

# Understanding North Carolina's Annual Measurable Objectives

## Introduction

With the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) waiver, approved on May 31, 2012 by the United States Department of Education (USED), North Carolina was allowed to transition away from reporting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for schools, with the expectation that more ambitious performance targets, known as Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), be set. The waiver was effective through 2013-14. North Carolina has recently been approved for an extension of the waiver that will be effective for 2014–15.

AMOs are a series of performance targets that states, school districts and schools must meet on designated assessments and indicators for specific subgroups each year to meet the requirements of the ESEA waiver and NCLB legislation. Targets are set on participation (for assessments) and proficiency standards (assessments and other indicators). The AMOs measure the academic performance of specific subgroups over time.

This document is designed to describe the components of the AMOs and provide an understanding of the calculations.

## Assessments and Indicators Included In Target Reporting

With the ESEA waiver, North Carolina now reports AMOs in reading (English language arts/reading), mathematics, science, current year End-of-Course (EOC) participation, The ACT<sup>®</sup>, ACT WorkKeys<sup>®</sup>, Passing Math III, and Cohort Graduation Rate (attendance if a school does not graduate students).

For reading and mathematics targets, the End-of-Grade (EOG) assessments are used in grades 3-8. The EOC for English II and Math I, as reading and math targets, are used when students are in 10<sup>th</sup> grade membership. If either EOC assessment is administered to a student prior to their 10<sup>th</sup> grade year, the test score is banked until the student is in membership in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

For science targets, the science EOG assessments are used in grades 5 and 8. The Biology EOC is used as the science target when students are in 11<sup>th</sup> grade membership. If the Biology EOC is administered to a student prior to their 11<sup>th</sup> grade year, the test score is banked until the student is in membership in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

Students are counted as proficient for reading, mathematics, and science targets if they score an achievement level 4 or 5 (Level 3 or 4 in 2012–13). This is the college-and-career readiness standard. In addition, students taking the alternates to the EOG and EOC assessments (i.e., **NCEXTEND1** and **NCEXTEND2**) are included in the targets. (Note: Effective for the 2014–15 school year, **NCEXTEND2** will no longer be administered as an alternate assessment.)

Current year EOC participation is a target designed to ensure that all students enrolled in courses that are identified as requiring an EOC take the assessment at the end of the course in the current school year. The current year EOC participation target is set at 95% for all subgroups.

The ACT is administered to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders in the spring of the school year, including the alternate assessments (**NCEXTEND1** and College-and-Career Readiness Alternate Assessment [CCRAA]). The alternate assessments of The ACT are used for participation only and are not part of the proficiency

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target. Students are considered proficient for targets if they receive a composite score of 17, the UNC System minimum score for admission.

ACT WorkKeys is administered to students who are Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators during their final year of school. The target is reported on students meeting this criterion the year they graduate from high school. Students are considered proficient for targets if they earn a Silver, Gold, or Platinum Certificate.

Passing Math III is an indicator that measures the percent of graduates who successfully pass the Math III course.

Cohort Graduation Rate (CGR) is measured on the progress of the 4- and 5-year cohorts. Progress is defined as at least a 2 percentage point increase from one year to the next (up to the threshold of 80%) for the 4-year cohort graduation rate, or at least a 3 percentage point increase from one year to the next (up to the threshold of 80%) for the 5-year cohort graduation rate. Any fluctuation above the threshold meets the requirement for progress. CGR is used for all schools that graduate students.

Attendance is measured for all schools that do not graduate students (schools that graduate students use CGR instead of attendance). Attendance is only done on the School as a Whole subgroup. Progress on attendance is defined as at least 0.1 percentage point increase from one year to the next, up to the threshold of 90%.

### Subgroups

All assessments and indicators are reported using subgroups (except attendance). AMO targets are set on each of 11 subgroups:

- School as a Whole (All Students)
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic
- Two or More Races
- White
- Economically Disadvantaged Students
- Limited English Proficient
- Students with Disabilities; and,
- Academically or Intellectually Gifted

The first ten subgroups are the same subgroups traditionally reported under NCLB. The Academically and Intellectually Gifted subgroup was added through the ESEA waiver. (Note: Any combination of Hispanic coding [e.g. Hispanic and White] is counted in the Hispanic subgroup only.)

The minimum number (known as “n-count”) of students needed to report a subgroup is 30. Targets for subgroups with less than 30 students are not reported. For the Limited English Proficient (LEP) and the Student with Disabilities subgroups, students who are exited 2 years or less may be included in the

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subgroup if the target is not met by the currently enrolled students. These subgroups must be reportable (i.e., 30 students) without the exited students.

### Calculating AMO targets

#### Proficiency Targets

Targets are designed to reduce the number of non-proficient students in subgroups. The purpose of this is to maintain a spotlight on performance gaps among groups of students so that these gaps can be closed over time. Targets are set on the state-level results during the baseline year. The baseline year was 2012–13, when North Carolina transitioned to new assessments and a new accountability model. North Carolina selected a model that reduces the percent of non-proficient students in each subgroup by one-half over six years. In other words, take the percent non-proficient in a subgroup and divide by 2, and then spread the percent evenly over 6 years. (In North Carolina, because the baseline year is also year 1 this is actually spread over 5 years.)

For proficiency, target students must meet the full academic year criteria of 140 days in a school. If a student does not meet this criteria their data is not used to calculate the proficiency for the school. The 140 days is determined as of the first day of either EOG testing or spring EOC testing. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) may have students included in their targets if they are enrolled in an LEA for 140 days even if no school includes the student. Therefore, it is not possible to combine the percentages of all schools in an LEA to get an overall percent for the LEA.

Proficiency targets are capped at 95% in order to align with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines on reporting. School data cannot be reported above 95%. Therefore, targets cannot be set above 95%. The target tables for 2012–13 through 2017–18 are available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/readytarggetables13.pdf>.

#### Participation Target

In order to ensure that all students are included in accountability measures, schools are held to the standard of including at least 95% of their students on assessments administered in their school. In order for participation to be reported, the subgroup must be at least 30 students. All students are included in participation regardless of the number of days the student is in a school. (The 140-day full academic year criterion does not apply to participation.) Participation targets are set on the following:

- EOG Reading (grades 3-8)
- EOG Math (grades 3-8)
- EOG Science (grades 5 and 8)
- EOC English II (grade 10)
- EOC Math I (grade 10)
- EOC Biology (grade 11)
- EOC Current Year Assessments (course enrollment)
- The ACT (grade 11)
- ACT WorkKeys (CTE Concentrator graduates)

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North Carolina implemented, through the ESEA waiver, sanctions for missing participation targets. Schools that miss subgroup participation targets must follow specific steps to ensure that participation is being addressed. This process includes:

Year 1—When a school misses any subgroup participation target(s) for the first time they must send a letter home to parents informing them of the specific target(s) missed by subgroup and subject. The schools must include information regarding their plan to ensure that this target is not missed in the future. Schools must submit a letter each year they have any subgroup missing a participation target for the first time.

Year 2—When a school misses the same subgroup in the same subject for a second year in a row, they must create and submit an intensive intervention plan focused on the participation of the subgroup missing the target for a second year. The state may provide assistance through the statewide system of support. Schools will be labeled as “Consistently Low Participating”.

Year 3—When a school misses the same subgroup in the same subject for a third year in a row, the percent of non-participants, to bring the subgroup up to 95% participation will be included in the proficiency rate for the missed target as not proficient.

### Additional Considerations

#### Confidence Interval

When reporting targets, schools and districts are able to meet a target using alternative calculations if they fall below the state target. Proficiency statistics (e.g., percent proficient) provide an estimate of a student group’s performance or a school’s aggregate proficiency. The more students taking the test in a particular group, the more confident we can be of the results. A confidence interval acknowledges a margin of uncertainty associated with any group statistic. For each student group, a 95 percent confidence interval is used around the percentages of students to determine whether target goals for AMOs are met.

#### Reporting for Schools

Schools will have targets for any subgroups that meet the minimum of 30 students reported. If a school does not have data, there will be no targets assigned to them. Some examples of schools that may have little/no data, include but are not limited to, K–2 schools, special education schools, hospital schools, or vocational and career centers.

#### Alternate Assessment Capping (1%/2% Rule)

According to rules under the ESEA, students taking alternate assessments (i.e., **NCXTEND1** and **NCXTEND2**) must have a limit on the number of students identified as proficient. This ensures that students are assessed using the most appropriate assessment for them.

The number of students that an LEA deems proficient based upon alternate academic achievement standards shall not exceed 1 percent on these assessments. This applies to state-, LEA-, and school-level reporting, but it does not apply to student-level reporting.

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If an LEA has greater than 1 percent of its students proficient based on these standards, the LEA superintendent may apply to the state superintendent for an exception as prescribed in the Federal Register, April 9, 2007, Vol. 72 No. 67 RIN 1810-AA98. If an LEA has greater than 1 percent of its students proficient based on these standards and does not receive an exception to the 1 percent limit, the state shall reassign enough proficient students' scores held to these standards to non-proficient such that the LEA will fall within the 1 percent limitation according to the procedures in the North Carolina Accountability Workbook Flexibility Addendum (as accepted by the USED). For this purpose, a student is considered proficient if he/she is deemed proficient in reading, mathematics, or both.

The number of students that an LEA deems proficient based upon modified academic achievement standards shall not exceed 2 percent on these assessments. This applies to state-, LEA-, and school-level reporting, but it does not apply to student-level reporting.

If an LEA has greater than 2 percent of its students proficient based on these standards, the state shall reassign enough proficient students' scores held to these standards to non-proficient such that the LEA will fall within the limitations as stated in Section 200.13 of the Federal Register and according to the procedures in the North Carolina Accountability Workbook Flexibility Addendum (as accepted by the USED). LEAs that do not fulfill the 1 percent limit of the most seriously cognitively disabled students may add the unfilled percent to the allowable 2 percent. For this purpose, a student is considered proficient if they are deemed proficient in reading, mathematics, or both.

**Note:** Effective with the 2014–15 school year, the modified academic achievement standards assessment (**NCXTEND2**) will no longer be administered. Students who have traditionally taken this alternate assessment will take the regular assessment unless the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines otherwise.

### Targets for 2013-14

Targets for 2013–14 can be found on the following page. Target tables for 2013–2018 can be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/reporting/readytarggetables13.pdf>.

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<b>2013–14 Targets</b>	<b>Reading</b>		<b>Math</b>		<b>Science</b>		<b>The ACT</b>	<b>ACT WorkKeys</b>	<b>Passing Math III</b>
	<b>3–8</b>	<b>HS (10)</b>	<b>3–8</b>	<b>HS (10)</b>	<b>3–8</b>	<b>HS (11)</b>	<b>HS</b>	<b>HS</b>	<b>HS</b>
Total (All students)	49.5	57.1	48.1	44.6	57.0	55.9	62.7	70.6	95.0
American Indian	36.1	42.2	34.3	36.2	45.9	41.5	49.5	63.3	95.0
Asian	65.4	68.1	74.1	66.7	73.5	73.0	74.7	76.6	95.0
Black	33.0	39.9	30.0	28.5	39.3	37.7	40.1	55.5	95.0
Hispanic	35.9	46.8	39.4	36.6	45.6	46.1	49.8	68.7	95.0
Two or More Races	51.1	59.5	47.8	44.3	58.7	57.2	64.0	70.6	95.0
White	60.9	67.4	58.4	53.6	68.2	65.5	74.7	78.1	95.0
Economically Disadvantaged	35.8	42.4	34.9	32.0	43.8	41.7	45.5	62.1	95.0
Limited English Proficient	18.5	14.5	25.7	14.8	24.8	15.4	16.2	24.3	89.7
Student with Disabilities	21.6	22.6	21.2	18.7	28.5	27.9	24.7	36.7	83.7
Academically or Intellectually Gifted	91.6	93.5	92.5	84.0	93.7	89.8	95.0	94.5	95.0