

2011-12 ABCs of Public Education

Technical Notes

(August 2, 2012)

Release of ABCs results

No new test editions were introduced in 2011-12. Consequently, NCDPI maintained its traditional release schedule for ABCs performance composites, ABCs calculations of academic change, and annual measureable objectives (AMO) results. Formal approval of these results was scheduled for the August 2, 2012 State Board of Education (SBE) meeting.

Standard Conventions used in the ABCs analyses

95R – Indicates that the percent of students tested was below 95%. The percentage of students tested was computed by combining information from EOG reading, EOG mathematics, EOC and alternate assessments across all grades in a school. The percentage must be greater than or equal to 95, when rounded to the nearest whole number.¹ Schools identified as having fallen below the 95% threshold for the ABCs were asked to justify their rate. Their explanations were reviewed at DPI and if rejected, the school was assigned a 95R status. This assigned status means that the school was in violation of the rule and ineligible to receive incentive awards or recognition (other than low-performing). A school in violation for two consecutive years may be identified as low-performing by the State Board of Education.

Full Academic Year

Students must have been in membership in a school for at least 140 days as of the first day of spring testing in order for their test scores to be included in the growth calculations for the ABCs or the proficiency calculations of AMO. In block scheduled high schools, the student must be in membership 70 days in the semester the course is taught.

Medical Exclusions

In compliance with NCLB and in light of the full availability of alternate assessments, only exclusions for serious medical emergencies and/or conditions were allowed. Examples included students who were (1) in the final stages of terminal or degenerative illnesses, (2) comatose, or (3) receiving extensive short-term medical treatment due to a medical emergency. In response to a request from the student's LEA, the Director of Accountability Operations provided a written statement of the decision to the LEA; any exception granted was limited to the testing period for the specific test(s) for which it was requested and did not carry forward to future test administrations, unless noted in the decision. In rare cases when a student was granted a medical exclusion but was administered an assessment, the score from the assessment was not used.

¹ To determine the 95% participation rate for Annual Measureable Objectives (AMO) per the No Child Left Behind legislation, the cohorts of students in grades 3-8 and the cohort of tenth-grade students on the first day of spring testing for the school were analyzed to determine the number of students who had taken the required tests. There is no appeal for the 95% requirement as it applies to AMO.

Algebra I Scores in the Performance Composite

Algebra I scores for current ninth graders who took Algebra I prior to grade 9 were included in the performance composite for the high school where they were currently enrolled.² Algebra I scores of students in grades 6, 7, or 8 during the current school year were included in the K-8 performance composite of the middle school where they were currently enrolled.

Confidence Interval Applied to the Performance Composite to Identify Low-Performing Schools

The performance composite is the percent of students' scores at or above grade level (i.e., in Achievement Levels III or IV) on end-of-grade and/or end-of-course tests. The performance composite is computed by adding the number of scores at or above Achievement Level III on each of the tests, and then dividing the sum by the total number of valid scores on the tests. If a school did not make expected growth *and* its performance composite was significantly less than 50, the school is given the status of low-performing.

The confidence interval is a way of taking into account the precision of the performance composite. By applying the confidence interval, the likelihood of incorrectly assigning a low-performing status to a school that does not deserve it is decreased while the likelihood of correctly assigning a status to schools is not hindered. The confidence interval itself will be narrow or wide depending on the size of the school and the variation of the student scores in the school. In general, the confidence interval is narrower when the number of students is larger, or the scores are more homogeneous; the confidence interval is wider when the number of students is smaller, or the scores are less homogeneous.

This means that a potentially low-performing school may have a performance composite that is considerably below 50% but when the confidence interval is applied (correcting for the precision of the performance composite), the school is not considered low-performing (because the confidence interval for that school is wide; i.e., there is less confidence in the specific numeric value of the performance composite). This situation would likely be true for a school that has few students or has wide variation in test scores. It is also possible for a school to have a performance composite that is fairly close to 50% and is considered low-performing because the confidence interval for that school is very narrow (i.e., there is high confidence in the performance composite). This situation would likely be true for a school that has a large number of students or students all have about the same test score.

As long as the value, 50, lies within or on the upper boundary of the confidence interval for an observed performance composite, then the performance composite is not considered significantly less than 50 and hence the school is not classified as low-performing.

Achievement Level and Scale Score Ranges Information

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/shared/achievelevel/>

Programming Reference Table with Means and Standard Deviations for Standard Setting Years

<https://www.rep.dpi.state.nc.us/adb/prod2010/reftables/> (Go to link and click on [ref_testmetrics tables.](#))

² Algebra I scores of students currently enrolled in grade 10 who took Algebra I while in earlier grades were included in the AMO calculations for mathematics in tenth grade.