found at <https://center.ncsu.edu/nct>. On days before an online test administration, schools must review these technical requirements and make any necessary adjustments before administering the online test. Schools that administer an online test but do not meet the technical requirements are at risk of providing students with questions that cannot be manipulated (e.g., technology-enhanced questions), are without associated artwork (e.g., tables, graphs, symbols), and do not fit properly on the screen.

Test Log in Options

Test day login procedures for online testing are determined locally. For the 2024–25 school year, student login access codes will be available for all state tests, except NCEXTEND1, Read to Achieve Summer 2024, and Read to Achieve Fall 2024.

It is permissible to either:

1. have students log themselves into the test or,
2. have teachers or test administrators log in students.

If students will log themselves into the test, the test coordinator must have procedures in place to ensure students cannot see the secure student ID numbers and student access codes of other students while logging themselves into their devices.

If the teacher or test administrator will log students into the test, the school test coordinator is expected to develop and train on procedures that outline how log in will occur while maintaining security. Students may remain in the room while teachers or test administrators log in to devices as long as:

- they cannot see secure test administrator usernames and passwords,
- they cannot see the student's name, ID number, test name, and school name displayed on the device, and
- they do not use their devices until instructed to do so.

Test log in plans must be included in the annual testing plan for the school system. (See the [Annual Testing Plans](#) subsection of this handbook for more information.)

Procedures the Test Administrator Must Complete on Test Day
Steps to complete before beginning online testing. The Annual Testing Program recommends test administrators begin setting up devices used to deliver the online test thirty to forty minutes before the students are to begin testing. Test administration guides include specific steps that must be taken by test administrators before online testing is scheduled to begin.

Online Administration Log in Procedures

The test administrator must perform the following:

1. If using Chromebooks, ensure they are managed with settings and login processes that restrict a student's ability to access additional resources during the test administration (kiosk mode). Directions for Chromebooks can be found in the technical requirements for NCTest.
2. Launch the NCTest Secure Browser, the NCTest Chrome app. (Android app., if available), or the NCTest iPad app. and click on the **NCTest Login** button.
 - If using iPads, ensure iPads are in Automatic Assessment Configuration by clicking on the **Yes** button in the pop-up to Confirm app. Self-Lock.
3. The test administrator should follow local procedures to log in each student at a device or have the students log themselves in using the directions below.
 - If the *test administrator* logs into the test:
 - enter a valid NC Education username and password and click **Login**.
 - choose the subject from the "Test Type" drop-down menu.

- choose the appropriate test name from the "Test Name" drop-down menu and click **Continue**.
 - select the student to be tested from the list presented on the screen and click **Select Student**.
 - If the *student* logs into the test (test administrator securely distributes each student's unique access code),
 - enter the student ID number and access code provided by the teacher and click **Login**.
4. After login is complete, the test administrator should ensure the screen is set to the start page with the correct student's name, ID number, school name, and test name.
 5. Confirm the screen on each student's device is still set to the start page. Students must not click the **Start** button and begin using their devices until they are told to do so.
 6. Collect access codes (if used) from each student and ensure the collected count matches the distributed count.
 7. The test administrator begins reading from the approved script in the test administration guide.
 8. Upon direction from the test administrator, the student clicks **Start**. After the **Start** button is clicked, a pop-up box will appear. The student confirms the information in the pop-up box and then clicks **OK** to begin.

If students experience an unexpected exit during testing, they must be logged back into the test by the test administrator. Student access codes cannot be used to log a student back into a test.

I. Reporting and Scoring

Requirement to Report Student Scores

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(h\)](#) "LEAs shall report scores resulting from the administration of State-mandated tests from the Annual Testing Program to students and parents or guardians no later than 30 days after the test is administered and along with available score interpretation information within 30 days from receipt of the scores and interpretive documentation from the NCDPI."

See [Appendix C](#) of this handbook for a sample letter schools may use to share this information with parents or legal guardians.

[General Statute § 115C-174.13\(b\)](#): Public Records Exemption

"Any written material containing identifiable scores of individual students on any test taken pursuant to the provisions of this Article is not a public record within the meaning of G.S. 132-1 and shall not be made public by any person, except as permitted under the provisions of the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g](#)."

Confidentiality of Student Scores When Publicizing Test Results

It is advised that the confidentiality of test scores must always be protected when publicizing or reporting test results to the public. Districts and schools should not violate confidentiality rights under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

It is best practice not to publicly post or to announce student names and test results.

As stated in the [Testing Code of Ethics](#), "Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. PSU personnel shall not publicize test scores or any written material containing personally identifiable information from the student's educational records except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and regulations adopted pursuant thereto. . . . In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:

1. withhold any monetary incentive awards;
2. file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
3. seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and

4. in accordance with the provisions of 16 N.C. Admin. Code 6C .0312, suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.”

It is best practice that school staff be mindful of student confidentiality and adhere to appropriate policies and procedures when publicizing or reporting test results.

Scoring

Online Tests

Scoring online tests without constructed response (CR) questions.

Online tests without CR questions are scored during an overnight process and available to PSUs in the online scoring and reporting system by 9:00 a.m. the following day.

Scoring online tests with CR questions. For online tests with CR questions, vendors will begin scoring the first business day after the test record is received and will return the scored online test electronically to the NCDPI within approximately six business days. An additional day is required for processing the files from the scoring vendor to the NCDPI. Therefore, RACs and district test coordinators should allow approximately seven business days to receive scored online test records.

As a reminder, a school may receive scored test records across multiple days for a group of students that tested on the same day. Student responses are scored in the order the vendor receives them.

Paper Tests

Scoring paper tests. On days before a paper test administration, if designated to do so by the school test coordinator, the test administrator must mark the following student interface questions in NCTest Admin:

- Transcribe Online
- *Multiple Testing Sessions* accommodation
- Other Accommodations (e.g., other accommodations besides *Multiple Testing Sessions*).

Selecting the Transcribe Online SIQ assigns the student the same test form for both paper and online administrations. If the Transcribe Online SIQ is not selected, the student will not be assigned the same online and paper form; therefore, the transcriber will not be able to transcribe the student's answers from the test book to the online test.

The school follows the procedures outlined in the test administration guide for transcribing the student's responses from the paper test administration into the online testing system. Additional information about the transcription process is located in the [Transcription Instructions](#) section of this handbook.

The district test coordinator establishes the schedule for sending secure test materials to TOPS after testing.

Scoring paper tests with CR questions. For districts and schools administering paper tests with CR questions, the Transcribe Online SIQ is selected in NCTest for the student. The school then follows the directions in the test administration guide for transcribing the student's responses from the paper test into the online testing system.

As a reminder, the window for tests with CR questions ends earlier than the window for tests without CR questions. The scoring process will begin the first business day after the test record is received by the vendor. Scored records will be returned electronically to the NCDPI within six business days of starting the scoring process. An additional day is required for processing the files from the scoring vendor to the NCDPI. Therefore, test coordinators should allow approximately seven business days to receive paper test records.

Invalid Test Scores

In the event that procedures specified in the test administration guides, the [Testing Students with Disabilities Handbook](#), or this Handbook (or in subsequent updates to these documents) are not followed during the test administration, the Office of Accountability and Testing may declare the test scores invalid. If test scores are invalid, the results must not be included in a student's permanent record or be used for accountability purposes.

J. District Requirements for Destroying and Returning Test Materials

District test coordinators should refer to this section of the handbook and the TOPS Return Kit for storage, return, and destruction of test materials requirements. The TOPS Return Kit accompanies all secure paper material orders and includes packing and shipping procedures for materials produced by the Annual Testing Program.

Guides and Handbooks

Guides (i.e., administration, assessment) and handbooks are not secure materials and do not have to be securely destroyed.

As a reminder, the following guides should be retained for future administrations.

- Store spring 2023–24 EOC guides for use in 2024 summer and fall flexible testing.
- Store spring Read to Achieve guides for use in summer and fall 2025.
- Store spring EOG guides for use in 2025 summer programs.
- Store NCEXTEND1 guides throughout the year for grades 3–8 and grades 10 and 11 administrations.
- Store CCRAA guides for grades 10 and 11 for use in spring 2025.
- Store fall 2024 EOC guides for use in 2025 spring, summer, and fall flexible testing.

Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box

- Schools planning to administer the portfolio during the 2024–25 school year should keep the portfolio boxes currently housed at the school. Public school unit test coordinators will need to order new implementation guides (Edition 2.1) for these schools through the TNN ordering system.
- Schools with a Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio (Edition 2) box that will not use the portfolio in 2024–25 must follow the Annual Testing Program's designated procedures for securely destroying or recycling the contents of the portfolio box.
- Schools that did not administer the portfolio in 2023–24, but want to administer it in 2024–25, will need to order a portfolio box through the TNN ordering system. Orders placed this year for the portfolio will auto-ship with the updated guide.

Test Materials to Be Temporarily Stored Locally

Test materials designated in table 5 are considered secure test materials and must be stored by the district in a locked facility with controlled access limited to one or two authorized school personnel only. After the required

storage time expires, the district must destroy these materials using one of the approved methods: (1) shredding, (2) secure recycling, (3) observed landfill burial by two or more designated school personnel, or (4) incineration.

TABLE 5. Test materials designated to be stored by the district in a locked facility until locally destroyed.

| Test Material | Required Storage Time |
|---|---|
| Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio box | Store and continue to use Edition 2 of the Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio. (This is the most recent version available of the instructional and test materials.) The guide should be recycled once the new version is received. |
| Test Material | Required Storage Time |
| EOG science grade 8 periodic tables (unused) | Destroy all previous stock (Stock No. 12427). New versions will be available in fall 2024. Store and use the fall version during next test administration. |
| Unused EOC Biology, English II, NC Math 1, and NC Math 3 test books | Store unused test materials from fall for use in spring, summer, and fall flexible testing. |
| Read to Achieve Test | Store unused test materials from spring for use during reading camps and fall administrations. |
| Unused EOC, EOG, and CCRAA graph paper | Store and use during next test administration. |
| NCEXTEND1 test card kits, selection booklets, and test ticket forms | Destroy locally after testing. |

Online Test Materials

Access codes and all visibly used (i.e., has been marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables should either be returned to the district for secure destruction or be securely destroyed at the school site. For districts allowing schools to destroy these materials at the school site, schools must complete the [Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification form](#) and submit it to the district test coordinator.

Paper Test Materials to Be Returned to the TOPS Warehouse

After the transcription of students' responses into the online system, the following test materials must be returned to the TOPS warehouse within five school days of the end of the testing window for non-vendor state-mandated tests:

- Original responses recorded in a test book (i.e., EOG, EOC, BOG3, RtA, CCRAA) to include:
 - *Student Marks Answers in Test Book*
 - *Large Print Edition*
 - *One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Edition*
 - *Braille Edition*
 - *Braille Writer/Slate and Stylus* responses
 - *Dictation to a Scribe* responses (e.g., typed, handwritten)
 - *Electronic Braille Notetaker* responses
- All visibly used (i.e., has been marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables *must be included inside the test book* used by the student when returned to TOPS.
- A completed *School Transcription Tracking Form* (see [Appendix L](#)) must be included with the associated paper test books. Schools are permitted to make copies locally as needed.

All used paper test books must have the transcription label completed on the front of the test book.

Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse

Test administrators, school test coordinators, and district test coordinators should use the following steps to pack and return test materials to the TOPS warehouse.

1. Test administrators return all materials (i.e., test books, test administration guides) to the school test coordinator.
2. The school test coordinator ensures that scratch paper, graph paper, and periodic tables (for grade 8) are inserted into each student's test book and then returns the materials to the district test coordinator.
3. The district test coordinator will package and return the secure materials as follows (top to bottom):
 - a) Place used test book(s) for a grade and subject or course together in a vinyl bag.
 - Place all visibly used (i.e., has marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables inside the student's test book.

- b) If applicable, place test materials with print errors in the box with a copy of the completed print error report form as the cover sheet.
 - c) Place any misadministration test books that are not to be scored in a separate, labeled vinyl bag.
4. The district test coordinator will send the secure test materials to TOPS.
- Place vinyl bags and test materials in boxes using the provided authorized return service (ARS) labels.
 - If more than one box is used for test materials, then each box should be clearly marked with "BOX <#> of <Total # of boxes>."
 - Fax or email a scanned PDF of the [TOPS Return Verification Form](#) (see Appendix N of this handbook) to TOPS, and email or carbon copy the regional accountability office staff. This form provides an area to denote the tracking number(s) for the school and TOPS to ensure test security and prompt follow-up should materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

Note: All secure test materials must be stored in a secure, locked facility when not in use.

Test Materials Stored at TOPS

TOPS will store the following in a secure facility for twelve months following the test date:

- original student responses (e.g., responses recorded in test books, assistive technology devices, and/or dictation to scribes),
- paper test books in which eligible students marked their answers in the test book (i.e., *Braille Editions*, *Large Print Editions*, *One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *standard print edition*), and
- photocopies of students' original responses or original scribe recordings of student responses, if not recorded directly into the online testing system or a paper test book (e.g., scribe records responses on a separate sheet of paper and transcribes into NCTest after the testing session).

Vendor Test Materials Return Instructions

Districts should follow the directives in table 6 to return materials as specified to vendors.

TABLE 6. Specified return of vendor materials for districts.

| Test Material | Specified Return |
|---|---|
| WIDA Screener for Kindergarten reusable kits | The security of WIDA Screener for Kindergarten reusable materials should be maintained at the school level for as long as the screener remains SBE-approved. These materials can be stored by test administrators in a secure, locked location. These materials are not returned to TOPS. |
| WIDA Screener for Kindergarten consumable materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student response booklet (PSU securely destroys following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS) • Student Score Sheet (housed in student cumulative record following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS) |
| WIDA Screener Grades 1–3 Writing booklets | PSU securely destroys following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS. |
| All WIDA Screener paper test materials, except used student response booklets. | Return WIDA Screener Paper test materials to TOPS immediately upon completion of testing. |
| ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS secure test materials | Return as specified by the vendor |
| The ACT (Tests are designated by test date and must be used for the test date specified.) | Return to ACT |
| WorkKeys | Return to ACT |
| PreACT | Online testing. Schools return student response information when score reports are returned. |
| | Paper testing. Schools return student test booklets when score reports are returned. |

K. Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential Schools' Requirements for Ordering, Receiving, Storing, and Returning Test Materials

Charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators should refer to this section of the handbook and the TOPS Return Kit for requirements about the ordering, receipt, storage, and return of the Annual Testing Program's secure test materials. The TOPS Return Kit accompanies all secure paper materials' orders and includes packaging and shipping procedures for materials produced by the Annual Testing Program.

Charter, lab, regional, and residential schools are not allowed to securely destroy any test materials produced by the Annual Testing Program.

School test coordinators must follow vendor specific test material ordering and test material return instructions for the PreACT, The ACT, ACT WorkKeys, ACCESS tests and the WIDA Alternate ACCESS test. These test materials are not returned to TOPS.

Before Ordering

School test coordinators should check to be sure the school contact information is correct on the NC Education ordering page. The United Parcel Service (UPS) will send an email notification to the email address listed for the test coordinator upon shipment of an order. If the test coordinator does not receive the package on the day indicated in the notification, the test coordinator must contact the TOPS warehouse at (919-515-4623). All UPS shipments from TOPS are next-day delivery. The test coordinator must be aware of the delivery date for the school to ensure there is not a security risk, and that the delivery occurs in a secure area.

Shipping and Receiving

Orders are typically shipped from TOPS ten days before the first test date. On the day the materials arrive at the school, the test coordinator must:

- conduct an inventory immediately upon receipt of all test materials to ensure that the packing list(s) match exactly what is included in the box(es) of materials.
- note quantities received in the appropriate column on the packing list.
- sign all packing lists and fax (919-515-4622) or email (group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu) TOPS the packing list verifying the accuracy of or any discrepancy in the quantity received on the same day that the materials arrive in the building. (See the example label which will be located on the bottom of the packing list.)

Example Label:

| | |
|---|----------------------------|
| Date _____ | Checked in Correctly _____ |
| Discrepancies Noted in Qty. Received Column _____ | |
| Signature of Test Coordinator _____ | |

- save all boxes for the return of all materials.
- save the original packing list(s) to use for the return of test materials to TOPS.

Storing Materials

Upon receipt, schools must house all secure test materials in a secure, locked facility with controlled access limited to one or two authorized school personnel only (e.g., test coordinator, principal). Secure test materials should only be stored at the school for a brief period before and after the test administration.

Guides and Handbooks

Guides (i.e., administration, assessment) and handbooks are not secure materials; however, they must be returned to TOPS after the last test administration listed below.

- Store 2023–24 EOC guides for use in 2024 summer and fall flexible testing.
- Store spring RtA guides for use in summer and fall 2025.
- Store spring EOG guides for use in 2025 summer programs.
- Store NCEXTEND1 guides throughout the year for grades 3–8, grade 10, and grade 11 administrations.
- Store CCRAA guides for grades 10 and 11 for use in spring 2025.
- Store fall 2024 EOC guides for use in 2025 spring, summer, and fall flexible testing.

Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio Box

- Schools planning to administer the portfolio during the 2024–25 school year should keep the portfolio boxes currently housed at the school. Public school unit test coordinators will need to order new implementation guides (Edition 2.1) through the TNN ordering system.
- Schools with a Grade 3 Student Reading Portfolio (Edition 2) box that will not use the portfolio in 2024–25 must follow the Annual Testing Program's designated procedures for returning the contents of the portfolio box.
- Schools that did not administer the portfolio in 2023–24, but want to administer it in 2024–25, will need to order a portfolio box through the TNN ordering system. Orders placed this year for the portfolio will auto-ship with the updated guide.

Returning Materials

Schools must return secure test materials within two business days after the regular test administration for both online and paper tests. The test coordinator must adhere to the following procedures for the return of test materials:

- All test materials are to be returned to TOPS. This includes all used and unused test books, all visibly used (i.e., has been marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables.
- All used paper test books must have the transcription label completed on the front of the test book.
- A completed *School Transcription Tracking Form* (see [Appendix L](#)) must be included with the associated paper test books. Schools are permitted to make copies of the form locally as needed.
- Boxes must be packed according to the quantities on the packing lists (i.e., materials packed in a box should match the packing list exactly).
- Fax or email a scanned PDF of the [TOPS Return Verification Form](#) (see Appendix N of this handbook) and email or carbon copy the regional accountability office staff. This form provides an area to denote the tracking number(s) for the school and TOPS to ensure test security and prompt follow-up should materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

Recording tracking information. The school test coordinator must adhere to the following procedures for recording tracking information.

- Record information clearly on the UPS authorized return service label.
- Complete the *TOPS Return Verification Form*.
- Maintain a record of the following:
 - UPS tracking numbers,
 - number of boxes in the shipment,
 - packing lists involved, and
 - date shipped.

Packing Test Materials for Return to the TOPS Warehouse

1. Test administrators should return all materials (i.e., test books, test administration guides) to the school test coordinator.
2. The school test coordinator will package and return the secure materials as follows (top to bottom):
 - a) Place used test book(s) for a grade and subject or course together in a vinyl bag.
 - Place all visibly used (i.e., has been marked on in some way or is not suitable for reuse during future state testing) scratch paper, graph paper, supplemental materials, and periodic tables inside the student's test book.

- b) If applicable, place test materials with print errors in the box with a copy of the completed print error report form as the cover sheet.
 - c) Place any misadministration test books that are not to be scored in a separate, labeled vinyl bag.
 - d) Place NCEXTEND1 and unused test materials sorted by grade and content in the box.
 - e) Place materials from online tests (e.g., scratch paper, graph paper) in the box.
3. The school test coordinator will send the secure test materials to TOPS.
- Place vinyl bags and test materials in boxes using the provided authorized return service (ARS) labels.
 - If more than one box is used for test materials, then each box should be clearly marked with "BOX <#> of <Total # of boxes>."
 - Fax or email the *TOPS Return Verification Form* to TOPS, and email or carbon copy the regional accountability office staff.

Note: All secure test materials must be stored in a secure, locked facility when not in use.

Test Materials Stored at TOPS

TOPS will store the following in a secure facility for twelve months following the test date:

- original student responses (e.g., responses recorded in test books, assistive technology devices, and/or dictation to scribes),
- paper test books in which eligible students marked their answers in the test book (i.e., *Braille Editions*, *Large Print Editions*, *One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *Large Print/One Test Item Per Page Editions*, *standard print edition*), and
- photocopies of students' original responses or original scribe recordings of student responses, if not recorded directly into the online testing system or a paper test book (e.g., scribe records responses on a separate sheet of paper and transcribes into NCTest after the testing session).

Vendor Test Materials Return Instructions

Schools should follow the directives in table 7 to return materials as specified to vendors.

TABLE 7. Specified return of vendor materials for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools.

| Test Material | Specified Return |
|---|---|
| WIDA Screener for Kindergarten reusable kits | The security of WIDA Screener for Kindergarten reusable materials should be maintained at the school level for as long as the screener remains SBE-approved. These materials can be stored by test administrators in a secure, locked location. These materials are not returned to TOPS. |
| WIDA Screener for Kindergarten consumable materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student response booklet (Return to TOPS following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS) • Student Score Sheet (housed in student cumulative record following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS) |
| WIDA Screener Grades 1–3 Writing Booklets | Return to TOPS following entry of screener results into PowerSchool/NCSIS |
| All WIDA Screener Paper test materials, except used student response booklets | Return WIDA Screener Paper test materials to TOPS immediately upon completion of testing. |
| ACCESS for ELLs and WIDA Alternate ACCESS secure test materials | Return as specified by the vendor |
| The ACT (Tests are designated by test date and must be used for the test date specified.) | Return to ACT |
| WorkKeys | Return to ACT |
| PreACT | Online testing. Schools return student response information when score reports are returned. |
| | Paper testing. Schools return student test booklets when score reports are returned. |

L. Testing Irregularities and Misadministrations

Testing Violations and Testing Irregularities

Test administrators (and proctors, if utilized) must report any alleged testing violation or testing irregularity to the school test coordinator on the day of the occurrence. The school test coordinator must contact the district test coordinator (charter, lab, and regional schools contact the RAC) immediately with any allegation of a testing violation. The school test coordinator must then conduct a thorough investigation and complete the Report of Testing Irregularity provided through the [OTISS](#).

The *NCTest Admin Guide* (posted on TNN > NC Education and NCTest Admin Guidance) provides step-by-step directions on entering an OTISS report.

The OTISS irregularity report should be submitted within five days of the occurrence. With the exception of technical difficulties experienced in the same testing room or same school, different incident types are expected to be documented on separate reports of testing irregularity even when the incidents occur during the same test administration in the same room. For example, if one student is disruptive during testing and another student becomes ill during the administration of the same test, two separate reports of testing irregularity must be filed in OTISS. If a misadministration is declared, it must be documented and reported using appropriate procedures outlined in OTISS. If the student is permitted to retest, the readministration date must be entered into OTISS.

Note: The RAC must be contacted by the PSU test coordinator immediately upon learning of any alleged serious testing violations or irregularities that may require a misadministration and the completion of the [OTISS Testing Irregularity Investigation Checklist](#).

Irregularity Classifications

Irregularity classifications include, but are not limited to, those shown in table 8.

Table 8. Irregularity classifications

| # | Irregularity Classification | Level | Examples (not all-inclusive) |
|---|-----------------------------------|--------|--|
| Test Administration Irregularities | | | |
| 1. | Staff Failed to Follow Directions | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Failed to administer the online tutorial or Practice Activity Started online test for student Administered incorrect test Provided incorrect materials or did not provide materials Failed to follow test schedule procedures Provided additional time beyond the designated time specified in the test administration guide Failed to follow administration instructions Test scheduling prevented students' test completion |
| 2. | Eligibility Issues | 1 or 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eligible student not tested Ineligible student tested |
| 3. | Defective Paper Test Materials | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrong cover Pages out of order Duplicate pages Blank or missing pages Missing questions Questions without answer choices Printing error—letters or words unreadable |
| 4. | Online Administration Issues | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Test connectivity or technical problems Items not displaying properly Unexpected exit in NCTest |

| Test Administration Irregularities continued | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| 5. | Disruptions to the Testing Environment | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire alarm or bomb threat • Emergency evacuations • Power outage • External noise • Student disruption • Unauthorized visitor |
| 6. | Accommodation Issues | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not provided or not provided appropriately • Provided but not approved or documented • <i>Test Read Aloud</i> or signed/cued on reading • Student refused accommodation |
| Student-Related Irregularities | | | |
| 7. | Student Cheated | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student copied answers • Student accessed prohibited device or resource (e.g., cell phone, cheat sheet) to access test information • Student used calculator during inactive portion of a math test |
| 8. | Student Personal Issues | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student was ill or injured • Student was anxious • Student had a problem with medication or glasses • Student had family or personal circumstance • Student fell asleep • Student left early for an appointment • Student did not finish the test • Student's pacing prevented completion of the test |
| 9. | Student Refusal to Test | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student did not mark answers • Student marked test randomly |
| 10. | Student Did Not Follow Directions | 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student worked on wrong section of test • Student possessed cell phone |

| Security Irregularities | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 11. | Secure Test Material Divulged | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test items used for instruction or in resource materials such as study guides • Reproduced test item(s) • Copies of test made available to others • Improper use of test materials • Staff or student copied, transmitted, or discussed test questions or information (e.g., social media, text message, video, picture) • Allowed those without a legitimate need to have access to the test • Allowed students to review secure test materials |
| 12. | Monitoring Issues | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff inadequately supervised test session • Proctor or students left alone with test materials • Students removed secure materials from test site • Test items not transcribed in secure, group setting |
| 13. | Missing Test Materials | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Materials lost and not found • Materials unaccounted for and then found |
| 14. | Test Material Distribution/Collection/Storage | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test materials not stored in secure, locked facility • Failed to delete secure electronic files saved or cached on network appliances or computers • Failed to maintain security of NC Education username and/or password • Materials not counted at all levels of distribution • Failed to return initial test materials distributed |

| Staff Procedural Irregularities | | | |
|--|---|--------|---|
| 15. | Encouraging Students to be Absent | 2 | |
| 16. | Modifying Test Directions | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff read test directions from wrong test administration guide • Did not read script or all "SAY" statements in script • Paraphrased, omitted, revised, interpreted, explained, or rewrote the script, directions, or test items |
| 17. | Staff Read or Altered Responses | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tampered with student responses • Read test items (not including <i>Read Aloud</i> accommodation) |
| 18. | Improper Assistance or Instruction | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed to remove or cover inappropriate displays • Provided improper assistance related to concepts measured on test |
| 19. | Test Not Administered during Testing Window | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failed to administer test on test day or during the testing window |
| 20. | Unauthorized Readministration | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ACT, PreACT, WorkKeys (ACT denied retest) • Grade 3 Reading EOG during summer program |
| Other | | | |
| 21. | Other | 1 or 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAC approval required |

Note: If students experience a technical difficulty but successfully complete testing, no OTISS report is required.

If the same technical problem that prohibits completion of the test is reported for multiple students for the same test administration on the same day, only one OTISS report needs to be submitted. A list of all students affected should be attached to the OTISS report.

OTISS Investigation Checklist and Sample Test Security Action Plan

When PSUs or schools submit irregularity reports in OTISS, level 2 irregularities require an investigation checklist, along with an investigation summary report(s) and other pertinent documentation to be submitted to the Office of Accountability and Testing.

The *OTISS Testing Irregularity Investigation Checklist* must be used by the PSU or school test coordinator when collecting information and investigating

a testing violation. The checklist provides the necessary steps and guidance for filing irregularities and completing investigations. The [Sample-Test Security Action Plan](#) may be used to address areas of concern in testing and to outline procedures for establishing corrective actions.

Online Testing Irregularity Submission System (OTISS) Investigation Checklist

This form and all accompanying documentation must be submitted electronically.

| | | | |
|--|--|----------------------------|--|
| OTISS ID #: | | District: | |
| Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC) Name: | | School Name: | |
| Date RAC Contacted: | | Date of Occurrence: | |

The following steps must be completed within five days of when the irregularity is identified.

| | Step | Completion Date | Additional Information |
|---|---|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Identify Level 2 Irregularity Classification | | Irregularity Classification: |
| 2. | OTISS Test Coordinator (TC) submits testing irregularity report in OTISS on the same day the irregularity occurs or is identified. | | |
| 3. | Collection of Evidence (e.g., test books, computers, cheat sheets, classroom displays) | | List Evidence Collected: |
| 4. | Statements and Interviews <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain written and signed statements from all parties involved. Conduct interviews with everyone (including students, if necessary) involved in the incident. The interviews should include questions of a non-objective nature, and each interview should be conducted by two staff members. | | List Name(s)/Role(s) of Person(s) Involved: |
| 5. | Summary of Any Disciplinary Action Taken TC should collaborate with leadership to prepare a written statement of any disciplinary action taken in association with the incident. | | |
| 6. | Action Plan TC should submit a written action plan that identifies strategies that will prevent a reoccurrence of the incident. | | |
| 7. | Upload All Evidence in OTISS All items in the following list must be included as electronic attachments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the incident Questions and answers collected during interviews Summary of any disciplinary action taken at the school or district level Action plan identifying strategies that will prevent a reoccurrence of the incident Completed/signed <i>OTISS Investigation Checklist</i> | | |
| Principal's or Director's Printed Name and Signature | | | Date |
| Public School Unit Test Coordinator's Printed Name and Signature | | | Date |
| Superintendent's Printed Name and Signature | | | Date |

Sample—Test Security Action Plan

School Site:

Plan Written By:

I. Identification of problem areas and corrective actions

Purpose:

Summary of Action Steps and Target Dates:

Goal(s):

II. Definition of roles and responsibilities

A. Name of Principal or Principal's Designee _____

Description of responsibilities:

B. Responsibilities assigned:

Name: _____

Responsibilities:

Name: _____

Responsibilities:

Name: _____

Responsibilities:

III. Evaluation criteria

- A. Measurable outcomes (e.g., reduction in number of testing irregularities, shorter resolution time, more comprehensive test administration training sessions according to workshop evaluation summaries)
- B. Follow-up methodology (e.g., distribution of fact sheets, resources, activity logs, training sessions, quarterly needs assessments)

Misadministrations

PSUs must monitor test administration procedures. According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307 \(e\)\(f\)](#), "LEAs shall monitor test administration procedures. If a school employee discovers any violation of the rules in this Subchapter, he or she shall notify the principal, charter school director, or school test coordinator who shall notify the superintendent or the LEA test coordinator. If the superintendent or the LEA test coordinator determines that the violation affected the validity of the test for its intended purpose, he or she shall have the authority to order the affected students to be retested. If NCDPI determines that the failure to administer a test in accordance with the rules in this Subchapter produced a result which is invalid for measuring student achievement, then NCDPI may remedy the error or order the LEA to remedy the error, including requiring retesting students."

When a testing irregularity occurs, or when a testing irregularity is under investigation that may result in a misadministration and subsequent student retesting, it is best practice not to share the first test score with the student, parent(s), or legal guardian(s) until the decision to retest is final. When a retest occurs, the second test score must stand for accountability purposes.

For online tests, after a misadministration is declared and indicated in NC Education, a different form of the test will be loaded for the student, if available. For paper tests, when a misadministration is declared, the affected student(s) must be given another opportunity to have the test readministered. The PSU test coordinator will specify how misadministrations are to be handled at the school and will schedule dates and times for readministering the tests in each school so that all misadministration retests are completed within the state-designated testing windows, if possible.

Only scores resulting from a valid test administration should be included in students' permanent records or used for accountability purposes. All misadministrations must be documented and reported using the appropriate procedures outlined in the OTISS. If a retest is permitted, the readministration date must be entered in OTISS.

M. District and School Assessment Monitoring

Per the U.S. Department of Education Assessment Peer Review Process, Critical Element 2.4 – Monitoring Test Administrations requirements, “The State adequately monitors the administration of its state assessments to ensure that standardized test administration procedures are implemented with fidelity across districts and schools. Monitoring of test administrations should be demonstrated for all assessments in the State system: the general academic assessments, the general ELP assessments, the AA-AAAS and the AELPA.”

Process for District and School Assessment Monitoring Visits

The NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing conducts district and school assessment monitoring. The purposes of this monitoring are to ensure the Annual Testing Program is meeting Peer Review requirements and that all testing is conducted in a manner that is fair, consistent, and equitable for all students, including students with disabilities and students identified as English Learners. The annual process for assessment monitoring consists of three components: (1) desk monitoring, (2) on-site monitoring, and (3) feedback and assistance.

The districts and schools selected for monitoring are identified by random stratified electronic sampling. This method ensures site visits are distributed in a fair and equitable manner.

The following steps outline the process for coordinating and conducting an assessment monitoring visit.

Desk Monitoring

Monitoring observations begin with desk monitoring. To facilitate this process, the monitor will request the following documents from the district or school test coordinator, as appropriate:

- annual testing plan,
- test-material distribution list or documents related to secure material distribution procedures,
- test administration training rosters,
- signed confidentiality and test security agreements,
- test meeting agendas and notes, and
- test specific school test plan (i.e., testing session groups).

The monitor may also access the following reports or platforms internally for review:

- the Expect Test File,
- the ACCOM file, and

- Online Testing Irregularity Submission System reports.

If concerns are noted during the desk monitoring review, the monitor will contact the district or school test coordinator to discuss the concerns before the visit.

If the monitor will be visiting a school within a district, he or she may request the district test coordinator accompany them on the visit. Prior to the monitoring visit, the monitor will contact the district or school test coordinator to gather specific details for the monitoring visit (e.g., arrival time, special circumstances).

On-site Monitoring

The assessment monitoring visit will include observation of either a full or partial assessment day. The visit may include monitoring the following activities:

- Visiting the district test coordinator's office.
- Visiting the secure facility for test materials.
- Observing test materials distribution procedures (check-in or checkout, or both).
- Observing test-day policy and procedures of the school test coordinator, test administrators, and proctors (if utilized).
- Monitoring the school's testing environment.
- Monitoring accommodated settings (i.e., Individualized Education Programs [IEP], Section 504 Plans, EL Plans, transitory impairment documentation, [Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms](#)).
- Monitoring the reporting of testing irregularities (if applicable).

If necessary, interviews may be scheduled prior to or after a visit via Microsoft Teams.

Results and observations from the on-site monitoring visit will not be shared with the school system or school building staff before leaving the site.

Feedback and Assistance

During the visit, the monitor completes an assessment monitoring checklist(s). A copy of the letter with a copy of the checklist(s) is sent within forty-five days of the visit. The checklist(s) are designed to provide specific feedback to the district or school staff.

As part of the feedback, the monitor will indicate if concerns were noted during the in-person visit as well as expectations for remedying the concerns. In some situations, when concerns are noted, the feedback will include plans to monitor the site again. If this circumstance should arise,

the monitor will include specific remedies or actions that should be completed before the next monitoring visit. The monitor will ensure that the concerns are corrected as part of the next monitoring visit.

Monitoring of Prior School Year's Cohort Graduation Rate

The Office of Accountability and Testing uses a formalized state monitoring plan to verify the withdrawal of students reported in the PSU's prior school year's cohort graduation rate. Teams of state-level and regional staff members conduct the monitoring. Team members are tasked with conducting electronic monitoring by requesting written evidence or documentation to verify the withdrawals of students from the cohort. For additional details and information regarding the monitoring process, access the [Cohort Graduation Rate Manual](#) that is located on the School Accountability and Reporting section of the NCDPI website.

| PSU Assessment Monitoring Checklist | | |
|--|--|--------------|
| Date: | | |
| PSU Name: | | |
| Test Coordinator: | | |
| Regional Accountability Coordinator: | | |
| Monitoring Process | Compliance | Notes |
| Review the testing plan developed and shared by the test coordinator. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| District only: Verify testing plans for schools are on file (i.e., electronic or paper copy) with the district testing office. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Review evidence of district/school test coordinator training (e.g., training materials, attendance roster, testing staff certificates of completion) Date(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Review evidence that test materials were counted, and test material numbers correlate with packing slips upon receipt from vendor. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Verify sufficient copies of test materials were ordered in a timely fashion | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Verify a system is in place to monitor all documented accommodations (i.e., IEPs, Section 504 Plans, EL Plans, transitory impairment documentation, <i>Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms</i>). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Verify procedures exist to ensure all testing irregularities, including misadministrations and situations that may compromise test security, are reported in OTISS within five days of occurrence. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Desk Monitored | |
| Verify test materials are stored according to testing policy and in a secure, locked storage facility. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Review evidence of secure test material distribution (check-in and checkout system). | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |

| Monitoring Process | Compliance | Notes |
|---|---|-------|
| Verify a plan is in place to destroy/return secure test materials in accordance with NCDPI/vendor requirements. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Districts only: Verify there is a plan in writing to monitor school test sites during each test cycle. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |

Other:

| School Assessment Monitoring Checklist | | |
|--|---|--------------|
| Date: | Monitor: | |
| District: | School: | |
| District Test Coordinator: | School Test Coordinator: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Online <input type="checkbox"/> Paper | Assessment: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Standard <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodated | | |
| School Monitoring Process | Compliance | Notes |
| The testing plan for the school is available to the person conducting the monitoring visit. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Review evidence that all test administrators were trained. Date(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Review evidence that all proctors were trained (if used). Date(s): | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Verify test materials were stored in a secure, locked, storage facility. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Verify test materials were distributed in accordance with the testing plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| The school test coordinator or designated staff were walking around and monitoring testing sessions. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Verify windows in doors were exposed and a "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign was posted on the door of each testing site. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Verify that the school testing plan includes provisions for secure transcriptions of student paper test responses to NCTest. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Verify a plan is in place to report all irregularities and misadministrations in OTISS within five days of occurrence. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Verify bulletin boards, instructional displays, notes on devices, and reference materials were covered or removed. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |

| School Monitoring Process | Compliance | Notes |
|--|--|-------|
| Desks and workstations were cleared of books and other materials (i.e., personal belongings) not required for the test were adequately stored. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Devices were set up appropriately before testing. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Handheld calculators (if used) were cleared before and after testing. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Students were provided the appropriate test materials. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Personal cell phones and electronic devices were turned off and appropriately stored. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Policies and procedures were followed for the provision of accommodations. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Procedures were followed for distribution and collection of test materials. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Directions were read to the students as they are written in the test administration guide. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| There were no distracting behaviors in the room. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Test log-in procedures were followed according to the test administration guide/manual. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| The test administrator's username and password were not displayed or shared with students. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Student access codes, if used, were kept secure at all times. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| Additional devices were charged and available in the event a student experiences an issue during testing. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |
| If technical issues arose, the issue(s) were resolved with limited delay and students were able to complete testing as scheduled. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |

| School Monitoring Process | Compliance | Notes |
|--|--|-------|
| Visitors were prohibited in the classroom during the test administration. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Test administrators did not leave students unattended at any time during the testing session and moved throughout the room during testing. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed | |
| Maximum time procedures were followed, if applicable. | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not Observed <input type="checkbox"/> Not Applicable | |

Other:

N. Data Security

According to [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0307\(b\)](#), the definition of "secure test" is "any test developed, adopted, or provided by the State Board of Education that has not been released under [G.S. § 115C-174.13](#)." SBE policy [TEST-004](#) specifies that "secure tests, including all test materials and test questions, are not to be reproduced in any manner or for any reason without the express written consent of the test publisher. School personnel must not disclose the contents of secure tests. They must not discuss with each other, or with students, specific test questions or information contained within the tests or write about them on the internet or on social media sites. In addition, excerpts from the tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in resource materials such as study guides. Access to the tests shall be limited to school personnel who have a legitimate need. Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use their access to those materials for personal gain."

Secure or copyrighted state tests shall not be copied, reproduced, paraphrased, filed, or used directly in instructional activities or for professional development. Copying, reproducing, or paraphrasing test materials represents a breach of test security and is a violation of federal copyright laws, [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#), and SBE policy.

Copies of any documents suspected of containing secure test questions or information from secure tests must be submitted to the NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing through the RAC for clearance before use in the PSU. Appropriate items for review would be any material of which the origin is not known, including test questions discovered on the internet. Individuals are not permitted to create or save electronic files of secure test questions, including answers, or save or post them through a vendor, Google Drive, email, social media, web posting, or any other method. The Office of Accountability and Testing will review any materials a PSU submits. PSUs and the Office of Accountability and Testing must work together to maintain the security of the testing program.

Third-Party Service Providers and Personally Identifiable Information

PSUs can contract with third-party data-sharing vendors. However, any third-party application that interfaces with the student information system must comply with the NCDPI third-party vendor policy at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/about-dpi/technology-services/third-party-data-integration>. In doing so, the third party can be designated a "school official" as defined by the [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\)](#). According to the FERPA, "a 'school official' includes a teacher, school

principal, president, chancellor, board member, trustee, registrar, counselor, admissions officer, attorney, accountant, human resources professional, information systems specialist, and support or clerical personnel.” Whether a third-party provider, such as Google apps. for Education or Microsoft 365, is designated a school official as defined by the FERPA, is at the discretion of the PSU. The legal relationship with third-party service providers is by and between the PSU and the third-party service providers. The NCDPI does not endorse or prohibit the use of any third-party vendors. However, PSUs are encouraged to consult with their legal counsel and leadership when determining which third party meets their specific requirements. Such requirements must include evidence/assurance that the third-party vendor is FERPA compliant. The PSU is responsible for the security of students’ personally identifiable information (PII).

PSUs are responsible for making sure the contracted vendor is compliant with the FERPA. Only PSU-contracted sharing services that provide evidence of the FERPA compliance should be used when sharing PII via shared files. Personal email or personal sharing services accounts must never be used to transfer student data or PII.

Handling and Transmitting Personally Identifiable Information

PSUs and the NCDPI staff frequently need to share information from individual student records to resolve data issues and answer program area questions. Employees of PSUs, the NCDPI, or other education institutions are legally and ethically obliged to safeguard the confidentiality of any private information they access while performing official duties. Confidential information regarding students and staff should always be transmitted securely.

The [FERPA \(20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#) is a federal law that applies to all educational agencies and institutions (e.g., schools) that receive funding under any program administered by the US Department of Education. Among several purposes, FERPA was enacted to protect the privacy of students’ educational records.

For those PSUs with full encryption capabilities, transported data and other electronic transporting devices containing NCDPI data should be encrypted. This requires the recipient of the data to have corresponding decryption capabilities.

To protect the confidentiality of individuals from those who are not authorized to have access to individual-level data, PII should be encrypted during transmission using the:

- **Secure FTP** server on SFTP or FTPS protocols, as this is the preferred method and most widely accepted standard for transmitting encrypted data.

If the third party wants to install a plugin or create a direct connection to PowerSchool/NCSIS it must follow the process outlined on the NCDPI website: [Third Party Data Integration Process](#).

Fax machines and printers used to send and receive secure data must be located in secure areas.

Secure test questions, answer choices, or portions of secure test questions and answer choices must not be sent via email. PSUs should follow their board of education policy for secure data transmissions.

PSUs should not use private or personal accounts to store students' PII. For example, an organizationally owned Google Workspace account would be acceptable if approved by the local data storage policy; however, a personally owned Google account should not be used.

Furthermore, it is recommended that PSUs use the Data Leak Protection feature of Google Workspace or Microsoft 365 to protect data, even though FERPA compliance does not require Data Leak Protection.

For additional information, see the publication *Best Practices Guide: PII and Email* at [Data Management Resources | NCDPI](#).

Viewing Secure State Tests and Obtaining Data for Research

[General Statute § 115C-174.13 \(a\)](#) states that "until the State Board of Education designates that a test is released, any test developed, adopted, or provided by the State Board of Education, as provided in this Article, is not a public record within the meaning of [G.S. §132-1](#). The State Board of Education may develop rules to allow inspection of a test prior to release, but shall require that individuals inspecting the test meet the same standards for confidentiality required for employees of local boards of education in test administration. As used in this section, the term 'test' includes both the test and related test materials."

Secure test materials include, but are not limited to, blueprints, test layout forms, item pools, operational and field test books, test questions, and test book sections. Secure test materials may be in either electronic or paper format. North Carolina test materials are costly to generate; every precaution must be taken to ensure all test materials remain secure at all times.

The normal course of the test development process includes educator and stakeholder involvement in the following processes: test specifications, test development, question writing, and reviews; experimental form and section, bias, and operational form reviews; range finding; standard setting; and alignment studies. During these processes, educators and stakeholders are asked to view secure test materials but are bound by a signed test security agreement.

In special circumstances, exceptions can be made for parents or legal guardians. Parents or legal guardians who request the opportunity to view secure test materials must send a receipted letter of request to the Senior Director of the Office of Accountability and Testing at the following address:

Tammy Howard, Senior Director
Office of Accountability and Testing
NC Department of Public Instruction
6307 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

Letters of request should include the following:

- the specific name of the test requested to view,
- the reason(s) for the request, and
- explanation of how the information will be used after the review.

For parents and legal guardians granted permission to view secure test materials, the review must occur at the NCDPI in Raleigh under secure conditions with NCDPI staff present throughout the viewing period. Parents and legal guardians may not view secure test materials at the district or school sites nor duplicate, scan, copy, photograph, or otherwise create a record of information contained within them. The *Testing Code of Ethics* may be referenced for information relative to test security requirements.

Parents and legal guardians granted permission to view secure test materials will not be able to view the same test form that was administered to their child, but it will be a parallel and equivalent form of the test. Parents and legal guardians will not be able to view their student's completed test. Before viewing secure test materials, information will be provided to describe how tests are developed. Several public documents about the process may be shared. The NCDPI staff member(s) may also have on hand a copy of additional documentation, such as standard-setting reports, technical manuals, or a report of test results that the parents and legal guardians may view during the meeting.

While parents and legal guardians may take notes about the information shared before viewing the secure test materials, notetaking is not permitted

during the viewing. Also, before viewing secure test materials, each parent and legal guardian is required to read and sign a test security agreement form. One copy of the form will be retained by the NCDPI; each parent and guardian will receive a copy. Parents and legal guardians who refuse to sign the test security agreement form may not view secure test materials.

Research Data Requests

Private companies, higher education staff, and students may request school data for research purposes. Test coordinators and other school officials must never release test data beyond what is publicly available on the NCDPI website. Researchers should be referred to the reports and data posted at the following link: [Data & Reports | NCDPI](#).

Information regarding the NCDPI research data request process is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/research-data-requests>.

If more data is requested than is publicly available, the individual should contact the NC Education Research Data Center at <https://childandfamilypolicy.duke.edu/north-carolina-education-research-data/> or the NCDPI, at research@dpi.nc.gov.

Maintaining the Confidentiality and Security of Testing and Accountability Data

PSU test coordinators are responsible for handling confidential North Carolina testing and accountability data. Extreme caution and care must be taken to maintain the confidentiality and security of this data. Access and use of these data must comply with the [FERPA](#) as well as all portions of [North Carolina General Statute § 115C](#) that pertain to the use of educational data. Violations may result in the withdrawal of US Department of Education funds and constitute misdemeanors under North Carolina law.

Confidential data must be transferred using secure methods (e.g., Secure File Transfer Protocol or receipted parcel delivery services, such as the US Postal Service, United Parcel Service [UPS], Federal Express). When placing confidential data on portable devices (e.g., laptops, thumb drives), the portable device must be protected by encryption or password protection.

In certain limited situations, confidential student, school, or district data may be used in presentations related to school or district improvement. However, this is permissible only when presented to personnel in the school or district who have access to the confidential data of students for purposes of improving instruction. Even in such situations, caution must be taken to ensure the data remain secure at all times.

Some specific examples of confidential data that must not be released to anyone include the following:

- **WinScan files.** WinScan files contain data that are for test development and accountability purposes only, and their release would violate test security. See the [Security of Student Test Records and Data](#) subsection in this handbook for additional information on the release of student test records.
- **Free and reduced meal data and direct certified data for the identification of economically disadvantaged students (EDS).** The EDS data are property of the NCDPI and School Nutrition Services. The Office of Accountability and Testing has access to the data through a Memorandum of Understanding. Test coordinators are bound by the requirements of the Memorandum of Understanding and FERPA to preserve the confidentiality of this data. Releasing this data to anyone in any manner that would allow the identification of the EDS status of an individual student would be a violation of federal law.

PSUs or schools must not release secure data to the public. If persistent requests are made, the test coordinator may instruct the requestor to send a receipted letter of request to the Senior Director of the Office of Accountability and Testing at the following address:

Tammy Howard, Senior Director
Office of Accountability and Testing
NC Department of Public Instruction
6307 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6307

Letters of request must include the following:

- the specific data requested,
- the reason(s) for the request, and
- explanation of how the data will be used.

Additional information may be required to facilitate a reply to such a request.

Security of Student Test Records and Data

Test records are part of student education records that contain sensitive information. Access to these records must be restricted to individuals with a legitimate need to access these data. These data are not for personal use and should not be distributed in such a way that can identify individual student scores. When producing summaries of student performance, any group with less than ten individuals must not be reported because it might be possible to identify the individual students that make up that group.

Instead, the report should show a "*" or "N/A" (or other symbol) with an appropriate explanation.

In any group where the percentage of individuals is greater than ninety-five percent or less than five percent, the values may not be displayed because of FERPA privacy regulations. In these cases, the results will be shown as >95% or <5%. This ensures that student information remains anonymous. The policy further ensures compliance with the interpretation of FERPA that small cell sizes must be removed from statistics made public or offered to outside organizations or persons to avoid the disclosure of personally identifiable data.

Individual student records must not be sent via email because this is not considered a secure means of transferring information.

The [FERPA \(20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99\)](#) protects the privacy of student education records. Under this law, parents and legal guardians have certain rights to inspect their children's education records. Usually, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student to release any information from a student's education record. According to [34 CFR § 99.31](#), "...FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions:

- School officials with legitimate educational interest;
- Other schools to which a student is transferring;
- Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
- Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
- Organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
- Accrediting organizations;
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
- Appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
- State and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law."

O. Resource Documents

North Carolina's Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

North Carolina's [Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery \(CDM\)](#) is provided by the SBE and the Office of Advanced Learning to help PSUs implement CDM policy [CCRE-001](#). The Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery offers specific implementation guidelines addressing how students can earn course credit in a manner that does not require specific seat-time. The Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, Frequently Asked Questions, and the CDM Toolkit may be found on the [NCDPI's Credit by Demonstrated Mastery webpage](#). The [Procedural Guidelines for Implementing Credit by Demonstrated Mastery](#) are provided by the Office of Accountability and Testing to help PSUs understand the requirements of demonstrating mastery in Phase I through testing, the generation of scores, and how/when CDM scores are utilized.

Process for Requesting Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies, Conditions, or Both

There may be rare instances in which a student is unable to participate in a state assessment during the testing window, including makeup dates, because of a significant medical emergency, condition, or both. Examples include, but are not limited to, circumstances involving students who are (1) in the final stages of a terminal or degenerative illness, (2) comatose, or (3) receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency. Under these circumstances, a school may request from the Office of Accountability and Testing a testing exception for the student. If a medical exception is granted, the student remains enrolled in the school during this period; however, the student does not take the assessment(s), and the student is not included in accountability data when calculating participation rates.

Failure to adhere to the process for requesting a testing exception, or not including all requested information, may result in the need to resubmit the request or cause a delay in the response. All requests must be submitted for consideration through the online Medical Exception Request System in NC Education's NCTest Admin. The requests must be submitted by the PSU test coordinator and have the superintendent's or school director's approval prior to submission in NC Education's NCTest Admin system. Once a medical exception request is successfully submitted to the Office of Accountability and Testing, the NCDPI medical exception review committee will evaluate the request and securely transmit a decision notification to the PSU.

Information that can be shared with parents, legal guardians, or students

can be found on the NCDPI Testing Policy and Operations webpage under "Guidelines, Policies, and Memos" at [2024-25 Request for Testing Exceptions Based on Significant Medical Emergencies and/or Conditions](#).

Policies and Procedures for Students Receiving Services at a Visited School

Accountability policies and procedures regarding students receiving services at a visited school apply to all public school students in grades K–12.

Per [G.S. § 115C-366\(a\)](#), "All students under the age 21 years who are domiciled in a school administrative unit and who have not been removed from school for cause, or who have not obtained a high school diploma, are entitled to all the privileges and advantages of the public schools to which they are assigned by the local boards of education." Per [G.S. § 115C-107.1\(a\)\(2\)](#), "any child with a disability who is receiving special education and related services and has not graduated from high school with a regular diploma is eligible to continue to receive a free, appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which that child reaches the age of 22." The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA) participation regulation [34 CFR 300.116\(e\)](#) specifies that in determining the educational placement of a student with a disability, "each public agency must ensure that a child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general curriculum." To exercise this responsibility for determining the least restrictive environment, the teams' decision-making process would need to begin within the context of an age-appropriate classroom.

It is the responsibility of the district to assign a base school for each child of school age residing within the district who qualifies under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school. A school administrative unit may decide that it is in the student's best interest to receive services at another school or from a service provider that is not part of the school system. These courses or services may be educational or special needs, such as those for children with disabilities or for ELs. In these instances, the base school still assumes responsibility for the student's education.

With the permission of the local school administrative unit, a school has the right to allow a non-North Carolina public school student to attend. In doing so, the school accepts responsibility for the student's education.

It is important that districts and schools understand the policies and procedures for including all students attending a school (whether in membership, cross-enrolled, or visiting) in the Annual Testing Program.

- Students who are cross-enrolled or are visiting a school are required to participate in the state's testing program, if eligible.
- Eligibility is determined by the Annual Testing Program and includes grade-level and course enrollment. Specific eligibility requirements are published each year and can be found in the test administration guides.

The policies and procedures for reporting test results apply.

- If there is a base school, test results go back to the base school and are included in the accountability results of the base school.
- If there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the accountability results of the visited school.

Definition of Terms

1. Average daily membership (ADM) – Average daily membership is the number of students in membership who receive an elementary, middle, or secondary education at public expense. To be included in ADM, a student must have a class schedule that is at least one-half of the school's instructional day. Students who have a schedule less than one-half of an instructional day must be assigned as visiting students and are not included in ADM.
2. Base school – The base school is the school in which the student is reported for ADM (i.e., in membership). A district cannot serve as a base school. Each local board of education is authorized and directed to provide for the assignment to a public school (i.e., base school) of each child residing within the district who is qualified under the laws of North Carolina for admission to a public school.
3. Cross-enrolled school – A cross-enrolled school is a school other than the student's base school that provides a course(s) or educational services to the student that are not available at the student's base school.
4. Cross-enrolled student – A cross-enrolled student is in membership at the base school but is taking a course(s) or receiving educational services at another school.
5. Visited school – The visited school is the school in which the student takes a course(s) or receives educational services. The student is not reported in ADM (i.e., membership) at the visited school. A district cannot serve as a visited school.
6. Visiting student – A visiting student is not in ADM at a base school but is taking a course(s) or receiving educational services at a visited school.
7. Community residential centers, developmental day centers, or contracted service providers – Districts and schools "furnishing special education and related services to children with disabilities may contract with private special education facilities or service providers to furnish any of these services that the public providers are unable to furnish" (pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-111.2](#)).

8. Clustered exceptional children (EC) students (term for accountability purposes) – Clustered exceptional children students are students with disabilities (with current IEPs) who may be grouped in a school other than their school attendance area. EC students must be administered all required state tests. The test results of these students may be electronically moved to an attendance area school determined by the district whereby test results will be included in the accountability results of that school.

Cross-enrolled students within the same districts. A cross-enrolled student's test results are included in the accountability results at the base school. There are several contexts in which students may be cross-enrolled (i.e., attending two different schools). For accountability purposes, the base school and visited school should adhere to the following procedures regarding cross-enrolled students:

- The base school should have a master schedule for the cross-enrolled student. The master schedule for the cross-enrolled student should
 - include all classes and courses taken at the base school and include each class and course taken at the visited school, and
 - use appropriate state course codes.
- The base school is responsible for ensuring the cross-enrolled student is administered all required state tests.

Visiting students. A visiting student's test results are included in the accountability results at the visited school. There are several contexts in which a student may be a visiting student (i.e., attending a school without a base school). For accountability purposes, the visited school should adhere to the following procedures for students who are visiting but do not have a base school:

- PowerSchool/NCSIS should record the student as visiting and not in ADM.
- The visited school should have a master schedule for the student. The master schedule for the student should
 - include all courses taken at the visited school, and
 - use appropriate state course codes.
- The visited school is responsible for ensuring eligible students are administered required state tests.
 - If the visited school administers a state test to the student, the student's test results (e.g., EOC, EOG) remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.

Examples for Clarification

The following are examples and guidelines regarding requirements to test cross-enrolled and visiting students:

1. **Foreign exchange students.** The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to foreign exchange

students. The student is enrolled in a visited school as a visitor and not counted in ADM. Test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.

2. **Department of Defense school, private school, or home-schooled students.** The district agrees to allow a Department of Defense school, a private school, or a home-schooled student to take a class(es) or course(s) at the visited school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests for the class or course the student is enrolled in are administered to the visiting student. Because there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.
3. **Nondomiciliary students attending a North Carolina school pursuant to an agreement with a district or school.** In some instances, pursuant to an agreement with the district or school, students may be admitted to a North Carolina school in which they are not domiciliary. For example, a student's family may live in Virginia and one of the parents teaches in North Carolina. The student (pursuant to an agreement with the district or school) attends the school in which the parent teaches. The student is not reported in ADM but is eligible to take state tests in the class(es) or course(s) the student is taking through the school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the visited school. Note: The student is eligible for a North Carolina high school diploma.

Nondomiciliary students meeting specific requirements. A student who is not domiciliary of a local school administrative unit may attend, without payment of tuition, the public schools of that school administrative unit if the student resides with an adult domiciliary of that unit as a result of the death, serious illness, or incarceration of a parent or legal guardian; the abandonment by a parent or legal guardian; the inability of the parent or legal guardian to provide adequate care and supervision because of a physical or mental condition; or the loss or uninhabitability of the student's home as a result of a natural disaster. The student must not be under a term of suspension or expulsion, and affidavits must be completed by the adult with whom the student resides and the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian ([G.S. § 115C-366](#)). If a student meets the requirements of G.S. § 115C-366, the student is in ADM. Therefore, this is the student's base school. The district and school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school.

4. **Nondomiciliary students attending a NC school as due to the parents' or legal guardians' active military deployment.** Pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-366 \(1\)\(g\)](#), a student who is a nondomiciliary of North

Carolina as a result of the parents' or legal guardians' active military deployment may attend, without payment of tuition, the public schools within a district or a specific school if the student meets the following requirements: (1) the student resides with an adult who is a domiciliary of that district or school, (2) the period of deployment is thirty days or longer, and (3) the school is provided evidence of the deployment along with the affidavits required under subdivision (3) of subsection (a3) of this Statute. If a student meets the requirements of [G.S. § 115C-366](#), the student is in ADM at a base school within the district or school. Therefore, the district or school is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

5. **Special education services.** Districts and schools furnishing special education and related services to children with disabilities may contract with community residential centers, developmental day centers, or contracted service providers to furnish services that the public providers are unable to furnish (pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-111.2](#)). [Title VIII, General Provisions, Part A, Sec.8101\(1\)\(D\)](#) of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states:

"(D) CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES. If a local educational agency makes a tuition payment to a private school or to a public school of another local educational agency for a child with a disability, as defined in section 602 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Secretary shall, for the purpose of this Act, consider the child to be in attendance at a school of the agency making the payment." The child is not considered to be in attendance at a school of the agency receiving the payment. All agencies not associated with local school administrative units, the Department of Health and Human Services, or the Division of Juvenile Justice must meet standards that apply to state and local educational agencies and secure the rights the students would have if served by the state or local educational agency.

- a. Community residential centers. Pursuant to [G.S. § 115C-366 \(a1\)](#), "children living in and cared for and supported by an institution established, operated, or incorporated for the purpose of rearing and caring for children who do not live with their parents are considered legal residents of the local school administrative unit [district] in which the institution is located. These children are eligible for admission to the public schools of the local school administrative unit as provided in this section." For additional information that outlines in more detail the steps community residential centers are to follow, see the [Community Residential Centers—Testing Policy](#) subsection in Section O of this handbook.

Example: A student residing in County A goes to live at a residential center in County B. As soon as the student becomes the ward of the residential center in County B, the student is no longer in membership in County A. County B must select a school within County B and enroll the student as a visitor. County B is responsible for the educational services of the student. All required state tests must be administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school.

- b. Developmental day centers. Special education and related services are provided to eligible children with disabilities who are placed in accredited developmental day centers by local school administrative units.

Example: If the district cannot provide services for a student, the district may place the student in a developmental day center. In this case, the student is enrolled at a base school in the district; the developmental day center becomes an extension of the school. The district is responsible for testing the student on all required state tests. The test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

Example: If a district has made a free and appropriate public education available in the district and the parents of a child elect to place the child in a developmental day center for educational services, the district is not responsible for the cost of education, nor is the student required to be tested.

- c. Contracted service providers. Local school administrative units may contract with service providers to furnish services that public providers are unable to furnish.

Example: A student in County A needs an educational service that is only available in County B. County A contracts with County B for the service. ADM for the student remains in County A. County A is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the student. Test results are used for accountability results at the base school in County A.

- d. Parentally placed private or home school students. Parentally placed private or home school students who receive services through a service plan are not required to be tested.

Example: Districts and schools are required to ensure equitable participation for students with disabilities. In cases where a parentally placed student in a home school attends a public school through a service plan, such as speech therapy, the student may be enrolled as a visitor. The student is not eligible for participation in the Annual Testing Program unless the student also enrolls in a content area course. In this case, refer to letter e below.

- e. Parent or legal guardian contracts with the PSU for a course. If the parent or legal guardian contracts with the local school administrative unit for a course, then the student needs to be tested. The school administrative unit is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the visiting student. Because there is no base school, test results remain at the visited school and are included in the visited school's accountability results.
 - f. North Carolina publicly places a student in a private facility. In a situation in which North Carolina publicly places a student in a private facility during the school year, the district and base school are responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered.
 - The district and base school are responsible for notifying the private facility of the required tests, policies, and procedures, and for arranging the test administration date and location. If the private facility will administer the state test(s), the district and base school must ensure all security policies and procedures are maintained.
 - For accountability purposes, the test results of such a student must be included in the accountability results at the base school.
6. **Summer program students taking EOC and EOG tests.** The summer program is an additional learning opportunity that occurs outside of the regular academic calendar. Tests taken at the end of a summer program must be completed before the end of the current accountability year and uploaded to the Office of Accountability and Testing by the defined end of the accountability year date. Accountability results will be attributed to the base school for the student in the spring of the accountability year.
7. **Summer school students taking EOC tests.** Summer school takes place during the summer and provides students the opportunity to participate in a high school course in one of two ways:
- a. Course for credit. Students receiving instruction in courses that require the administration of the EOC test and having obtained a proficient score previously on the EOC test may use the proficient score as at

least twenty percent of their final grade, or they may elect to take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course. Students who have not obtained a proficient score on the EOC test before 2024–25 must take the appropriate EOC test at the completion of the course.

- b. **Credit recovery.** Students receiving instruction in credit recovery courses may be administered the appropriate EOC test no later than thirty days after completion of the course.

Summer school test scores. Summer school test scores are returned to the base school the student attended in the spring for inclusion in the accountability results for the new accountability year.

Example: Student A attended school at School X in the spring of 2024–25. This student then attended summer school at School Y in July of 2024. The student's resulting EOC score will be attributed to School X in the 2025–26 school year.

- 8. **Clustered EC students.** Clustered EC students—a term used for accountability purposes—are students with disabilities (with current IEPs) who may be grouped in a school other than their school attendance area. Clustered EC students must be administered all required state tests. It is a district's decision as to where test results from EC students' scores will count for accountability purposes. If students are appropriately cross enrolled in PowerSchool/NCSIS to a school within a district for instructional purposes, the students will have their scores sent to the base school as defined in PowerSchool/NCSIS. If a student is not scheduled in this manner, districts may complete the ACCHOME process to have the student's accountability measures attributed to the appropriate school.
- 9. **Hospital or homebound students.** Educational services for hospital or homebound students are typically provided at a home or hospital by school or district personnel. If a student is confined at home or in a hospital, is unable to attend the base school, and is receiving homebound instruction from the base school or district, the student is considered hospital or homebound. Once PSU personnel have made contact (i.e., a face-to-face meeting) with the student to provide instruction, the student should be counted present for the span of time during which regularly scheduled hospital, or homebound instructional services are delivered. (Supporting documentation should be maintained at the school.) The base school is responsible for ensuring that all required state tests are administered. Medical exceptions can be submitted, if appropriate, and must include the current hospital or homebound documentation with current service dates noted. For accountability purposes, the test results of a hospital or homebound student must be included in the accountability results at the base school.

10. **North Carolina Virtual Public School.** The North Carolina Virtual Public School is not responsible for administering state tests. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
11. **Learn and earn early college high schools.** Learn and earn early college high schools provide students with the opportunity to complete high school with a high school diploma and an associate degree or two years of transferable credit at no cost to the student. To participate in learn and earn, students must meet the course prerequisites set by the participating college or university. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school. The graduation data is reported for the school where the student is included in ADM.
12. **Community college courses.** A public school student taking a community college course must be enrolled with the appropriate state course code designated for community college courses. Community college officials have the responsibility for verifying eligibility and acceptance of the articulated course or courses on a student's high school transcript. For credit to be awarded in any individual course, all criteria of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges must be met. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
13. **Teacher-in-treatment programs.** Teacher-in-treatment programs are located at centers across the state, but the centers are not affiliated with a district or school. Students who are participating in a teacher-in-treatment program should remain in membership in their base school. Days of participation at the center should be posted as absences. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
14. **North Carolina Department of Public Safety Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJ).** The DJJ facilities are responsible for administering all required state tests. Scores are not included in accountability results.
15. **Extended day program.** For students who attend an extended school day program and are in membership at a base school, the base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
16. **Vocational and career centers.** Students can take special vocational courses as well as academic courses at vocational and career centers. The student must be enrolled in the course at the base school. The base school is responsible for administering all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at the base school.
17. **Schools housed in the same building.** There are several instances where two schools, each having different school codes, are housed in the

same building (e.g., a S.T.E.M. school and a traditional school). For example, School A has school code XXX and School B has school code YYY. If a student is enrolled in School A and walks down the hall to take a class in School B, the student should be cross enrolled at School B. School A assumes responsibility for the education of the student and must ensure the student is administered all required state tests. Test results shall be included in the accountability results at School A, which is the base school.

Community Residential Centers—Testing Policy

Per [G.S. § 115C-366 \(a1\)](#), "Children living in and cared for and supported by an institution established, operated, or incorporated for the purpose of rearing and caring for children who do not live with their parents are considered legal residents of the local school administrative unit in which the institution is located. These children are eligible for admission to the public schools of the local school administrative unit as provided in this section." All required state tests must be administered to these students. Test results are included in the accountability results at the base school.

The steps local school administrative units should follow for testing students at community residential centers are as follows:

1. Assign students at community residential centers to a base school.
 - a. Assign the students in grades 3–12 who are served by a community residential center to a base school that includes their grade configuration. Grades 3–12 cannot use school code 292 or any other school code under 300. Students must be assigned to a school in the district. The district can determine which base school the scores will go to.
 - b. Only students at grades PP, PK, K, 1, 2, and 12 or 13 (for students with disabilities who have completed the twelfth grade but have not graduated from high school and continue to receive a free appropriate public education until the end of the school year in which they reach the age of twenty-two) can use school code 292 as their base school number.
2. The district is responsible for ensuring all required state tests are administered to the students. Test results are included in the accountability results at the assigned base school.
3. The district test coordinator is responsible for ensuring all testing policies and procedures are implemented at the community residential centers and test security is maintained at all times.
4. Districts have two options available for assigning test administrators at community residential centers:
 - a. Designated staff who are employed by the district and have received training in the appropriate test administration(s) can administer the

required tests to the students residing at the community residential centers.

- b. Community residential staff members who provide instruction to the student(s) residing in the center may attend test administrator training provided by the district accountability staff and administer the required test(s) to their students. The following procedures apply for this option:
 - i. Community residential staff must attend face-to-face test administration training (including training on the guidelines for the use of accommodations) conducted by the district before the administration of any state-required test(s).
 - ii. A test security agreement by and between the district and community residential center and its employee(s) must be signed at the time of training and kept on file at the district. The agreement is to ensure compliance with all state policies and procedures pertaining to the administration of secure state tests, test administrator training, irregularities reporting, materials handling, and test security. (The district assumes responsibility for test security.)
 - iii. For online tests and NCEXTEND1, the district will need to collaborate with each community residential center test administrator to create an NC Education account. District test coordinators must ensure that these accounts have proper roles and permissions. On days before testing, the district test coordinators must go under the district tab on the enrollment screen and add students to the appropriate course. District test coordinators must ensure all pre- and post-test activities are completed for online tests as described in the appropriate test administration guides (e.g., scheduling test windows, ensuring proper entry of SIQs, meeting all technology requirements).
 - iv. For students with a documented need to record answers in a manner other than directly entering them into the online testing system (e.g., paper test administration, audiotape recording, assistive technology device, braille writer/braille paper), test administrators or other designated school personnel must transcribe the student's recorded answers into the online testing system. The students' responses are included in the school's accountability results. If the responses are not transcribed into the online testing system, the student will not receive a score. Transcription and verification must occur under secure conditions in a group setting (i.e., three or more designated school personnel). Note: For steps to follow when transcribing students' responses, see the [Transcription Instructions](#) subsection in this handbook.
 - v. In some instances, in which the district has a current, signed security agreement between the community residential center and

the district ensuring the security of all student data, the community residential center employees who are trained as test administrators may be provided access to the Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS). The district assumes responsibility for test security. For community residential center employees who are trained as test administrators but have not been given access to ECATS, the district test coordinators must plan to provide community center teachers with the necessary student accommodation information for testing purposes.

NC School Report Cards

The North Carolina School Report Cards provide information about K–12 public schools for local school systems and for the state.

Each report card includes a school or district profile and information about student performance, safe schools, access to technology, and teacher quality. By reviewing report card data, parents and others can learn more about school progress and resources.

State Testing Results

Reports of student performance for the EOG, EOC, and NCEXTEND1 tests are published annually in the Green Book.

Disaggregated state, district, and school performance data are available at <https://ncdpi.tiny.us/TestingStateLevel>.

Accountability data sets and reports are available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/accountability-data-sets-and-reports>.

The North Carolina SAT report and Advanced Placement (AP) results are available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/north-carolina-sat-and-ap-reports>.

Results from The ACT and ACT WorkKeys administrations are available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting/act-reports>.

State Board of Education Policies, North Carolina Administrative Codes, and Legislative Requirements

[Appendix P](#) of this handbook contains SBE policies, N.C. Admin. Codes, and other legislative requirements related to the Annual Testing Program.

Appendixes

Appendix A: Directions for Accessing the *Policies and Procedures Training Course(s)* for Online and Paper Test Administrations

Directions for accessing the course(s):

1. Use the following link to access NC Education and the virtual training courses: <https://center.ncsu.edu/training/>
2. Log in to NC Education with your username and password.
3. In the navigation box, click the word Courses.
4. Select the appropriate course name based on the test format to be administered. Test administrators giving both online and paper tests must enroll and complete both courses.
 - a. *Online Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course*
 - b. *Paper Test Administrations—Policies and Procedures Training Course*
5. Click Enroll me.
6. Click Enter in the middle of the page to begin the course.
 - a. Enable “pop-ups” to access the course.
 - b. The course will open in a separate window.
 - c. The course tracks progress in the event the participant needs to log out and finish later. To save course progress, the participant must click the Exit Course button in the top right corner of the screen. If this button is not clicked, course progress will not be saved.
7. The last page of the course displays a fillable certificate of completion. The participant must type in his or her name and the date of completion. There are instructions on the bottom of the screen to assist participants with saving and printing a copy of the certificate of completion.
8. After obtaining the certificate of completion, a hand-waving icon will appear on the screen and the browser may be closed.

Appendix B: Sample Parent or Legal Guardian Letter— Opting Out of Required State Testing

School letterhead

Date

Dear (Parent or Legal Guardian) _____,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to express your concerns regarding the testing mandates of the Annual Testing Program.

Having received your request for a waiver, _____ (*insert district or school*) understands your concerns. However, our school system is obligated to abide by state and federal laws which require that all public school students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) in grades 3 through 8 and high school courses requiring an end-of-course test, must participate in the Annual Testing Program.

North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required state testing. The only exceptions granted are for a limited number of students who have extenuating circumstances related to a significant medical emergency or condition and are unable to participate in a specific test administration. Additionally, homeschooled students are required to be assessed annually on a nationally normed standardized test.

[N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309](#) requires schools within a district and charter, lab, regional, and residential schools to “use results from all EOCs as a minimum of 20 percent of the student’s final grade for each respective course.”

As such, a student’s grade for these courses and overall grade-point-average calculation may be negatively impacted by not taking the required end-of-course state tests.

Please know that _____ (*insert district or school*) is trying to be responsive to parents’ and legal guardians’ concerns, yet we must adhere to state and federal laws that address the educational needs of all children.

Sincerely,

Appendix C: Parent's or Legal Guardian's Right to Know— Sample Letter

School letterhead

Date

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian _____,

This letter is to inform you that your student will take districtwide and state-mandated tests this school year as reflected on the attached test calendar, which is also posted online at _____.

Per [16 N.C. Admin Code 06D .0307](#)—Test Administration in Public Schools, “(g) LEAs shall, at the beginning of each school year, provide information to students and parents or guardians advising them of the districtwide and State-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year. In addition, LEAs shall advise students and parents or guardians of the dates the tests will be administered and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents shall include whether the State Board of Education or the local board of education requires the test(s). (h) LEAs shall report scores resulting from the administration of State-mandated tests from the Annual Testing Program to students and parents or guardians no later than 30 days after the test is administered and along with available score interpretation information within 30 days from receipt of the scores and interpretive documentation from the NCDPI.”

[N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#) requires all public school students in membership (i.e., enrolled in a school) in grades 3 through 8 and high school courses requiring an end-of-course assessment, to participate in the Annual Testing Program. North Carolina does not allow any student to opt out of required state testing. The only exceptions granted are for a limited number of students who meet certain eligibility requirements or have extenuating circumstances related to a significant medical emergency or condition and are unable to participate in a specific test administration.

[N.C. Admin Code 06D .0309](#) requires schools to “use results from all EOCs as a minimum of 20 percent of the student’s final grade for each respective course”. As such, a student’s grade for these courses and overall grade-point-average calculation may be negatively impacted by not taking the required end-of-course state tests.

Sincerely,

Enclosure: Test calendar

Appendix D: Confidentiality and Test Security Agreements

Test coordinators will find the following confidentiality and test security agreements on the subsequent pages:

- [District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)
- [Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement](#)

This form must be completed annually by the district test coordinator and kept on file with the regional accountability coordinator. If a new person is employed in this position, then the new person must complete this form as soon as possible.

District Test Coordinator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the district test coordinator, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that these test materials must remain secure at all times.
6. in order to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
7. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material.
8. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the test coordinator's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability to me.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form must be completed annually by the principal or director and kept on file with the school test coordinator. If a new person is employed in this position, then the new person must complete this form as soon as possible.

Principal or Director Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the principal or director, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I have read and will follow school policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested fairly.
6. I am responsible for ensuring all necessary school personnel are identified and trained prior to any test administration.
7. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that these test materials must remain secure at all times.
8. I am responsible for ensuring a procedure is in place at my school to assure that all test materials are accounted for and secure at all times while they are in the school's possession.
9. in order to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
10. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material.
11. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the principal's/director's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability to me.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This form must be completed annually by the school test coordinator and kept on file with the district test coordinator, except for charter, lab, regional, and residential school test coordinators who must submit this form to the regional accountability coordinator. If a new person is employed in this position, then the new person must complete this form as soon as possible.*

School Test Coordinator*

Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the school test coordinator, I understand that:

1. maintaining test security and student confidentiality is critical to the mission of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).
2. my compliance with federal and state laws is crucial to maintaining the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
3. my assigned duties and responsibilities may involve the use of the NCDPI's data, local data, or other information that is confidential.
4. federal and state laws prohibit me from including or disclosing personally identifiable information in any form of communication with any unauthorized individual or entity, except as required in the performance of my assigned duties. Such communication includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messaging, or social media account posts (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
5. I have read and will follow school policies and procedures to ensure all eligible students are tested fairly.
6. I am responsible for ensuring all necessary school personnel are identified and trained prior to any test administration.
7. I acknowledge that all North Carolina test materials are the property of the NCDPI and that these test materials must remain secure at all times.
8. I am responsible for ensuring a procedure is in place at my school to assure that all test materials are accounted for and secure at all times while they are in the school's possession.
9. in order to ensure test security, I will not discuss or share information relating to the contents of any test, testing process, or test scoring. This restriction applies to discussion with mass media, including, but not limited to, print, radio and television media, and social media.
10. I will not publish any secure testing or scoring material or share this material.
11. I am obligated to read the *Testing Code of Ethics* in its entirety annually and always understand and act in accordance with the test coordinator's obligations described therein.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability to me.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date _____

*To include charter, lab, regional, and residential test coordinators

This form must be completed and signed by the test administrator at each test administrator training session and kept on file with the school test coordinator.

Test Administrator Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

School Name: _____ Test Name: _____

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the test administrator,
I understand that:

1. I cannot be assigned to test sessions where my relatives or wards are testing and where the proctor is a personal family member or close acquaintance.
2. I must administer the test listed above according to all state and local regulations and policies as printed in the test administration guide, the *Testing Code of Ethics*, and other information provided in the training session(s) conducted by the school test coordinator.
3. I must comply with federal and state laws to maintain the public's trust in North Carolina public schools.
4. I must review, study, and understand the test administration guide and the *Testing Code of Ethics* that was given to me by the school test coordinator.
5. I must count and record the number of secure test materials, including supplemental materials, before and after the test administration and notify the school test coordinator of any discrepancies in the counts.
6. I must maintain test security at all times while test materials are in my possession.
7. I will not copy, post, or reproduce test items in any manner or in any medium for any reason (e.g., Facebook, X [Twitter], Instagram, Snapchat).
8. I will not modify, change, alter, or tamper with student responses during or after the test administration.
9. I will conduct an unbiased administration of the test according to the policies, procedures, and directions (as written) in the test administration guide.
10. I must remain in the room throughout the entire test administration.
11. I will report any testing irregularities to the school test coordinator on the day of the occurrence.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above. I understand that violation of this agreement constitutes personal misconduct and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including, dismissal, without prior warning. Further, I understand that violation of this agreement could lead to additional legal liability to me.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

If proctors are utilized, this form must be completed each testing cycle and signed at the conclusion of proctor training. A copy of this signed form must be kept on file at the school with the school test coordinator.

Proctor Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement

In performing my assigned duties and responsibilities as the proctor, I understand that:

1. I cannot be assigned to test sessions where my relatives or wards are testing and where the test administrator is a personal family member or close acquaintance.
2. I cannot distribute or collect test materials, read directions, assist students on the test, or review student information or responses.
3. I cannot use a cell phone or electronic device during testing, including breaks. Test administrators and students are not allowed to use cell phones or electronic devices during testing, including breaks. (Students testing online may use approved electronic devices.)
4. I will assist school personnel in maintaining test security at all times by ensuring secure test materials are not discussed or disclosed in any manner (copying, posting, or reproducing).
5. I will assist in monitoring the testing environment and minimize distractions and interruptions in the testing environment.
6. I will assist school personnel in ensuring appropriate test administration procedures are followed.
7. I will assist students with emergencies and restroom breaks.
8. I will assist school personnel in ensuring accommodations are provided appropriately. School staff will discuss the type of accommodation(s) the student(s) will receive, how the test administration will differ from what is considered standard administration, and the specific procedures necessary to provide the accommodations(s) prior to the test administration.
9. I will monitor the distribution of materials as specified by the script in the test administration guide. (Exceptions include approved supplemental materials or designated features such as highlighters, colored pencils, color acetate overlays, and students who receive a sample copy of the English II constructed response space or mathematics grid.)
10. I will monitor students during the test session.
11. I will maintain student confidentiality and must not disclose any personally identifiable information (PII) about individual students. (Student information is protected by federal privacy laws.)
12. I will report all testing irregularities or testing violations to the school test coordinator or principal on the day of occurrence.
13. I have reviewed and understand the *Testing Code of Ethics* (found in the back of *The Proctor's Guide*) before proctoring a test administration.

My signature below indicates my agreement to abide by and fulfill the obligations and duties described above.

Print Name Here: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E: Sample 2024–25 Public School Unit (PSU) Annual Testing Plan

PSU Name: _____ PSU Code: _____

PSU Test Coordinator: _____

PSU test coordinators shall ensure a written annual testing plan for the school is developed and disseminated before the beginning of the school year. Plans should also be available in an electronic format and include “Sample” documents that will be used for testing throughout the year. The annual testing plan clarifies local procedures. Testing staff are still required to read and follow all of the NCDPI’s Annual Testing Program’s publications related to state tests. The superintendent or school director ensures that the PSU accountability contact, and school test coordinators (STCs) are accurately coded in the Educational Directory and Demographical Exchange (EDDIE) throughout the school year. PSUs may use or modify this template to develop their annual testing plan.

Test Administrators and Proctors

- Proctors (**will** or **will not**) be utilized. If utilized, **include a description of local proctor requirements, including the bullets below:**
 - Proctors assigned: (1) a one-on-one, full-time proctors and/or (2) roving proctors.
 - The school will use the following procedures for roving proctors, who can assist up to three test administrators in three testing rooms:
 - Roving proctors will not be responsible for more than three centrally located classrooms.
 - Roving proctors will spend _____ minutes in each room before rotating to the next room to proctor.

Training

- All school staff (i.e., principal, school test coordinator, test administrators) who handle secure test materials must sign a confidentiality and test security agreement.
- Signed confidentiality and test security agreements will be kept (**location**).
- The STC will provide annual accommodations and security training to all instructional staff.
- Training materials and sign-in sheets will be kept (**location**).
- The STC trains all proctors, if utilized, before testing. Proctors sign a confidentiality and test security agreement. Signed proctor agreements are kept on file at the school with the STC.
- The STC trains all potential test administrators at least one week before the first day of testing. Administrators will sign a sign-in sheet and a confidentiality and test security agreement. The school principal or director is encouraged to attend test training.
- Before testing, the STC trains all test administrators on the use of the specific accommodations that will be provided to students in their assigned test settings.

The following chart provides the name of each required test security document, the person(s) required to sign each document, and when each document must be signed.

| Person Responsible | District Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement | Principal or Director—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement | School Test Coordinator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement | Test Administrator—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement | Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement | Public School Unit Annual Testing Plan |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| | By signing the appropriate Confidentiality and Test Security Agreement, testing staff agree to uphold the <i>Testing Code of Ethics</i> . The <i>Testing Code of Ethics</i> does not need to be signed in addition to the security agreement. | | | | | |
| District Test Coordinator | Annually | | | | | Annually |
| School Test Coordinator | | | Annually | | | Annually |
| Charter, Lab, Regional, and Residential School Test Coordinators | | | Annually* | | | Annually* |
| Principal or Director | | Annually | | | | |
| Test Administrator | | | | Annually, before the administration of any state-mandated test | | |
| Proctors (if utilized) | | | | | Annually, after proctor training session and before each administration of a state-mandated test | |

* Charter school test coordinators (STC) must submit all documents to their regional accountability office, except for the signed *Proctor—Confidentiality and Test Security Agreements* which are kept on file at the charter school with the STC.

Test Materials Security

- The STC stores materials in a locked, secure, limited-access facility until needed for testing. **Include a brief description of where secure materials will be stored. Include a list of all personnel granted access to this location.**
- Describe the procedures and timeline for the secure checking out and checking in of test materials to ensure that at each level of distribution and collection all secure materials are tracked, returned, and accounted for.
- **Describe the procedures and timeline for returning test materials to the district TC (TOPS for charter schools).**

Testing Environment

- Food and drink (**are or are not**) permitted in test sessions. For vendor tests, consult the test administration manual for permitted food and drink policies.

Accommodations Documentation

Accommodation Entry in PowerSchool/NCSIS. Accommodation information in PowerSchool/NCSIS derives from two sources:

1. IEP: (Name of person or position) is responsible for entering and updating the IEP details and accommodations information into ECATS for students identified as exceptional children (EC).
2. Section 504 Plan and English Learner (EL) documentation: (Name of person or position) is responsible for entering the special program participation and the accommodation information in the appropriate pages in PowerSchool/NCSIS for students with a Section 504 Plan or EL documentation. For each school year, the initial entry of special program assignment and accommodations must be completed by October 1 for returning students. The PowerSchool/NCSIS entries for special program participation and accommodations must be made by the first of each month following initial assignment to a special program, annual review of the plan, and/or the addition of accommodations.

School Testing Plans and Self-Monitoring Procedures

- The STC securely submits a school test plan to the PSU TC (for districts) or the RAC (for charter, lab, regional, and residential schools) at least two weeks before the first day of testing for each test, such as RTA, BOG3, and ACCESS, and no later than May 1 for end-of-year testing.
- **(Persons designated)** completes monitoring during testing with the goals of preventing any avoidable irregularities and ensuring that there are no errors in the coding. These staff members need to have access to the testing plan and should use the following self-monitoring procedures:
 - ✓ Make sure the TC is accessible.
 - ✓ Inquire about students' test preparation. Before testing starts, ask a couple of students in online test settings if they watched the online tutorial video and if they had a chance to do the sample test items on the device they will use for testing.
 - ✓ Check to see if the bells are turned off.
 - ✓ Check that each testing site has a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door.
 - ✓ Check to see if there is a test administrator in each room.

- ✓ If utilized, check to see if there is a proctor (one-on-one or roving) serving where designated.
- ✓ Observe whether each test administrator is providing a positive test-taking environment.
- ✓ Check to see if there are enough testing materials (e.g., scratch paper, calculators).
- ✓ Be sure the test administrator and proctor (if utilized) remain in the room throughout the testing and move frequently and quietly around the room monitoring students.
- ✓ Check to be sure that classroom displays that provide information regarding the content being measured by the test or test taking strategies are covered or removed.
- ✓ Ensure that visitors are not allowed into the testing site during testing. (Monitoring staff are not visitors.)
- ✓ Report any noise or disruptions.
- ✓ Randomly select **(the number or percent is a local decision)** students receiving accommodations during each testing period. Pull the IEP, EL Plan, Section 504 Plan, or transitory impairment documentation. Make sure that the accommodation(s) each student receives matches those listed on the plan/documentation and on the *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms*. Record (1) the information from the IEP, EL Plan, Section 504 Plan, or transitory impairment documentation, (2) the accommodations listed on the *Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms*; and (3) the accommodations observed in the testing site on the *Self-Monitoring Report Form*. (See a Sample *Self-Monitoring Report Form* in the appendix of this handbook.)
- ✓ Complete the *Self-Monitoring Report Form* for each testing period and keep it on file at the school.

Testing Irregularities Reporting Procedures

- Ensure a plan is in place to report all irregularities and misadministrations into the OTISS within five days of the occurrence.
- **(Name and Role)** follows all state procedures for submission of testing irregularity reports into the Online Testing Irregularity Submission System (OTISS).
- If a student refuses to use a documented accommodation or if the student is not provided a documented accommodation, the school should obtain a written statement from the parent or legal guardian. The statement indicates whether the parent waives the right to have the student retested or will accept the score results from the initial administration. (See the sample *Testing Irregularity Parent or Legal Guardian Notification Form*.)

Online Testing

- Schools ensure every student participating in an online assessment has completed the appropriate Online Assessment Tutorial at least one time before test day. The process for verifying completion of the tutorial is **(describe procedures)**.
- The test administrator ensures any information from the test saved or cached on any network appliance or computer is purged or deleted immediately following the completion of the test administration. To ensure this step, all devices are shut down after each test administration.

Online Testing Log In Flexibility

- The Annual Testing Program's policy for online test administrations recommends test administrators begin setting up devices thirty to forty minutes before students begin testing. School test coordinators are expected to develop, distribute, and train on a written plan that outlines secure procedures for schools to follow when students either remain or do not remain in the room while devices are being set up.
- List the secure, locally determined test day login procedures for online testing. Determine if test administrators will log in each student at a device or if students will log in to the test themselves using an access code. The plan must outline procedures that ensure (1) students cannot see secure test administrator usernames and passwords while the test administrator logs into the devices; (2) students cannot see the secure student ID numbers and student access codes of others while logging themselves into their device; (3) upon login, each device is set to the start page with the correct student's name and student ID number, test name, and school name correctly identified on each device; and (3) students do not begin using their device until they are instructed to do so.
- The school **(will or will not)** allow students to log themselves into the test.
- The school **(will or will not)** allow teachers to log in each student to the test.
- The school **(will or will not)** allow both students to log themselves into the test and allow teachers to log in students to the test.

Arrangements for Completing Makeups

- Each test administrator takes attendance and reports absences by **(describe procedures)** before starting the test session.
- The STC designates someone to contact all students absent from the test session. **(Person responsible)** will contact all students who are absent from the test session on the day of testing.
- The STC lists all students ABSENT from makeups. (See the sample *Students Absent from Makeups for State-Required Tests* form.)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Protocol

- To protect the confidentiality of individuals from those who do not have access to individual-level data, personally identifiable information (PII) should be transmitted using the following method:
 - Secure FTP server based on SFTP or RTPS protocols.

Include a brief description of how the PSU will use secure transfer protocols to share PII.

PSU Testing Templates. All templates that are used in conjunction with the PSU's annual testing plan, must be included in the annual testing plan. PSUs can use all or some of the sample templates located in the appendixes of this handbook. The templates provided may be modified for local use, or the PSU may develop other documents that suit their needs.

Appendix F1: Sample—Test Plan Template

School Name:

Test Coordinator's Name:

Backup Test Coordinator's Name:

Test Name:

Date of Test Administrations:

Make-Up Day(s):

Test Coordinator's Signature:

Principal/Director's Signature:

Date of Signatures:

Test Training Date and Time:

| Test Name | Date | Format (Online or Paper) | Location | Administrator | Proctor (note if roving) | # of Students | Accommodations |
|-----------|------|-----------------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
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- Attach a map of the school facility.
- What locked, secure storage facility in the school will be used for storing test materials?
- Where will test administrators pick up and return test materials?
- What are the procedures (who, when, where, and how) for transcribing students' test responses?
(Ensure three or more school personnel are present for the transcription process).

Appendix F2: Example Test Plan Template

School Name: ABC Elementary

Test Coordinator's Name: Susie Coordinator

Backup Test Coordinator's Name: Jimmy Back-Up

Test Name: EOGs

Date of Test Administrations: May 25–26, 28

Make-Up Day(s): May 28

Test Coordinator's Signature: *Susie Coordinator*

Principal/Director's Signature: *Alexandra Boss*

Date of Signatures: April 15, 20XX

Test Training Date and Time: May 10, 3:00-4:00

| Test Name | Date | Format | Location | Administrator | Proctor | # of Students | Accommodations |
|----------------------|--------|--------|----------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Gr. 3 Math EOG | May 25 | Online | 14 | M. West | C. East | 24 | None |
| Gr. 4 Math EOG | May 25 | Online | 15 | D. North | T. South | 25 | None |
| Gr. 4 Math EOG | May 25 | Paper | 16 | N. January | R. Smith | 5 | MTS, DSC |
| Gr. 3 Reading EOG | May 26 | Online | 14 | M. West | C. East | 24 | No |
| Gr. 4 Reading EOG | May 26 | Online | 15 | D. North | T. South | 25 | No |
| Gr. 4 Reading EOG | May 26 | Paper | 16 | N. January | R. Smith | 1 | BRW, DSC |
| Make-Up Testing | May 27 | Online | 20 | J. Haley | B. Burke | ? | No |
| Make-Up Testing | May 27 | Online | 21 | C. Southeast | F. Southwest | ? | Yes |
| Gr. 3 Reading Retest | May 28 | Online | 20 | J. Haley | B. Burke | ? | No |
| Gr. 3 Reading Retest | May 28 | Online | 21 | C. Southeast | F. Southwest | ? | Yes |

- What locked, secure storage facility in the school will be used for storing test materials? *Materials will be stored in the vault room in the main office. During testing, all keys will be collected, so that only the school test coordinator and the director can access this space.*
- Where will test administrators pick up and return test materials? *Test administrators will pick up/return materials in the media center.*
- What are the procedures (who, when, where, and how) for transcribing students' test responses? (Ensure three or more school personnel are present for the transcription process. *After testing ends, in group of three school personnel or more, students' recorded responses will be entered into the online testing system.*

Appendix G: Sample Training Sign-In Sheet

School Name: _____ Date: _____

Facilitator(s) Name: _____

Test Name: _____

| Name (print) | Signature | Test Administrator (TA) or Proctor (P) | Received Test Administration Guide (initial) | Received Accommodations Training (initial) |
|-----------------|-----------|---|--|---|
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Appendix H: Sample Materials Checkout/Check-In Sheet

Complete before the Testing Session

I acknowledge that I have attended training for the _____ test and have received and read a copy of the test administration guide. I further acknowledge that I am responsible for information provided during training and for understanding and adhering to the contents of the test administration guide, including the *Testing Code of Ethics*.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please note the number of materials received for each item:

| Materials | Number at Sign-out (Completed by test administrator <i>before test administration</i>) | Number at Sign In (Completed by checker <i>after test administration</i>) |
|------------|---|--|
| Test books | | |

Check off any of the following items received.

| | | | | | |
|-------------|--|------------------|--|------------------------|--|
| blank paper | | writing utensils | | testing sign | |
| graph paper | | periodic tables | | Review of Accom. forms | |

Signature of test administrator (teacher) at checkout: _____

Signature of person checking in materials after the test (Checker): _____

Students absent from this test session:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

Complete after the Testing Session:

I, _____, affirm that I adhered to the following rules and procedures during the students' test administration.

1. I read and complied with all the procedures in the *Testing Code of Ethics*.
2. I maintained test security at all times.
3. I administered the tests according to the directions in the test administration guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher.
4. I administered the test to all eligible students.
5. I reported all testing irregularities to the school system test coordinator.
6. I provided a positive test-taking climate.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Proctor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Proctor Name (Please Print Clearly): _____

Appendix I: Sample Testing Irregularity Parent or Legal Guardian Notification Form

Student: _____ Grade: _____

Test and Subject: _____ Student ID: _____

Teacher: _____ Test Date: _____

School Test Coordinator (STC): _____ STC Phone: _____

The following testing irregularity occurred during testing today, which invalidates your child's test results.

Your child's test will not be scored, and your child is scheduled to retake the test on

_____.

Description of Testing Irregularity:

Waiver of Right to Retake the Test

In some cases, you may choose to waive the right for your child to retake the test and accept the scores from the test already taken. Please sign and return this form to the school test coordinator before the retake test date listed above. If this form is not returned by the retake date, the test will be readministered to your child as indicated. *Note: The test already taken is deemed invalid and will not be scored unless you choose to waive the right for your child to retake the test.*

☐

I would like my child to retake the test. I understand that my student and I will not receive results from the original test.

☐

I do not want my child to retake the test. I understand that the results from the test already taken will be used. Furthermore, I understand I am waiving the rights for my child to retake the test.

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Date

Note to staff: This document should be scanned and attached to the OTISS report.

Appendix J: Sample Self-Monitoring Report Form

Date: _____

School: _____

Test: _____

CHECK ALL BOXES THAT ARE OBSERVED; INCLUDE EXPLANATIONS FOR ANY AREAS NOT OBSERVED.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| School testing plan located in the main office. | Personal cell phones and electronic devices are turned off and appropriately stored during testing. | Windows in doors exposed and a "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign is posted outside each testing room. | Directions are read to the students exactly as they are written in the test administration guide. |
| Test materials are stored in a secure, locked room and distributed in accordance with the testing plan. | School test coordinator walks around and monitors testing sessions. | Test administrator and proctor (if utilized) do not leave the students unattended at any time during the testing session and move throughout the room during testing. | Bulletin boards, instructional displays, and reference materials related to testing content are covered or removed. |
| Devices are set up appropriately before testing, and correct login procedures are followed. | Documentation exists confirming students took the online tutorial before the test administration. | All rooms designated for testing are quiet, orderly, comfortable, with adequate seating, lighting, and heating or cooling. | Students are provided with the appropriate test materials. |

Accommodations. Choose three students at random who are receiving accommodations on the test and complete the chart below.

| Student Name | Type of plan (IEP, Section 504, EL, transitory impairment) | Accommodations documented on the <i>Review of Accommodations Used During Testing Forms</i> | Accommodations observed in test session |
|--------------|--|--|---|
| | | | |
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Test Session

_____ This test was conducted in accordance with the accepted practices of standardized testing.

_____ This test had some irregularities and/or findings as listed below.

Monitor's Name: _____

Monitor's Signature: _____

Appendix K: Sample Students Absent from Makeups for State-Required Tests

The STC lists all students absent from makeup testing on this form. If all students were tested, write NO ABSENCES.

| Last Name | First Name | Student Number | Grade | Subject | Classroom Teacher | Reason Student Did Not Test |
|-----------|------------|----------------|-------|---------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
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My signature below indicates that I understand it is the responsibility of the principal and school test coordinator to ensure that ALL eligible students are tested.

School Test Coordinator's Signature / Date

Principal's/Director's Signature /
Date

Appendix L: School Transcription Tracking Form

School Transcription Tracking Form

School Code:
Test Coordinator:

[illegible]

Appendix M: Secure Test Materials Destruction Verification Form

This process is only permitted at schools that report to a district.

School Name: _____ School Number: _____

The signatures below indicate that all secure student test materials have been collected by the school test coordinator and securely destroyed using one of the following methods: shredding, secure recycling, observed landfill burial (i.e., by two or more designated school personnel), or incineration.

School Test Coordinator
(Print Name)

School Test Coordinator
(Signature)

Date:

School Principal
(Print Name)

School Principal
(Signature)

Date:

School test coordinators must return this form to the district test coordinator no later than three school days following the completion of all test sessions.

Appendix N: TOPS Return Verification Form**TOPS Return Verification Form**

Fax to 919-515-4622 or
Email to group-topsdocs@ncsu.edu

Circle YOUR RAC and send CC Email:

RAC Emails:

- (1) Brent Caldwell brent.caldwell@dpi.nc.gov
- (2) John Worley john.worley@dpi.nc.gov
- (3) Scott Frye scott.frye@dpi.nc.gov
- (4) Patricia Benbow patricia.benbow@dpi.nc.gov
- (5) Amanda Hobbs amanda.hobbs@dpi.nc.gov
- (6) Anthony Hinson anthony.hinson@dpi.nc.gov
- (7) Paul Davis paul.davis@dpi.nc.gov

Test: _____

PSU Name _____

PSU # _____

TC Name _____

Phone # _____

FAX # _____

Date Shipped: _____

(MUST be picked up and scanned by UPS driver
or dropped off and scanned at UPS Store)

Affix UPS Tracking label(s) below:

To Be Completed by the Test Coordinator

Return verification must be faxed or emailed to TOPS and your RAC immediately after the test materials have been shipped. This provides a tracking number(s) for you and TOPS, and will also help assure test security and prompt follow-up should your test materials not arrive the next day at TOPS.

Appendix O: Abbreviations

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|--|
| ADM | Average Daily Membership |
| AP | Advanced Placement |
| ASL | American Sign Language |
| ASM | Accountability Services Management website |
| AST | Accommodation code: Assistive Technology Devices |
| BANA | Braille Authority of North America |
| BOG3 | Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test |
| BOY | Beginning-of-Year |
| BRW | Accommodation code: Braille Writer/Braille Paper |
| BSS | Accommodation code: Slate and Stylus/Braille Paper |
| CAB | Accommodation code: Cranmer Abacus |
| CAN | Accommodation code: Special NCDPI-Approved Accommodation |
| CCB | Configuration Control Board |
| CCRAA | College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment |
| CCSSO | Council of Chief State School Officers |
| CDM | Credit by Demonstrated Mastery |
| CEDARS | Common Education Data Analysis & Reporting System |
| CEP | Community Eligible Program |
| CGR | Cohort Graduation Rate |
| CR | Constructed Response |
| CSI | Comprehensive Support and Improvement |
| CTE | Career and Technical Education |
| DMG | Data Management Group |
| DSC | Accommodation code: Dictation to a Scribe |
| DTC | District Test Coordinator |
| EBN | Accommodation code: Electronic Braille Notetaker |
| ECATS | Every Child Accountability and Tracking System |
| EC | Exceptional Children |
| EDDIE | Educational Directory and Demographical Information Exchange |
| EDS | Economically Disadvantaged Students |
| EL | English Learner |
| ELAC | English Learners Advisory Council |
| ELP | English Learner's Progress |
| EOC | End-of-Course |
| EOG | End-of-Grade |
| EOY | End-of-Year |

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| ESEA | Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 |
| ESL | English as a Second Language |
| ESSA | Every Student Succeeds Act (an amendment to ESEA) |
| EVAAS | Education Value Added Assessment System |
| EXT | Accommodation code: Scheduled Extended Time |
| FDF | First Day of Fall |
| FDS | First Day of Spring |
| GLP | Grade Level Proficiency |
| IADA | Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority |
| IB | International Baccalaureate |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education <i>Improvement</i> Act |
| IEP | Individualized Education Program |
| IHE | Institute of Higher Education |
| ISC | Accommodation code: Interpreter/Transliterators Signs/Cues Test |
| ISR | Individual Student Report |
| LEA | Local Education Agency |
| LEP | Limited English Proficient |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| LTG | Long Term Goals |
| MAG | Accommodation code: Magnification Device |
| MCR | Math Course Rigor |
| MFELs | Monitored former English Learners |
| MLT | Accommodation code: Multiple Testing Sessions |
| MOY | Middle-of-Year |
| MTSS | Multi-Tiered System of Support |
| NAEP | National Assessment of Educational Progress |
| NCDPI | North Carolina Department of Public Instruction |
| NCES | National Center for Education Statistics |
| NCEES | North Carolina Educator Evaluation System |
| NCEXTEND1 | Alternate assessment for EOG and EOC tests |
| NCJDC | North Carolina Juvenile Detention Center |
| NCSCOS | North Carolina <i>Standard Course of Study</i> |
| NCSIS | North Carolina Student Information System |
| NSLP | National School Lunch Program |
| OTISS | Online Testing Irregularity Submission System |
| PD | Professional Development |
| PE | Partial Enrollment |
| PEP | Personalized Education Plan |
| PISA | Program for International Student Assessment |
| PLC | Professional Learning Communities |

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| PS | Power School |
| PSU | Public School Unit (districts, charter schools, lab schools, regional schools, and residential schools) |
| PSU TC | Public School Unit Test Coordinator (includes district and charter, lab, regional and residential school test coordinators) |
| PBIS | Positive Behavior Intervention and Support |
| RAC | Regional Accountability Coordinator |
| RAS | Accommodation code: Student Reads Test Aloud to Self |
| RCC | Regional Computing Consultant |
| RESA | Regional Education Service Alliance |
| ROA | Review of Accommodations Used During Testing form |
| RtA | Read to Achieve |
| SBE | State Board of Education |
| SCASS | State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards |
| SEA | State Education Agency |
| Section 504 | Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 |
| SIP | School Improvement Plan |
| SIQ | Student Interface Questions |
| SIS | School Information System |
| SLC | [North Carolina] Student Learning Conditions [Survey] |
| SPG | School Performance Grades |
| STC | School Test Coordinator |
| STEM | Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics |
| SWD | Students with Disability |
| TALIS | Teaching and Learning International Survey |
| TIMSS | Trends in Math and Science Study |
| TOPS | Technical Outreach for Public Schools |
| TMS | Test Measurement Specialist |
| TSI | Targeted Support and Improvement |
| TSIEL | Guidelines for Testing Students Identified as English Learners |
| TNN | Testing News Network |
| TRA | Accommodation code: Test Read Aloud (in English) |
| TRD | Accommodation code: Word-to-Word Bilingual (English/Native Language) Dictionary/Electronic Translator (EL Only) |
| TSR | Accommodation code: Testing in a Separate Room |
| TWC | [North Carolina] Teacher Working Conditions [Survey] |

| Abbreviation | Meaning |
|--------------|---|
| TWS | Test Window Scheduler |
| UEB | Unified English Braille |
| USED | US Department of Education |
| WIDA | World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (English proficiency test) |

Appendix P: State Board of Education Policies, North Carolina Administrative Codes, and Legislative Requirements

This section contains SBE policies, N.C. Admin. Codes, and other legislative requirements related to the Annual Testing Program.

Appropriate Use of State Tests and Testing Program Documents

- [TEST-009](#)—Policy regarding rules, guidelines, and procedures governing the Annual Testing Program.
- [TEST-013](#)—Policy delineating the test development process for multiple-choice tests.
- [TEST-015](#)—Policy outlining time devoted to standardized testing.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0310](#)—Policy delineating the appropriate use of state tests.

Test Security

- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0311](#)—Policy of administrative testing procedures and *Testing Code of Ethics*.

End-of-Course Tests

- [CCRE-001](#)—Policy defining “Course for Credit”.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309](#)—Policy specifying the requirements for end-of-course testing (eligibility, participation, dropping a course, use of results). Note: For additional clarification on students excluded from the twenty percent grade calculation, see SBE policy [TEST-003](#).

Testing Students Who Are English Learners

- [TEST-011](#)—Policy outlining EL identification, participation in the Annual Testing Program, eligibility for testing accommodations, exit criteria, ACCESS for English language learners’ proficiency levels and performance definitions.

Graduation Requirements

- [ACCT-039](#)—Policy delineating the cohort graduation rate.
- [GRAD-001](#)—Policy giving the local school boards of education the authority to exceed minimum graduation requirements.
- [GRAD-004](#)—Policy delineating state graduation requirements.

Academic Achievement Standards and Achievement Level Descriptors

- [TEST-033](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for the Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test,

the Read to Achieve Test, and the end-of-grade tests in reading, mathematics, and science.

- [TEST-036](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for end-of-course tests.
- [TEST-037](#)—Policy defining the academic achievement standards and achievement level descriptors for NCEXTEND1 alternate assessments.

Accountability Model

- [ACCT-020](#)—Policy delineating the components of the accountability model.
- [CHTR-001](#)—Policy delineating charter school accountability requirements.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0315](#)—Policy delineating the accountability annual performance standards.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06G .0314](#)—Policy delineating the alternative schools' modified accountability system.

Use of Test Results

- [G.S. §115C-288 \(a\)](#)—Law granting principals the authority to grade and classify students; this law instructs principals not to make the decision solely based on standardized test scores.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0309](#)—Policy requiring schools to use results from all operational EOC tests as at least twenty percent of the student's final grade for each respective course (with exceptions).

Other Policies Related to the Annual Testing Program

- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D. 0307](#)—Policy governing test administrations in public schools.
- [16 N.C. Admin. Code 06D .0308](#)—Policy governing the role of the test coordinator.

Appendix Q: Testing Code of Ethics

Introduction to the *Testing Code of Ethics*

In North Carolina, standardized testing is an integral part of the educational experience of all students. When properly administered and interpreted, test results provide an independent, uniform source of reliable and valid information, which enables:

- *students* to know the extent to which they have mastered expected knowledge and skills and how they compare to others,
- *parents and legal guardians* to know if their children are acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a highly competitive job market,
- *teachers* to know if their students have mastered grade or course-level knowledge and skills in the curriculum, and if not, what weaknesses need to be addressed,
- *community leaders and lawmakers* to know if students in North Carolina schools are improving their performance over time and how the students compare with students from other states or the nation; and
- *citizens* to assess the performance of the public schools.

In order to achieve those objectives, teachers and administrators must conduct testing in a fair and ethical manner, which includes:

Security

- assuring adequate security of the testing materials before, during, and after testing and during scoring
- assuring student confidentiality

Preparation

- teaching the tested curriculum and test-preparation skills
- training staff in appropriate testing practices and procedures
- providing an appropriate atmosphere

Administration

- developing a local policy for the implementation of fair and ethical testing practices and for resolving questions concerning those practices
- assuring all students who should be tested are tested
- utilizing tests which are developmentally appropriate
- utilizing tests only for the purposes for which they were designed

Scoring, Analysis, and Reporting

- interpreting test results to the appropriate audience
- providing adequate data analyses to guide curriculum implementation and improvement

Standardized test scores are only one of the many indicators of how well the student is learning. Test scores should be used in conjunction with all other available information about a student to understand student progress and improve student learning. When administering tests, school administrators and teachers must comply with applicable statutes, rules, and policies. In particular, administrators and teachers must comply with the *Testing Code of Ethics* ([16 N.C. Admin. Code 6D .0311](#)), which is printed on the following pages.

16 NCAC 06D .0311 TESTING CODE OF ETHICS

- (a) This Rule shall apply to all public school unit (PSU) employees or agents while they are administering the Annual Testing Program defined in Rule .0307(c) of this Section.
- (b) The PSU shall develop local policies and procedures to ensure maximum test security in coordination with the policies and procedures developed by the test publisher.
- (c) The PSU shall require all testing coordinators, school test coordinators, test administrators and proctors to be trained as required in Rule .0308 of this Section.
- (d) The PSU shall designate the personnel who are authorized to have access to secure test materials. "Access" to test materials by school personnel means handling the materials but does not include reviewing tests or analyzing test items.
 - (1) Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use those materials for any purpose other than test administration.
 - (2) No person shall copy, reproduce, or paraphrase the test materials without the express written consent of the test publisher.
- (e) The principal shall store test materials in a locked facility to which only the principal has access. The principal shall not allow anyone access to the test materials except as necessary for administration.
- (f) When PSU personnel discover loss of materials, failure to account for materials, or any evidence of unauthorized access to the materials, they shall report the discovery without delay to the principal, school test coordinator, school system (LEA) test coordinator, or charter school director.
- (g) PSUs shall ensure that test coordinators:
 - (1) plan and implement training for school test coordinators, test administrators, and proctors;
 - (2) ensure each school test coordinator and test administrator is trained in accordance with Rule .0308 of this Section; and
 - (3) in conjunction with program administrators, ensure test accommodations to students entitled to testing accommodations as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0315; are documented and provided.
- (h) The principal or the principal's designee shall serve as school test coordinator.
- (i) The principal shall ensure the school test coordinator maintains test security and accountability of test materials, including taking the following actions:
 - (1) before each test administration, the school test coordinator shall count and distribute test materials;
 - (2) after each test administration, the school test coordinator shall without delay collect, count, and return all test materials to the locked storage facility;
 - (3) establishes procedures to assure all students participating in the Annual Testing Program have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test; and
 - (4) identifies and trains personnel, proctors, and backup personnel for test administrations.
- (j) Teachers may help students improve test-taking skills by:
 - (1) helping students become familiar with test formats using curricular content;
 - (2) teaching students test-taking strategies and providing practice sessions;
 - (3) helping students learn ways of preparing to take tests; and
 - (4) using resource materials such as test questions from test item banks and linking documents in instruction and test preparation.
- (k) With respect to test administration, PSUs shall:
 - (1) assure each school establishes procedures to ensure all test administrators comply with test publisher guidelines;
 - (2) inform the local board of education of any breach of this code of ethics; and
 - (3) inform test coordinators and principals of their responsibilities.
- (l) The school test coordinator shall:

- (1) assure school personnel know the content of rules in this Section and local testing policies;
 - (2) implement the school system and local testing policies and procedures to assure all students participating in the Annual Testing Program have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test;
 - (3) ensure proctors are trained; and
 - (4) ensure all violations of rules in this Section and local testing policies are reported to the school system (LEA) test coordinator.
- (m) Test administrators shall:
- (1) administer tests according to the directions in the assessment guide and any subsequent updates developed by the test publisher;
 - (2) administer tests to all students enrolled in a grade or course that requires a test in the Annual Testing Program;
 - (3) report all violations of rules in this Section and local testing policies to the school test coordinator; and
- (n) Proctors shall serve as additional monitors to help the test administrator assure that students have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on the test.
- (o) Scoring. The school system test coordinator shall:
- (1) ensure each test is scored according to the procedures and guidelines defined for the test by the test publisher;
 - (2) maintain quality control during the entire scoring process, which consists of handling and editing documents, scanning answer documents, and producing electronic files and reports. Quality control shall address scoring accuracy and scoring consistency.
 - (3) maintain security of tests and data files at all times, including;
 - (A) protecting the confidentiality of students at all times when publicizing test results; and
 - (B) maintaining test security of answer keys and item-specific scoring rubrics.
- (p) Educators shall use test scores as one piece of information to be interpreted together with other scores and indicators when determining a student's grade. The PSU shall ensure that school personnel analyze and report test data within the limitations described in this Paragraph.
- (1) Educators shall maintain the confidentiality of individual students. PSU personnel shall not publicize test scores or any written material containing personally identifiable information from the student's educational records except as permitted under the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, 20 U.S.C. 1232g and regulations adopted pursuant thereto.
 - (2) Staff development relating to testing must enable school personnel to respond knowledgeably to questions related to testing, including the tests, scores, scoring procedures, and other interpretive materials.
- (q) Unethical testing practices include the following practices:
- (1) encouraging students to be absent the day of testing;
 - (2) encouraging students not to do their best;
 - (3) using secure test items or modified secure test items for instruction;
 - (4) changing student responses at any time;
 - (5) interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test directions or the test items;
 - (6) classifying students for the purpose of avoiding State testing;
 - (7) not testing all students enrolled in a grade or course that requires a test in the Annual Testing Program;
 - (8) failing to provide required accommodations during testing to students entitled to testing accommodations as defined in 16 NCAC 06G .0315;
 - (9) modifying scoring programs including answer keys, equating files, and lookup tables;
 - (10) modifying student records for the purpose of raising test scores;

- (11) using a single test score to place a student in a grade or a course; and
- (12) providing inaccurate test results and interpretations to the public.
- (r) In the event of a violation of this Rule, the State Board of Education may impose any one or more of the following sanctions:
 - (1) withhold any monetary incentive awards;
 - (2) file a civil action against the person or persons responsible for the violation for copyright infringement or for any other available cause of action;
 - (3) seek criminal prosecution of the person or persons responsible for the violation; and
 - (4) in accordance with the provisions of 16 NCAC 06C .0312, suspend or revoke the professional license of the person or persons responsible for the violation.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-12(9); 115C-174.11; 115C-174.12; 115C-218.85(a)(3);
Emergency Adoption Eff. August 20, 2019;
Eff. August 23, 2022.*

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