



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., *State Superintendent*

WWW.NCPUBLICSCHOOLS.ORG

August 8, 2016

TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM Rebecca B. Garland, Deputy State Superintendent
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent

RBG

Tammy L. Howard, Director *TH*
Accountability Services

2016–17 PARTICIPATION IN FIELD TESTS AND SPECIAL STUDIES

Earlier this month, the State Board of Education (SBE) was informed of the field tests and special studies that will be administered during the 2016–17 school year. The field tests and special studies scheduled for this school year include the North Carolina Proof of Concept Studies in Mathematics at grade 5 and English Language Arts/Reading at grade 6, the *NCEXTENDI* NC Math 1 Alternate Assessment, and the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) Alignment Study. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) will conduct pilot tests in grade 4 and 8. Additionally the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) will conduct a study in grades 6, 7, and 8, Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) will conduct a study in grades 4 and 8, the International Educational Achievement will conduct an International Computer and Information Literacy study in grade 8, and the Program for International Student Assessment will conduct a field test in grade 10.

The individual schools selected to participate in 2016–17 field test/special studies are available through links posted on the Testing News Network (TNN). *LEA Test Coordinators are responsible for accessing the list and sharing it locally.*

Please remember that field testing and special studies are key components of the process for developing tests and making programmatic decisions. The purpose of field tests and special studies is to collect the data necessary to generate high-quality and technically-sound state tests and to inform our assessment practices. Specifically, the objectives are:

- To try out the questions and the tests in part or in their entirety in an environment that simulates an operational test.
- To generate data that will assist the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) in making decisions about each test question and each test as a whole.
- To generate data that will assist the test publisher in determining the level of difficulty of each question.
- To generate data that will assist the test publisher in determining if questions are biased in favor of one group over another.
- To determine the appropriateness of the content measured and the appropriateness of the test questions.
- To determine the level of accessibility to the questions and the test by students with special needs.
- To determine the time test administrators need to administer the tests and the time students need for a fair administration of the tests.
- To collect data used to establish and/or equate forms of the tests, the scales for the tests, and to set or link performance standards (achievement levels) for the tests.

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

6314 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6314 | (919) 807-3769 | Fax (919) 807-3772

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

- To collect data to provide documentation about the overall technical quality of the tests for the U.S. Department of Education and other stakeholders.
- To collect data that establish and maintain the credibility of the testing program and answer questions about the program asked by the North Carolina General Assembly, the U.S. Department of Education, and the public.

The attached *2016–17 Field Tests and Special Studies Calendar* contains information regarding all of the scheduled 2016–17 field tests and special studies. Additionally, the following documents are included:

- *Request to Appeal Field Test/Special Study Participation* form
- *Notification of School Closings or Changes in Grade Configuration* form
- SAMPLE Parent/Guardian Field Test Notification Letter—sample letter for schools to send to parents informing them about field testing and special studies. An electronic copy of this letter will be posted on the Testing News Network (TNN).

Review the information carefully. Use the enclosed *Notification of School Closings or Changes in Grade Configuration* form to make us aware of any changes in school closings and grade configurations so that we can update our records.

Appeals will be reviewed carefully and only those that demonstrate true hardship will be considered. To appeal a school's participation in field testing for the 2016–17 academic year, please (1) complete and submit the enclosed *Request to Appeal Field Test Participation* form with the appropriate signatures and (2) send a written letter of request from the LEA Superintendent/Charter School Director to Dr. Tammy Howard, Director of Accountability Services. Appeals must be received (using receipted mail method) by 5:00 PM, August 19, 2016. Appeals that cannot be handled administratively will be submitted to the Compliance Commission for Accountability on August 25, 2016. The Compliance Commission will review each appeal and make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) at its September meeting. LEAs/Charter schools will receive notification of the acceptance or denial of the appeal by September 9, 2016.

RBG/TLH/slj

- c: June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent
Dave Machado, Director, Office of Charter Schools
Bill Hussey, Director, Exceptional Children
Dreama McCoy, Section Chief, Supporting and Teaching Related Services
Nancy Carolan, Section Chief, Testing Policy and Operations
Hope Lung, Section Chief, Test Development
Karen Hoeve, Section Chief, Analysis and Reporting
Kenneth Barbour, IT Manager, Accountability Systems
LEA/Charter Test Coordinators
Regional Accountability Coordinators

Attachments

2016–17 Field Tests and Special Studies Calendar—North Carolina Testing Program

The following field tests/special studies will be administered in North Carolina during the 2016–17 school year.

Subject(s)	Participation	Item Type(s)	Mode	Testing Window
Proof of Concept Study	Stratified random sample of schools who participate in Grade 5 End-of-Grade Mathematics assessments	Multiple-choice and Gridded Response	Paper/Pencil	Interim 1 - October 17–November 16, 2016
				Interim 2 – January 2–31, 2017
				Interim 3 – March 1–31, 2017
Proof of Concept Study	Stratified random sample of schools who participate in Grade 6 End-of-Grade English Language Arts/Reading assessments	Multiple-choice and Short Response	Paper/Pencil	Interim 1 - October 17–November 16, 2016
				Interim 2 – January 2–31, 2017
				Interim 3 – March 1–31, 2017
NCEXTEND1 NC Math I Alternate Assessment	All eligible students enrolled in grade 10 whose IEP designates participation in NCEXTEND1 enrolled in grade 10	Multiple-choice	Paper/Pencil	April 3–28, 2017
Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) Alignment Study	Teachers at grades 3–8 and high school ELA, Math, Science at sampled schools who have at least two consecutive years of teaching experience at the currently assigned grade and subject area.	Survey questions	Online	September 6–30, 2016
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Math, Reading, and Writing	Select students enrolled in grade 4 at sampled schools	Multiple-choice and Constructed Response	Digitally-based Assessments Paper/Pencil	January 30–March 10, 2017 (pilot test)

2016–17 Field Tests and Special Studies Calendar—North Carolina Testing Program

Subject(s)	Participation	Item Type(s)	Mode	Testing Window
National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) Civics, Geography, Math, Reading, U.S. History, and Writing	Select students enrolled in grade 8 at sampled schools	Multiple-choice and Constructed Response	Digitally-based Assessments	January 30–March 10, 2017 (pilot test)
National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Middle Grades Longitudinal Study (MGLS) Math and Reading	Select students enrolled in grades 6, 7, and 8 at sampled schools	Multiple-choice and Constructed Response	Tablet-based assessments	Winter 2017 (pilot test)
Trends in International Math and Science Study (eTIMSS)	Select students enrolled in grade 4 and 8 at sampled schools	Multiple-choice and Constructed Response	Tablet-based assessments Paper/Pencil	April–May 2017 (field test)
International Educational Achievement (IEA) International Computer and Information Literacy Study (ICILS)	Select students enrolled in grade 8 at sampled schools	(i) Multiple-choice or constructed response items based on realistic stimulus material; (ii) software simulations of generic applications so that students are required to complete an action in response to an instruction; and (iii) authentic tasks that require students to modify and create information products using 'live' computer software applications	Computer-based assessment	April–May 2017 (field test)
Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Reading, Mathematical, Science, and Financial Literacy	Select 15-year olds at sampled schools	Multiple-choice and Constructed Response	Computer-based assessment	April–May 2017 (field test)

North Carolina Testing Program Request to Appeal Field Test/Special Study Participation

Accountability Year: 2016–17

LEA Name: _____

School Name: _____

LEA/School Code:

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Check here if this appeal is being submitted because of more than two field tests/special studies at one grade level in a school.

Check here if this appeal is being submitted due to a technology hardship.

Please list the name of the field test/special study that is being appealed.

Note: If a sampled school closes or a sampled grade level moves to another school, the school with the intended population participates in the field test or special study.

To appeal a school's selection to participate in field testing or special studies for the 2016–17 academic year, (a) please complete and submit this form with the appropriate signatures using a receipted mail method, and (b) send a written letter of request from the LEA Superintendent/Charter School Director to:

Dr. Tammy Howard, Director
Division of Accountability Services
Department of Public Instruction
6314 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6314

This form and letter of request for removal from the field test/special study sample must be received (using receipted mail method) by 5:00 PM, August 19, 2016. Appeals that cannot be handled administratively will be submitted to the Compliance Commission for Accountability on August 25, 2016. The Compliance Commission will review each appeal and make recommendations to the State Board of Education (SBE) at its September meeting.

The response to the appeal will be based solely on the written justification.

School or district personnel will **not** have the opportunity to address the Compliance Commission or the SBE. LEAs will receive notification of the acceptance or denial of the appeal by September 9, 2016.

Principal: _____ Date: _____

LEA/Charter School
Test Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

LEA Superintendent/
Charter School Director: _____ Date: _____

**North Carolina Testing Program
Notification of School Closings or Changes in Grade Configuration**

Complete the following information for a school that has closed or has changed in grade configuration.

Accountability Year: 2016–17

LEA Name: _____

School Name: _____

LEA/School Code:

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List the name of the field test or special study for which this school was selected to participate:

If a sampled school closed or changed in grade configuration, list the name(s) of the receiving school(s). The school(s) that received the student population must participate in the field test or special study.

List the name of the receiving school(s):

All requested information must be completed. Please fax this form with the appropriate signatures to Dr. Tammy Howard, Director of Accountability Services, by 5:00 PM, August 19, 2016.

**LEA Superintendent
Charter School Director**

Date

Please fax this form to:
Dr. Tammy Howard, Director
Division of Accountability Services
Fax Number: 919-807-3772

Dear Parent or Guardian:

(Insert school name) has been selected by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to participate in the following field test/special study administration: (Insert name of field test/special study).

This means your child will assist educators in collecting data needed to develop high-quality, technically-sound state tests. For example, field testing/special studies determine: how effective a test is under conditions that closely simulate the “real” test environment; the level of difficulty of a test question; and how appropriate a test is for students with special needs. The NCDPI has made every effort to limit the number of field tests/special studies at each school.

There is no need for your child to study in preparation for the field test/special study; however, we do ask that students do their best and receive plenty of rest the night before the test. Your child’s grades or progress in school will not be affected in any way by participating. Results about individual students or schools will not be reported. The data collected will be used for the purpose of test development only.

The field test/special study will take a minimal amount of time, and is scheduled to take place on (Insert test date). The test will take approximately (Insert time) minutes to complete.

For more information about the North Carolina Testing Program, please visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing>. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact _____ at _____.
(Insert name of contact and email/phone)

Sincerely,

(Insert name and title of local official)