

**REPORT FROM THE
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON
TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

**TO THE
NORTH CAROLINA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

January 2008

Acknowledgements

The members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability appreciate the opportunity provided them by the State Board of Education to comprehensively review and offer recommendations for re-visioning the State's test program and accountability system. During their deliberations, a number of individuals graciously gave of their time to share information and their perspectives. Special thanks are extended to the following individuals:

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Executive Summary

In May 2007, the State Board of Education convened a Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability charged with comprehensively reviewing and offering recommendations for re-visioning the State's test program and accountability system. As reflected in the appointment letter, it was expected that the Commission's work would be "visionary and in-depth, searching for credible and practical solutions that will serve us well in public education." The Commission met regularly over a seven month period and heard from a large number of stakeholders. The Commission also considered the recommendations in Senate Bill 1463 and the requirements of No Child Left Behind (PL 107-110).

The Commission believes that a 21st Century curriculum is the foundation of a 21st Century testing program and accountability system. The curriculum must drive the testing and accountability system and define the performances and demonstrations that are to be revealed by the testing (assessment) and accountability process. All tests and assessments should be linked to the state's curriculum. It is neither helpful nor fair to test children on topics and skills that they have not been taught. Nor is it fair or productive to hold teachers and schools accountable for material that is so vast, does not define those standards that are most important and represent big ideas (power standards) rather than discrete information that will quickly be forgotten, and that has no "shelf life" even though it is included in the standard course of study. Acceptance of these and other beliefs leads to the realization that new and different accountability models are needed for the elementary, middle school, and high school levels, with the most significant changes needed at the high school level.

These new and different accountability models must be understandable and transparent. They must provide parents and other stakeholders with valid and meaningful information about the performance of students and how our students perform compared to students in other states and countries around the world. The construction of assessment items is a critical process and more so with the intent to measure 21st Century skills as defined by the SBE. Teachers and principals need support and data that enable them to make informed instructional decisions that result in positive outcomes for students. 21st Century technologies and tools must be used to support student learning.

The Commission recognizes that developing and implementing a 21st Century testing program and accountability system will take time and encourages the State Board of Education to commit to a plan and timetable for change. We are sure that the SBE will hear many reasons why "this or that" cannot be accomplished and we hope that your wisdom will lead you to ask "why not" and to lead change efforts that push the system to a true 21st Century level. Based on concerns shared with the Commission by a variety of stakeholders, adjustments to the current system are due, needed, and critical.

Commission members identified 27 recommendations which are detailed in the report. Of the 27, five were identified as critical:

- The K-12 curriculum must be reviewed in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary fashion. Power standards must be articulated for each grade level with appropriate curriculum extensions for students with disabilities. The curriculum must reflect 21st Century skill sets.

The curriculum must be rigorous and relevant, and reflect relationships between and among subject areas.

- The construction of assessment items be done by experts in the field, not through an item bank development process as is currently done. The number of items per learning objective should be sufficient to provide student-level diagnostic instructional information, but limited to that number that can reasonably be completed in one sitting. This should be 90 minutes or less at the elementary level and 120 minutes or less at the high school level. The assessment tasks should require students to demonstrate a command of the important standards measured and employ cognitive skills rather than memorized facts.
- Before students are subjected to new assessments, sample tests and questions be made public to all interested in what NC students are being expected to demonstrate they know and can do so that teachers and others will be knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments. Regular release of forms of assessments should be provided to local school administrative units for use as benchmark assessments.
- Any student who scores within the standard error of measure (SEM) of Level 3 on an end-of-grade test (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) test or any retest of an EOG or EOC be counted as proficient for the schools' and LEAs' ABCs performance composite and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes.
- End-of-Course (EOC) and End-of-Grade (EOG) tests not be included in the ABCs performance composite, AYP calculations, or ABC bonus award if the cut scores for those tests were not determined prior to their administration.

Members of the Commission appreciate the opportunity provided by the State Board of Education to make recommendations related to the testing program and accountability system and stand ready to assist the Board in implementing the recommendations.

REPORT FROM THE BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON TESTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Background

In 1995, the North Carolina General Assembly directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a restructuring plan for public education to focus more on basic skills, higher accountability, and more local control over educational decisions. The SBE conducted an in-depth study involving public hearings, surveys and interviews; reviewed current mandates and operating procedures; and undertook a major organizational analysis to relate all education operations to the mission. In May 1995, the New ABCs¹ of Public Education outlined the framework for a dramatic restructuring of public education. Under the ABCs of Public Education, individual schools are held accountable for student performance. With the implementation of the ABCs, the State Board of Education has attempted to give principals and teachers as much control as possible over the schools in which they work and the flexibility to make their own decisions. A detailed chronology of the evolution of the ABCs is included in Appendix A.

A key component of the accountability system is the State's testing program. At the elementary and middle grades levels, End-of-Grade (EOG) tests in reading and mathematics at grades 3-8, writing assessments at grades 4 and 7, and computer skills tests at grade 8 are used as accountability measures. In compliance with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, science will be tested in grades 5 and 8 beginning with the 2007-08 school year. At the high school level, components of the ABCs include: student performance on ten mandate End-of-Course (EOC) tests (Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, English I, Geometry, Physical Science, Physics, US History, and Civics and Economics); current year to baseline (average of two previous years) comparison of percentages of students completing College/University Prep or College Tech Prep courses of study; gains in passing rate on high school competency tests from the end of eighth grade to the end of 10th grade; and dropout rate. SAT scores and participation rates for the last three years are reported, but not included in the schools' composite scores determining ABCs status. The NCAAP (NC Alternate Assessment Portfolio), NC EXTEND2 and NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards) alternate assessments are used for certain students with disabilities. A detailed chronology of changes in the State's testing program is included in Appendix B.

In September 2006, the State Board of Education adopted a new guiding mission: Every student will graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century. In support of this guiding mission, the Board adopted five goals:

- NC public schools will produce globally competitive students.
- NC public schools will be led by 21st Century professionals.
- NC public school students will be healthy and responsible.
- Leadership will guide innovation in NC public schools.
- NC public schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.

¹ Strong **A**ccountability, Better Schools Through **B**asics, and Local **C**ontrol and Flexibility

In light of the Board's new guiding mission and goals, and concern that while the State's testing program and accountability system have worked well for many years, demands on the system have exceeded its capacity and original intent, in May 2007 the State Board of Education convened a Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability.

Commission Members

Dr. Sam Houston, a former North Carolina public school superintendent and current CEO and president of the North Carolina Science, Math, and Technology Center, was named as chair the Commission. Commission members were selected to represent a wide array of backgrounds and experiences, some in public education and some from the business and community sectors. Members of the Commission were:

- Dr. Terry Ackerman, UNC-Greensboro
- The Honorable Tom Apodaca, North Carolina Senate
- Ms. Nancy Bartles, Area Superintendent, East Learning Community, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
- The Honorable Curtis Blackwood, North Carolina House of Representatives
- Mr. Michael Brader-Araje, TruePilot
- Ms. Tammy Bellefeuil, Principal, Brevard Elementary School, Transylvania County Schools
- Ms. Cathy Boshamer, EC Director, Gaston County Schools
- Mr. J. Keith Brown, NC Community College System
- Mr. John Cardarelli, Teacher, Jefferson Middle School, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
- The Honorable Susan Fisher, North Carolina House of Representatives
- Dr. Kathi Gibson, Superintendent, Northampton County Schools
- The Honorable Rick Glazier, North Carolina House of Representatives
- Mr. Jeff Gorsuch, Testing Director, Buncombe County Schools
- Mr. Craig Hill, Principal, Kinston High School, Lenoir County
- Dr. Terry Holliday, Superintendent, Iredell Statesville Schools
- Dr. Helen F. Ladd, Duke University
- The Honorable Vernon Malone, North Carolina Senate
- Dr. Donald Martin, Superintendent, Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools
- Dr. James McCormick, Superintendent, Lee County Schools
- The Honorable Earline Parmon, North Carolina House of Representatives
- Mr. Andre Peek, IBM
- Dr. Larry Price, Superintendent, Wilson County Schools
- The Honorable A.B. Swindell, North Carolina Senate
- Ms. Marylene Tootle, Counselor, Broad Creek Middle, Carteret County Schools
- Mr. Brian Whitson, Teacher, Salisbury High School, Rowan-Salisbury School System

Mr. J. B. Buxton, Deputy Superintendent, Department of Public Instruction, Dr. Rebecca Garland, Executive Director, State Board of Education Office, and Dr. Kathy Sullivan, Senior Policy Advisor, State Board of Education Office served as staff to the Commission.

Commission Charge

The charge to the Commission was to comprehensively review and offer to the State Board of Education recommendations for re-visioning the State’s test program and accountability system. As reflected in the appointment letter, it was expected that the Commission’s work would be “visionary and in-depth, searching for credible and practical solutions that will serve us well in public education.”

Work of the Commission

Meeting regularly from May through November, the Commission heard formal presentations from professional associations and commissions, individuals in the field, parents, higher education, the business community, 21st Century initiatives, the State Superintendent, DPI staff, representatives of a national testing organization, an individual testing expert, and Judge Howard Manning. Summaries of the presentations are contained in Appendix C.

In addition, the Commission considered the recommendations in Senate Bill 1463 (Appendix D), the requirements of No Child Left Behind (PL 107-110) and the fiscal implications of non-compliance,² and letters received from stakeholders.

State Board of Education Objectives for the 21st Century

As reflected in Appendix F, for each five goals adopted by the State Board of Education in support of its guiding mission, specific objectives have been articulated. Fourteen of these objectives are directly related to the work of the Commission. These are:

- Every student excels in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what students need to know and demonstrate a global 21st Century environment, including a mastery of languages, an appreciation of the arts, and competencies in the use of technology.
- Every student’s achievement is measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions needed in the 21st Century.
- Every student will be enrolled in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition.
- Every student uses technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that will be needed as a life-long learner to be competitive in a constantly changing international environment.
- Every teacher will have the skills to deliver 21st Century content in a 21st Century context with 21st Century tools and technology that guarantee student learning.
- Every teacher and administrator will use a 21st Century assessment system to inform instruction and measure 21st Century knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions.
- Every educational professional uses data to inform decisions.

² As reflected in Appendix E, if North Carolina does not comply with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, the State would lose \$465,777,218 annually.

- Every school reflects a culture of learning that empowers and prepares students to be life-long learners.
 - School professionals will collaborate with national and international partners to discover innovative transformational strategies that will facilitate change, remove barriers for 21st Century learning, and understand global connections.
 - School leaders will create a culture that embraces change and promotes dynamic continuous improvement.
 - Processes are in place for financial planning and budgeting that focus on resource attainment and alignment with priorities to maximize student achievement.
 - Twenty-first century technology and learning tools are available and are supported by school facilities that have the capacity for 21st Century learning.
 - Information and fiscal accountability systems are capable of collecting relevant data and reporting strategic and operational results.
 - Procedures are in place to support and sanction schools that are not meeting state standards for student achievement.
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Findings of the Commission

Based on review of all the information and data available to it, the Commission found that:

1. The current testing program and accountability system do not ensure that students are graduating from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.
2. The current testing program and accountability system do not reflect 21st Century skill sets.
3. Too much time is spent on testing without effective prescriptive feedback.
4. The current curriculum is too broad and not deep enough.
5. There are trade-offs in any assessment system. Less testing yields less information. Sampling, such as that used with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), reduces individual student testing and provides a rich picture of the curriculum as a whole, but it does not provide information on individual students. Meaningful individual student diagnostic information requires extensive testing. Norm-referenced tests must be augmented. Constructed-response tests must be hand-scored and therefore require more time for scoring.
6. Teachers need on-going, formative assessments to ensure that all students graduate from high school globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.
7. NC will need significant upgrades of infrastructure and staff development to support more on-line testing.

8. The system of testing in North Carolina has not proven to have an impact that has increased the graduation rate nor reduced the remediation rates at the community college or university levels. Representatives of the University system indicated that they afforded no value to the EOC tests as admission is being considered and likewise the community college system uses its own system rather than EOC tests for placement decisions.
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Guiding Principles

In arriving at its recommendations, the Commission was guided by the following principles:

1. The primary goal of an accountability system should be to improve outcomes for students. The testing program and accountability system must help us produce graduates who are globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.
 2. The testing program and accountability system must comply with the requirements of NCLB.
 3. The testing program and accountability system must be understandable and transparent.
 4. The testing program and accountability system must provide parents and other stakeholders with valid and meaningful information about the performance of students.
 5. The testing program must provide teachers with tools and data for each individual student that enables them to align their instruction to each student's needs based on defined curriculum standards and objectives.
 6. The curriculum must reflect 21st Century knowledge and skills, and the testing program and accountability system must be aligned with and reflect the curriculum.
 7. The testing program and accountability system must take advantage of 21st Century technologies.
 8. An accountability system can and should include elements other than tests or assessments.
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Recommendations

The Commission has generated 27 recommendations. The recommendations fall into two broad categories: 1) a vision of what a 21st Century testing program and accountability system should be and 2) adjustments needed to the current testing program and accountability system while the State works to develop and implement a 21st Century system. Within the first category, recommendations have been grouped as:

- Curriculum
- Assessments
- Support and Resources
- Accountability Models

A Vision of a 21st Century Testing Program and Accountability System

Curriculum

A 21st Century curriculum is the foundation of a 21st Century testing program and accountability system. The curriculum must drive the testing and accountability system and define the performances and demonstrations that are to be revealed by the testing (assessment) and accountability process. The Commission therefore recommends:

1. The K-12 curriculum must be reviewed in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary fashion. Power standards³ must be articulated for each grade level with appropriate curriculum extensions for students with disabilities. The curriculum must reflect 21st Century skill sets. The curriculum must be rigorous and relevant, and reflect relationships between and among subject areas.
2. A moratorium be imposed on curriculum changes until the comprehensive review that results in a movement of narrowing to power standards that truly reflect what students “need to know” and not the “nice to know” is completed, The moratorium should not include the development of curriculum extensions for students with disabilities that is being done.
3. The knowledge and skills needed to successfully complete the high school graduation project be embedded in the K-12 curriculum, i.e., the requirements of the project should be back-mapped throughout the curriculum. The graduation project rubric should be evident at every grade level and annotated to the exit expectation – kindergarten teachers should know that the knowledge and skills they are delivering align with the 12th grade and graduation.

Assessments

All tests and assessments should be linked to the state’s curriculum. It is neither helpful nor fair to test children on topics and skills that they have not been taught. Nor is it fair or productive to hold teachers and schools accountable for material that is so vast, does not define those standards that are most important and represent big ideas (power standards) rather than discrete information that will quickly be forgotten, and that has no “shelf life” even though it is included in the standard course of study. The construction of test items is a critical process and more so with the intent to measure 21st Century skills as defined by the State Board of Education. The

³ Power Standards are prioritized standards that are derived from a systematic and balanced approach to distinguishing the standards that are absolutely essential for student success from those that are “nice to know.”

Power Standards are a subset of the complete list of standards for each grade and for each subject. They represent the “safety net” of standards that each teacher needs to make sure that every student learns prior to leaving the current grade. Students who acquire this “safety net” of knowledge and skills will thus exit one grade better prepared for the next grade.

Commission therefore recommends:

4. New tests and assessments be developed based on the power standards articulated for each grade level, including appropriate extensions for students with exceptionalities.
5. The construction of assessment items be done by experts in the field, not through an item bank development process as is currently done. The number of items per learning objective should be sufficient to provide student-level diagnostic instructional information, but limited to that number that can reasonably be completed in one sitting. This should be 90 minutes or less at the elementary level and 120 minutes or less at the high school level. The assessment tasks should require students to demonstrate a command of the important standards measured and employ cognitive skills rather than memorized facts.
6. An expert review panel of teachers and specialists be established for each test developed. The test items and descriptions should receive a review at a level of difficulty commensurate with the intended use of the test.
7. Companion assessment descriptions that spell out the essence of what is measured by State test items or tasks be created so that teachers are able to ensure alignment of instruction to assessment.
8. Before students are subjected to new assessments, sample tests and questions be made public to all interested in what NC students are being expected to demonstrate they know and can do so that teachers and others will be knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments. Regular release of forms of assessments should be provided to local school administrative units for use as benchmark assessments.

Support and Resources

Teachers and principals need support and data that enable them to make informed instructional decisions that result in positive outcomes for students. 21st Century technologies and tools must be used to support student learning. The Commission therefore recommends:

9. Teachers and principals be provided with extensive and intensive quality professional development focused on the new curricula and the use of formative assessment to improve instruction.
10. The Board seek funding from the General Assembly for an accountability director/data coach for each local school administrative unit. This individual should help systems and schools use test data to improve student performance.
11. An external group be convened to determine the capacity of the Department of Public Instruction to implement the new testing program and accountability system. If additional personnel are needed, funding should be requested from the General Assembly.

12. The Board seek funding from the General Assembly to provide the technological infrastructure needed for tests, as appropriate, to be administered on-line.
13. An electronic system of tracking students during their enrollment in North Carolina public schools be fully implemented. This system should provide all the rules and nuances of tracking students for graduation purposes, including who is counted, who is not counted, diploma students, certificate students, and a process for when a school closes or a new school opens.

Accountability Models

Acceptance of the beliefs reflected in the guiding principles leads to the realization that new and different accountability models are needed for the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. These new and different accountability models must be understandable and transparent. They must provide parents and other stakeholders with valid and meaningful information about the performance of students and how our students perform compared to students in other states and countries around the world. The Commission therefore recommends:

14. The elementary and middle grades state accountability models be revised to include only the Reading and Math End-of-Grade (EOG) tests. Students who score proficient on an EOC test should be counted proficient on the comparable EOG test without having to take the EOG (e.g., 8th graders taking Algebra I and scoring proficient on the Algebra I EOC should not be required to take the 8th grade math EOG, but the school should be able to count the student as proficient on the math EOG).
15. The high school accountability model be revised to include only the following components:
 - A. The 3-5 year graduation rates; [40%]
 - B. The End-of-Course test results for those courses currently or subsequently required for graduation; [30%] and
 - C. Percent of students who are college ready (e.g., % of students scoring above the remediation cut score on any test used by the NC Community College System, % scoring 3 or higher on AP exams, etc.). [30%]

The suggested weight of each component is in [] above.

16. A technical advisory committee develops an equitable growth model that accounts for differing levels of student achievement and resources. The growth model should provide prescriptive information. The new model should be used for the payment of ABC bonuses.
17. Selected LEAs be invited to develop and implement 21st Century assessment models for a two year pilot period. The models would need to incorporate *authentic* assessments of 21st Century knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The results of the pilot should be used by the Board to inform statewide practice.

Adjustments to the Current System

The Commission recognizes that developing and implementing a 21st Century testing program and accountability system will take time, and that until a new system is in place, the current system will continue to be used. Based on concerns shared with the Commission by a variety of stakeholders, adjustments to the current system are due, needed, and critical. The Commission therefore recommends:

18. Any student who scores within the standard error of measure (SEM) of Level 3 on an end-of-grade test (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) test or any retest of an EOG or EOC be counted as proficient for the schools' and LEAs' ABCs performance composite and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes.
 19. Only those students who have been enrolled in the school for 140 days or more be included when calculating a school's performance composite.
 20. End-of-Course (EOC) and End-of-Grade (EOG) tests not be included in the ABCs performance composite, AYP calculations, or ABC bonus award if the cut scores for those tests were not determined prior to their administration.
 21. Scale scores and proficiency in both the old standard and the new standard be provided for a one-year transition period when a test is rescaled to meet higher standards.
 22. The High School Cohort Graduation Rate be redefined so that it includes students who complete their graduation requirements in five years or less.
 23. The fourth, seventh, and tenth grade writing tests be eliminated and replaced with more authentic assessments embedded within the curriculum and the graduation project.
 24. The on-line computer skills test be eliminated as a requirement and replaced with more authentic assessments of computer literacy embedded within the curriculum and the graduation project.
 25. The English I (9th grade) EOC be replaced by an English II (10th grade) EOC, which would be used for NCLB accountability purposes.
 26. An Integrated Math EOC be developed for students who take Integrated Math courses in lieu of Algebra I and Geometry.
 27. A group of school accountability experts be convened to review the data collection procedures used for the 2006-2007 school year and make any needed changes to those procedures prior to any further data collection.
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For Consideration

In the course of deliberation, other suggestions were made by Commission members. Although the Commission did **not reach consensus** that led these suggestions to become recommendations of the Commission to the State Board of Education, several are included herein. These points of consideration are very complex and consensus can be developed given time and evidence. The Commission would encourage energy be given to finding a solution for the following:

- The testing program should include both nationally normed referenced tests and constructed response tests.
- North Carolina should adopt the *Achieve* multi-state Algebra II exam.
- North Carolina should use the TIMSS⁴ (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study) and PISA⁵ (Programme for International Student Assessment) assessments as models and as benchmarks against which to evaluate its curriculum.
- The Board should review the terminology it uses to describe student performance to ensure its alignment with the terminology used in national tests such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and to eliminate confusion.
- The Board should seek funding from the General Assembly for testing coordinator positions in the schools based on one testing coordinator for each 2,000 students.
- The feasibility and desirability of establishing an education review office that serves as an inspectorate of the type that is common in other English speaking countries, such as New Zealand and England, should be investigated. This review office would send “inspectors” to each school on a regular basis. In preparation for the visits, each school would do a self-study and would have an opportunity to respond to the report before it is made public. The precise responsibilities of the review office would need to be worked out, but its main mission would be to assure that the school is paying attention not only to the subjects that are tested, but also to the softer, and harder-to-measure 21st Century skills such as working in teams, having a global perspective, and working with others different from oneself. Another function could also be to share information in the form of periodic reports on productive practices in the schools. This is a 21st Century suggestion and requires the development of highly professional levels of respect absent from the present system of accountability.

⁴ TIMSS is an international assessment of mathematics and science achievement at the fourth and eighth grade levels conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA).

⁵ PISA is an international assessment of reading, mathematics, and science literacy developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (sic). It is administered to students at the age of 15 (as they are nearing completion of compulsory education). It assesses the ability of students to “apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas and to analyze, reason and communicate effectively as they pose, solve and interpret problems in a variety of situations.”

The members of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability appreciate the opportunity provided by the State Board of Education to make recommendations related to the testing program and accountability system. Members stand ready to assist the Board in implementing the recommendations.

APPENDIX A

Evolution of the ABCs of Public Education

Evolution of the ABCs of Public Education

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| 1995 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Assembly directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop a restructuring plan for public education. The SBE conducted an in-depth study involving public hearings, surveys and interviews; reviewed current mandates and operating procedures; and undertook a major organizational analysis to relate all education operations to the mission. In May 1995, the New ABCs of Public Education outlined the framework for a dramatic restructuring. |
| 1995-96 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One hundred eight schools in ten school districts piloted The New ABCs of Public Education. The systems were Albemarle, Alleghany, Asheville City, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank, Duplin, Halifax, Lexington, McDowell, Bladen, and Lincoln. |
| 1996 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ General Assembly approved the State Board’s plan and put into law the School-Based Management and Accountability Program (the ABCs). |
| 1996-97 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ABCs implementation began for schools with grades K-8. The model included growth and performance composites and included EOG Reading and Mathematics and Writing at Grade 4. The new Grade 7 writing was used only in the performance composite. ▪ DPI communicated ABCs Procedures to principals and teachers. ▪ Assistance teams were formed and trained; assistance was offered to schools that asked for it. ▪ Steering Committee for Assessment and Accountability was established by the SBE to develop the High School Model. ▪ Compliance Commission for Accountability was established by the SBE to advise on testing and other issues related to school accountability and improvement. The commission was to be composed of two members from each of eight educational districts and four at-large members to represent parents, business, and the community. ▪ The first ABCs Report submitted to the State Board of Education in August. ▪ All schools achieving exemplary growth standards received incentive awards (\$1,000 for certified staff; \$500 for teacher assistants). |
| 1997-98 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designated Low-Performing schools received assistance teams. ▪ The next phase of statewide reform was implemented with the high school accountability model. It was considered a “work in progress” with re-examination, changes and adjustments to come. ▪ The model included results on five mandated EOCs, a high school writing test (English II – time was extended to allow students 100 minutes); percent of students completing College Prep/College Tech Prep (based on a year to year change); student SAT scores and participation rates were reported. |

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| <p>1997-98 (Continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two measures, changes in the passing rates on the high school competency tests and changes in dropout rates, were approved for implementation for 1998-99 (competency) and 2000-01 (dropout). ▪ The Comprehensive Test in Reading and Mathematics was administered to determine cohort growth from grade 8 to grade 10. This was to meet the requirements of Senate Bill 1139, legislation that called for measuring student growth (for high schools). Initially, results were to “count” for the accountability year, but it was decided to delay inclusion of these data in the growth composite for high schools until the following year. ▪ Growth for K-8 schools was computed using both the “old” <i>unmatched</i> grade 3 parameters, and the “new” (1996-97) <i>matched</i> group grade 3 parameters. The higher of the two growth computations was used in the final computations for growth. ▪ Seventh Grade Writing was included in computing growth since this was the third year of data collection; it had previously been used only in the performance composite. ▪ Algebra I scores from grades prior to the ninth grade were included in the computations for performance composites for high schools. ▪ A confidence band for the performance composite was computed for identifying low-performing schools; this allowed schools a safety margin for sampling error. Schools could be slightly below 50% at or above grade level and not be penalized. ▪ ABCs status label <i>No Recognition</i> was changed to <i>Adequate Performance</i>. ▪ Charter Schools were included in the ABCs reporting for the first time. ▪ A Comprehensive model was defined for schools that had grades included in both the K-8 and high school configurations. The school faculty voted on whether the Comprehensive model would be used to evaluate the school for the accountability year, and the vote was to be reflected in the School Improvement Plan. ▪ Alternative schools were asked to submit proposals of better ways to be evaluated in subsequent accountability years. ▪ Reporting guidelines were developed to accommodate feeder patterns for special education schools, alternative schools, K-2 feeder schools; high schools with major demographic shifts were accommodated under special conditions, These reporting accommodations were implemented for schools with insufficient data. Guidelines were also developed to handle senior high schools under the ABCs. ▪ An administrative decision was made that during this accountability year, no alternative schools or special schools were to be identified as Low-Performing. ▪ EOC test scores, e.g., Algebra I scores, of students in middle grades were used in the high school portion of the performance composite score but not the gain composite score. |
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| <p>1997-98 (Continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ K-8 and high school results under the ABCs were reported in <u>A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education, Volume I</u>. ▪ All schools making Expected or Exemplary Growth/Gain were awarded incentives per the Excellent Schools Act, enacted by the General Assembly, up to \$1500 for certified staff, up to \$500 for teacher assistants in schools making Exemplary Growth/Gain. Schools making Expected growth/gain received up to \$750 for certified staff; up to \$375 for teacher assistants. ▪ <u>A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education</u> was made available on the DPI website. |
| <p>1998-99</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The SBE increased the membership of the Compliance Commission for Accountability from the original 20 members to 22 members to include an SBE member and an additional at-large business member. ▪ The Comprehensive model was applied to all schools. ▪ Five additional EOC tests were added to the performance composite score. ▪ The High School Comprehensive Test growth parameters were approved; the growth component was included in the high school growth/gain computations. ▪ The change in the competency passing rate component was implemented in the high school growth/gain computations. ▪ EOC scores in middle schools counted toward the schools' growth/gain and performance. ▪ Data collection guidelines and procedures were documented in an Accountability Processing Checklist to incorporate roles of LEA, regional coordinators, and the agency staff. ▪ Insufficient data rule, (less than 30 students in a given course for a given year of the three years of data), was documented for high schools. ▪ Dual enrollment policies were documented and disseminated. ▪ Membership rule for Comprehensive Tests was approved (160 days). ▪ Revised grade 3 parameters were applied to the grade 3 growth computations. ▪ <u>A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education, Volume II</u> included ABCs dropout data. ▪ Alternative schools with sufficient data were included in the ABCs on the basis of their data; schools with insufficient data were awarded prorated incentives based on the feeder schools. ▪ The labels <i>Top 10/25 Schools</i> and <i>Adequate Performance</i> were changed to <i>Most Improved 10/25</i> and <i>No Recognition</i>, respectively. |

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| 1999-2000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A rule for dropping courses in high school (10/20 Day Rule) was implemented. ▪ Alternative Schools were included in the ABCs under HSP-C-013. Web interface was developed for data collection for alternative schools to enter local option data online. ▪ 46. Department of Health, Human Services (DHHS) and Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) Schools were included in the ABCs. ▪ Schools were given test administration options for fall English II Tests due to catastrophic weather. ▪ The SBE appointed a Writing Assessment Task Force. ▪ Full ABCs documentation was made available on the Accountability web site. |
| 2000-01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EOC prediction formulas for 10 multiple-choice EOCs were implemented; this fully addressed concerns related to comparing different cohorts over time at the high school level. ▪ Dropout rate change was implemented as a component to the growth computations in high schools. ▪ Computer Skills testing results at grade 8 were added to the performance composite. ▪ EOC prediction formulas' exemplary growth standard was set at 3% more than the expected growth standard. ▪ Weighting the ABCs growth composites was adopted by the SBE in part to eliminate concern over small groups of students having the same impact as large groups of students in the determination of whether the school met growth standards. ▪ The North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP) was added to the performance composite. ▪ Writing at grades 4 and 7 was removed from the growth composites, but remained a part of the performance composite. ▪ The North Carolina Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (NCAAAI) and the Computerized Adaptive Testing System were approved by SBE to be pilot tested and included in ABCs Volume II Report. |
| 2001-02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The State Board of Education approved revisions to ABCs terminology for the 2001-02 school year. ▪ The term <i>high</i> growth replaced <i>exemplary</i> growth, and the term <i>growth</i> replaced <i>growth/gain</i> in all designations of meeting or exceeding growth or gain standards. ▪ Schools of Distinction were required to make expected growth. |

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| <p>2001-02 (Continued)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Three tests were eliminated for the 2001-2002 school year: Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Open-ended Assessments in grades 4 and 8, and the High School Comprehensive Tests in Reading and Mathematics at grade 10. (Only the latter had been included in the ABCs.) ▪ English II was suspended and will not be included in the ABCs until new tests for grade 10 Writing are developed. Writing results at grades 4 and 7 were removed from the ABCs performance composite. ▪ Format for reporting data in ABCs Volume II was revised, and the name was changed to <i>Reports of Supplemental Disaggregated State, District and School Performance Data for 2000-2001</i>. ▪ SBE approved the revised achievement levels in mathematics determined from the Summer of 2001 equating study for student reporting, student accountability standards gateways, student competency standard, and ABCs reporting (performance composites). ▪ Two ABCs reporting categories were added: Schools of Progress (schools that make at least expected growth and have a performance composite of at least 60%) and Priority Schools (schools that have less than 60% performance composite and are not low-performing.) |
| <p>2002-03</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ABCs 91-Day Rule for Growth Calculations changed to 140-Day Rule to align with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) full academic year (FAY) requirement. ▪ The ABCs 98% participation rule for grades 3-8 under the ABCs was changed to 95% to conform to the NCLB 95% participation rule. ▪ No exclusions were allowed. ▪ Added Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) as a “closing the gap component” of the ABCs to meet requirements of General Statute 115C-105.35. ▪ North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio (NCAAP) scoring revised to yield Reading and Mathematics scores. ▪ The ABCs Report, The ABCs of Public Education 2002-2003 Growth and Performance of North Carolina Schools was made available in electronic format on DPI website. No hardcopy reports were published. |

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| 2003-04 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No U.S. History tests were administered in 2003-04. Economic, Legal and Political Systems (ELP) tests was administered for transfer students, students who previously failed the course, and students in 10th-12th grade who needed the course for graduation. U.S. History and ELP data will be excluded from the ABCs data analysis for 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years. New EOC tests in these subjects are under development for administration during the 2005-06 school year. ▪ Alternative schools' accountability policy was revised to prescribe 8 local options; these revisions were optional for the 2003-04 school year, and mandatory in 2004-05. ▪ Certain charter schools became eligible to participate in the ABCs as alternative schools per SBE policy. ▪ The Occupational Course of Study (OCS) graduates were subtracted from the denominator of diploma recipients in computing the College University Prep/College Tech Prep component. ▪ Writing results (grades 4, 7, and 10) were not included in the ABCs in 2003-04; results at grades 4, 7, and 10 will be included in performance composite in 2004-05. ▪ SBE approved a change in weighting the dropout component of the ABCs to $\frac{1}{4}$ membership, making it comparable to English I weight; this will be applied to the changes in dropout rates reported in the 2004-05 ABCs. ▪ The SBE approved adding a recognition category for Schools of Excellence that meet AYP. The new category was named Honor Schools of Excellence. |
| 2004-05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing results (grades 4, 7, and 10) were not included in the ABCs in 2003-04; results at grades 4, 7, and 10 will be included in performance composite in 2005-06. ▪ Implementation of weighting the dropout component of the ABCs to $\frac{1}{4}$ of the membership used for funding was included in growth calculations. ▪ SBE approves new growth formulas and standards for the 2005-06 school year and beyond. Included is the calculation of student level growth and a variety of procedural changes precipitated by a provision in general statue from the summer of 2004. ▪ SBE approves Report of 2004-05 ABCs with sixth grade reading excluded from the growth calculations. |

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| 2005-06 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New ABCs growth formulas for all grades and subjects were implemented. ▪ Writing results were included in the performance composite using a confidence interval. ▪ US History and Civics and Economics tests were included in the performance composite only. ▪ For schools with an 8th grade, the factor for computer skills in the performance composite was based not on the number of test takers but the number of eighth grade students on the first day of spring testing. ▪ A fundamental change in the way High Growth is computed was implemented. Instead of the standard being a larger amount of growth, the standard was changed to include the ratio of students who meet their individual growth standard compared to those who do not. ▪ For the first time, average growth per student at the school level is reported as is the ratio used to determine high growth. ▪ As a U.S. Department of Education Pilot, North Carolina was one of only two states allowed to use growth as part of AYP determinations. ▪ Growth by AYP group is reported for all students in the web presentation of school detail results. ▪ Two new alternate assessments were implemented to meet the needs of students with particular issues accessing a standard test administration. (NCCLAS and NCEXTEND2) (replacing NCAAAI) NCEXTEND2 was included in AYP and performance composite subject to a 2% cap at the LEA level of students being counted as proficient on this alternate assessment. ▪ North Carolina was one of only 10 states that had received approval of its assessment system prior to June 30, 2006 (the USED deadline to receive such approval). ▪ Due to the implementation of the new edition of the math EOG tests, ABCs were delayed until November and High School results were sent the SBE independent of lower grade results in October. |
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APPENDIX B

***A Brief Historical Chronology
of the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program***

A Brief Historical Chronology of the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program

1. The North Carolina Statewide Testing Program was implemented initially in 1978 in response to legislation passed in 1977. At that time, the program consisted of an annual testing program using the California Achievement Tests (CAT) in designated grades in the areas of reading, language arts, and mathematics. In addition, the competency testing program was initiated in 1978, effective with the class of 1982. New High School Exit Standards were effective with the ninth graders of 2006-07.
2. The writing assessments were implemented in North Carolina effective with the 1983-84 school year at grades six and nine. The North Carolina Writing Assessment has evolved to where it is currently administered at grade 4 (narrative), grade 7 (expository or argumentative), and grade 10 (informational).
3. In the mid-1980s through the early 1990s, North Carolina administered science and social studies tests to students in grades 3, 6, and 8 annually. Both tests were discontinued in the 1990s.
4. The end-of-course testing program was implemented effective with the 1985-86 school year with the first administration of the North Carolina End-of-Course (EOC) Test in Algebra I.
5. The end-of-course tests were expanded over time to include 11 subjects, ten of which are currently being administered: Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, English I, Civics and Economics, U.S. History, Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics (online with interactive items). The EOC tests are administered at the end of the course, wherever the course is taught. The English II end-of-course test, a writing assessment, was initially implemented during the 1991-92 school year and was discontinued at the end of the 2000-01 school year.
6. In 1990 North Carolina began its participation in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which offers state-to-state and state-to-the nation comparisons of student performance in reading, mathematics, science, and writing at grades 4 and 8. North Carolina continues to participate in NAEP annually.
7. The California Achievement Tests, nationally norm-referenced achievement tests, were discontinued in North Carolina after the 1991-92 school year.
8. The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests in Reading and Mathematics at grades 3-8 were implemented effective with the 1992-93 school year in response to concerns about the use of nationally norm-referenced standardized tests which did not align with the state-mandated curriculum. In addition, open-ended assessments were initiated the same year in the areas of reading, mathematics, and social studies but were discontinued effective in the mid 1990s but were reinstated in the late 1990s but were discontinued again in the early 2000s in order to reduce the amount of testing and to reduce the costs for annual implementation of the statewide testing program.
9. The number of end-of-course tests was reduced effective with the 1995-96 school year in response to a request to reduce the statewide testing program. The EOC tests eliminated at that time were: Physical Science, Algebra II, Geometry, Chemistry, and Physics. These tests were reinstated effective with the 1998-99 school year at the request of the LEAs to become a part of the ABCs Accountability Program.
10. In 1995-96, the competency standard was revised by the State Board of Education to be performance at Achievement Level III or higher on the end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics at grade 8.

Students who fail to meet this standard were required to have remedial instruction beginning with grade 10 which was later changed to grade 9 by the General Assembly.

11. Effective with the 1992-93 school year and after the CAT was discontinued in North Carolina, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS), another nationally norm-referenced standardized achievement test series, was administered to a sample of students in grades 5 and 8 to provide a national comparison. The ITBS were discontinued due to concerns about the lack of alignment with the state content standards and due to budget constraints in the early 2000s.
12. In response to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) reauthorized in 1997, the North Carolina Alternate Assessment Portfolio for students with significant cognitive disabilities was implemented in July 2000. The assessment for these students has evolved to become a performance task assessment (NCEXTEND1) administered using an online data collection system effective with the 2006-07 school year. Approximately 5,800 students annually are expected to participate in this alternate assessment.
13. Effective with the class of 2001, the North Carolina Test of Computer Skills, which requires students to use computers to demonstrate computer proficiency, was added as a graduation requirement under Feature C of the Quality Assurance Program. This assessment is administered to grade 8 students and high school students who failed the standard at grade 8. Effective with the grade 8 students of 2005-06, the assessment was administered as North Carolina's first online test.
14. Effective with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, a federal mandate was given that all students must be included in the statewide testing program. In response to this, additional alternative/alternate assessments (NCCLAS and NCEXTEND2) were implemented to provide access to the statewide testing program for eligible students with disabilities and eligible students with limited English proficiency. These alternative/alternate assessments are designed to offer these special need students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do, thereby allowing access to the statewide testing program.
15. The following North Carolina-developed tests have been implemented or the results from the existing assessments are used to meet the testing requirements of Title I and/or Title III under the NCLB Act of 2001 and IDEA:
 - a. End-of-Grade Reading and Mathematics at grades 3-8,
 - b. NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment in Reading and Mathematics 3-8 and 10; writing, grades 4, 7, and 10; and science grades 5, 8, and 10,
 - c. Algebra I, English I, and Biology end-of-course tests,
 - d. General Writing Assessment and OCS Writing Assessment at grade 10,
 - e. NCCLAS Alternative Assessment in Reading and Mathematics 3-8 and 10 and end-of-course tests,
 - f. NCEXTEND2 EOG Alternative Assessment in Reading and Mathematics 3-8 and 10,
 - g. General Science tests in grades 5 and 8 are statewide pilot tests being administered initially in Spring 2007,
 - h. NCEXTEND2 OCS Alternative Assessments in English, Mathematics, and Life Skills Science administered initially during the 2006-07 school year, and the
 - i. Designated English language proficiency tests in reading, listening, speaking, and writing at grades K-12.

APPENDIX C

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS TO THE COMMISSION

Summary of Presentations to the Commission

From Professional Associations and Commissions

- Representing the **NC Professional Teaching Standards Commission**, Ms. Carolyn McKinney distributed copies of the new teacher evaluation standards approved by the SBE at its June meeting. She pointed out specific references to the use of assessment in the new standards and indicated that a new teacher evaluation instrument would be developed to reflect the new standards. Ms. McKinney said that the current testing and accountability system needs dramatic changes for the 21st Century. Teachers need a variety of assessments, both formative and summative, throughout the school year to evaluate student progress and make adjustments to the teaching and learning process; teachers need assessments that require students to think, synthesize data, and draw conclusions in order to solve problems; teachers need assessments that reflect 21st Century classrooms.
- Mr. Eddie Davis represented the **North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE)**. He indicated that NCAE believes assessment is a vital aspect of the teaching and learning process. Multiple measures are needed; paper and pencil tests should not be the only measures used to assess student achievement and student success. The current system puts too much focus on test scores and not enough on learning. Test scores should be used to guide instruction; resources must be provided for students who need extra help. The conditions under which tests are administered need to be adjusted (e.g., access to water; stretch breaks). The writing test should be eliminated from the ABCs formula. We need to limit the amount of time spent on testing. Mr. Davis shared four questions that need to be addressed in the review of the accountability system:
 - ▶ How well is the accountability system working in our state or district?
 - ▶ What are its intended effects on districts, schools, and students?
 - ▶ What are its actual effects? How do we know? Is our assessment based on evidence so that others can be persuaded to improve the current situation?
 - ▶ What is the most effective, strategic method for improving the accountability system?

He recommended that the Commission hear from minorities and non-English speaking communities about the impact of testing.

- Ms. Deidre Williams spoke on behalf of the **NC School Counselors Association**. She indicated that the number of tests administered in a school year should be reduced. Students need an opportunity to understand they are not in school merely to do well on a test. The alternative assessments for LEP (Limited English Proficient) and special needs students need to be reviewed and revised. The “all or nothing” NCLB model should not overshadow NC’s ABCs growth model. A “testing facilitator” position should be funded for each school. Ms. Williams encouraged the Commission to reconsider the purpose of testing. She shared that “a colleague once said that EOGs and EOCs are like an autopsy – they tell you what is wrong after the fact.” We need to know how schools measure up and how our students are doing. We also need to determine what about testing is most important to this state.
- Ms Cathy Boshamer, President of the **NC Council of Administrators of Special Education** and a member of the Commission, shared concerns from an exceptional children’s perspective. She told the Commission that every comment they have heard applies to EC students. She stressed the need for on-going formative assessment. She expressed concern that the curriculum is not focused enough. She also indicated that additional work is needed on alternate assessments to appropriately reflect learning and growth for EC students.
- Mr. Lloyd Thrower spoke on behalf of the **NC Principals and Assistant Principals Association (NCPAPA)**. He prefaced his comments by indicating that NCPAPA is committed to fairness in

testing for both the student and the school. He recommended that schools receive credit for retesting in the performance composite. Cut scores must be established and published before the test is administered. No test should be given that cannot be scored immediately with the results given to the schools. The way in which LEP, exceptional children, and other special needs children are evaluated needs to be reviewed for consistency and fairness. The computer competency test should be eliminated. The process used to score the writing test should be reviewed, as should the inclusion of the writing test in the performance composite. The SEM (Standard Error of Measurement) should be applied consistently. He concluded his comments asking that the recommendations of the Commission go not only to the SBE, but also to the USED (US Education Department).

- Dr. Bill McNeal spoke on behalf of the **NC Association of School Administrators (NCASA)**. He began noting that accountability defines schools, teachers, principals, and students, and that because of the consequences it has, it must be right. He indicated that if testing is to improve instruction, diagnostic information at the student level is needed. Testing information needs to be more transparent and sample tests need to be provided. He recommended that the graduation rate be defined as individuals who complete high school in five years or less, and that students receiving a GED should be counted. A new formula, including multiple data points, should be developed for the growth model. A testing coordinator and an accountability director should be funded for each LEA. He recommended that we look at the curriculum and define “power” (critical) standards. Our current curriculum is too wide and not deep enough. The “right” curriculum ought to drive the accountability system. Dr. McNeal indicated that all 115 superintendents support the recommendations contained in the NCASA document distributed at the meeting.
- Dr. Ed Dunlap spoke on behalf of the **NC School Boards Association**. He indicated that his Board of Directors support the recommendations put forth by the superintendents. He shared several concerns of local board members with the Commission:
 - ▶ There is concern about the lack of transparency with the current system in terms of what is tested, how it is scored, and the rubrics used.
 - ▶ There is concern with the lack of alignment between the ABCs accountability model and NCLB (e.g., a school be labeled a school of distinction at the same time it fails to meet AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress]).
 - ▶ There is concern that too much time is spent on testing and that instructional days after the EOG and EOC exams may not be being used constructively.

He said we must determine the skill sets needed for the 21st Century and then make sure we are teaching and testing the appropriate curriculum for the 21st Century.

- Dr. Joseph Johnson, Chairman of the **SBE Closing the Gap Commission**, spoke about the paradigm shift between the “opportunity to learn” and the “obligation to teach.” He noted the need to consider the impact of the accountability system on minority and special needs students and identified disproportionality as a major concern. He further noted that changing a formula changes proportionality. He spoke about the difference between equal and equitable, and indicated that a system must be equitable.

From Individuals in the Field

- Ms. Sandy Bates, principal at Hillendale Elementary School in Durham, indicated that we need to determine if testing is doing what it is intended to do, and if so, at what cost. She expressed concern that testing takes priority over the needs of students to see a school counselor. She estimated that at her school 30 days were impacted by testing (15 for administration; 15 for preparing students for the tests).

- Ms. Ann Cortez (**Guilford County Education Alliance**) and Ms. Terrina Picarello (**President of the Guilford County PTA**) told Commission members that parents need data that is accessible and user-friendly. Measures must be meaningful. Parents need clear information about why their children are not proficient. The community must be involved in the deployment of a new accountability system.
- Dr. Shirley Prince, **Superintendent of Scotland County Schools**, explained the impact of the current accountability system on efforts to redesign schools to focus on R3 (Rigor, Relationships, and Relevance). She characterized the current accountability system as one designed to sort and label students, rather than one that encouraged rigor for all. Time must be the variable; standards must be the constant.

From Parents

- Dr. Nancy Sung (Durham County) expressed concern that we are testing more than we are teaching in our schools and that the “opportunity costs” for students who are not struggling is too great. She stressed the need to target students who are having difficulty and to assist them. She also asked whether or not our tests measure what students need to know in the 21st Century.
- Ms. Lisa Jackson (Wilson County) shared her experiences as a parent and test proctor. She shared the perception of parents and students with whom she had talked that the test and the curriculum are not aligned. She talked about her daughter’s situation and the impact that not passing the test has had on her. She circulated a portfolio of her daughter’s accomplishments.
- Ms. Rochelle Harris (Wilson County) shared her perspective as a parent whose child had not passed the EOG math test. Her comments reinforced the need for transparency and better alignment between the curriculum revision cycles and testing.

From Higher Education

- Dr. Ken Whitehurst described the testing program used by the **North Carolina Community College System**, with assessments being used for placement purposes and not admission decisions. Beginning next fall, all NC community colleges will use the same placement test scores for course placement purposes. He noted that some public schools are now offering the placement tests used by the community colleges which allow students to remediate skills while still in high school.
- Dr. Hope Williams, representing the **North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU)**, explained that colleges need reliable, valid, strong indicators of college readiness. She indicated that the more widely normed the assessment, the more useful it is to colleges and universities in admission decisions. She noted that while our current writing assessment may not be appropriately measuring writing skills, colleges and universities would like valid assessments of writing because of its importance for college success.
- Dr. Alan Mabe, Dr. George Dixon, and Ms. Alisa Chapman spoke on behalf of the **UNC System**. They indicated that currently, universities consider the high school curriculum (how rigorous) the applicant completed, the applicant’s gpa, standardized test scores (that include a writing assessment), demonstrated leadership, and other activities in making admission decisions. Additional factors that will likely be considered in the future include analytical reasoning, critical thinking, oral and written communication skills, information literacy, and computer literacy. The UNC system provides high school principals and superintendents with a “Freshmen Performance Report” that provides information on how students from the high school did in their freshman year at a UNC institution. The report contains information on retention, gpa, and whether or not the students were required to take remedial courses. Last year over 47,000 high school students took a math placement test (Early Math Placement Test [EMPT]) offered through ECU.

From the Business Community

- Mr. Edgar Murphy presented a business perspective on testing and accountability to the Commission. He noted that businesses need people who can apply knowledge to solve problems, create, innovate, and use information. Having the right answer for a test is not as valuable as being able to “develop the right questions” to solve a problem. India, China, and other developing countries are producing large numbers of young people with top math and analytical skills. Some of the world’s top students come from low wealth countries (i.e., lower incomes do not prevent students from learning). Today’s students need to know how to work on teams in a global setting.
- Dr. Beth Lucas spoke on behalf of the **NC Commission on Workforce Development**. In her comments, Ms. Lucas addressed the need for a simple, understandable, transparent accountability system. She noted that while people know NC has a high stakes accountability system, they know little more about it.

From 21st Century Initiatives

- Dr. Tony Habit, President of the New Schools Project, explained the need for the accountability system to be transparent, authentic, and simple to foster trust, confidence, and understanding. He recommended the accountability system:
 - ▶ be focused on college preparedness;
 - ▶ have focused and authentic measures that support interdisciplinary, applied learning, encourage 21st Century skills development, and foster school innovation and differentiation;
 - ▶ present a fuller view of school performance.
- Ms. Melissa Bartlett, Executive Director of the Century for 21st Century Skills, told Commission members that curriculum must drive the assessment. Our curriculum is too wide and not deep enough. “Content” is not the destination; it is the vehicle. Ms. Bartlett shared three projects the Center is working on: the Educational Testing Service (ETS) is trying to imbed an assessment of information communication technology (ICT) into a 9th grade English test; an interactive biology test is being developed; a high school graduation project is now required of all entering 10th graders. We need to minimize standardized testing and shift to formative assessments.

From the State Superintendent

Dr. June Atkinson shared her suggestions for revisions to the accountability model used by NC. She prefaced her recommendations by noting that they did not represent the official position of the Department, but were based on discussions with a variety of stakeholders including parents, students, principals, LEA superintendents, central office staff, DPI staff, and business partners. Her recommendations were:

- ▶ That the high school accountability model be changed to focus on: the 3-5 year graduation rate; the percent of students receiving a state or national credential; the percent of students meeting minimum admission requirements for the UNC System or accepted at an accredited four-year college/university or proprietary school; and the percent of students eligible to enter the NC community colleges without remediation.
- ▶ That we develop a writing accountability system, not a writing test.
- ▶ That we develop a computer skills accountability system, not a computer skills test.
- ▶ That we develop a system of formative assessment and benchmarking.
- ▶ That we develop a professional development system that is e-based and includes extended employment of select teachers when changes are made in the Standard Course of Study.

From DPI Staff

Dr. Lou Fabrizio, Director of the Division of Accountability Services, provided an overview of North Carolina's Testing and Accountability Programs. His overview included testing formats/terminology, background/history of testing in NC, legislative requirements, the process NC uses in test development, and NC's current testing program configuration.

From Policy Organizations

- Dr. Joan Lord, Director of Educational Policies for the **Southern Region Education Board (SREB)**, shared with the Commission trends in testing and accountability in the southeast region.
- Mr. Michael Cohen, President of **Achieve**, presented the results of a study conducted by Achieve and JFF (Jobs For the Future) at the request of the State Board of Education. Specifically, Achieve and JFF were asked to make recommendations as to how our high school assessments and accountability indicators could better substantially increase the percentage of students, particularly low-income, African American and Hispanic young people, who graduate from high school in four years and substantially increase the percentage of high school graduates who are fully prepared to succeed in work and postsecondary education.

Achieve and JFF recommended that NC use a framework for accountability indicators focused on recognizing and rewarding schools that help students:

- ▶ Stay in school and graduate on time
- ▶ Successfully complete the North Carolina Future-Ready Core Course of Study
- ▶ Earn career-ready industry-recognized credentials and/or college credit
- ▶ Succeed in postsecondary education and careers

They also recommend that NC

- ▶ Add EOCs to upper-level courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study
- ▶ Strengthen the quality of the EOCs
- ▶ Make every EOC count for students, but consider multiple kinds of stakes
- ▶ Focus school accountability on graduation rates and readiness for college and careers, including EOCs
- ▶ Reward schools for helping students earn "career-ready" industry credentials and college credit
- ▶ Invest in data systems

From A Testing Organization

Ms. Ellen Haley, President of **CTB McGraw Hill**, and Dr. Rich Patz, Vice President for Research with CTB-McGraw Hill, talked about the role of assessment in education, essential elements for a sound assessment system, the types of assessments that are available, the process used in developing and publishing tests, and what test publishers can offer. They told Commission members that:

- ▶ On-going, on-line formative assessments, linked to a summative assessment, would make testing seem less intrusive on instructional time.
- ▶ CTB-McGraw Hill is able to provide student level diagnostic information. They also have teacher guides that reflect the best research-based practices.
- ▶ If a test is built correctly, a teacher should be teaching to the standards.
- ▶ There are states that test reading and math at different times. (e.g., New York)
- ▶ There are states that use survey data about schools beyond test scores in accountability measures.
- ▶ CTB-McGraw Hill's *Terra Nova* test (standardized achievement test) includes EC students in the norming population. CTB-McGraw Hill has helped states develop alternative assessments for EC students.

- ▶ Embedding Norm-Referenced Test (NRTs) questions in an assessment instrument is the way to both value state standards and get comparisons of achievement across states.
- ▶ New (trial) items should be embedded in assessments rather than administering separate field tests. With separate field tests students are not necessarily motivated to do well.
- ▶ CTB-McGraw Hill is working in all 50 states. In 10 states they are the primary state-wide assessment provider. In other states they work with individual districts. There are a variety of models being used by states. Colorado is completely customized; Missouri embeds NRTs in its assessment program; Alaska uses a customized test as well as a stand alone NRT.

From An Individual National Testing Expert

Dr. Duncan MacQuarrie, **Assessment Consultant with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)**, presented information to the Commission on other states' testing programs. In his comments, he noted that:

- ▶ NCLB requires all states to have content standards and to build tests (assessments) from the content standards. It is expected that curriculum be built from the standards and that tests (assessments) meet technical requirements as determined through a peer review process.
- ▶ Writing assessment is optional under NCLB.
- ▶ Science assessments become mandatory next year under NCLB.
- ▶ USED (US Education Department) will not accept norm-referenced tests unless they have been augmented to reflect a state's content standards. (The only exception to this is Iowa, which uses the Iowa Test of Basic Skills.)
- ▶ Nebraska's testing system allows local units to develop their own tests. However, the tests must align with state standards.
- ▶ Several states are moving toward requiring the SAT or ACT.
- ▶ Twenty-four states go beyond the testing requirements of NCLB. This could be testing additional subjects and/or additional grade levels and/or formative assessments.
- ▶ Testing companies are experiencing capacity issues (there are not enough psychometricians; the sheer volume of paper that must be processed).
- ▶ Oregon and Kansas have done their own testing.
- ▶ NC is fortunate to have TOPS to process its tests.

APPENDIX D

Excerpts from Senate Bill 1463

Excerpts from Senate Bill 1463

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly finds that, just a few years ago, North Carolina had one of the leading testing and accountability programs in the nation. The ABCs of Public Education were simple, fair, and equitable, and both educators and the public had a high degree of confidence in the annual results generated by this testing and accountability program. Today, however, there are serious concerns about the validity and reliability of the data that are produced. The data from the Accountability Services Division of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction are so important to the success of children, teachers, and schools that any questioning of the validity and reliability of the data must be taken very seriously. For these reasons, the Department of Public Instruction is hereby directed to:

- (1) Study the need to make the following changes to the ABCs of Public Education:
 - a. Count as proficient for the school's and local school administrative units' ABCs performance composite and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes any student who scores within the standard error of measure (SEM) of Level 3 on an end-of-grade test (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) test or any retest of an EOG or EOC.
 - b. Count only those students who have been enrolled in the school for 140 days or more when calculating the schools' performance composite.
 - c. Use an EOC or EOG test for field testing purposes only and not for the ABCs performance composite or AYP if the cut scores for those tests were not determined prior to their administration.
 - d. Convene a group of school accountability experts to review the data collection procedures used for the 2006-2007 school year and make any needed changes to those procedures prior to any further data collection. This group shall make recommendations regarding the capacity of the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to perform this data collection including whether or not DPI needs additional personnel for this work.
 - e. Use fourth, seventh, and tenth grade writing test results for instructional purposes only and remove them from the ABCs.
 - f. Provide the scale scores and proficiency in both the old standard and the new standard for a one-year transition period when a test is rescaled to meet higher standards.
 - g. Provide goal summary reports for all administrations of the Online Computer Skills Test.
 - h. Provide student level diagnostic information on all State assessments.
 - i. Before students are subjected to new assessments, provide sample tests and questions so teachers will be knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments. Regular release of forms of assessments should be provided to local school administrative units for use as benchmark assessments. Provide sample tests and questions so teachers are knowledgeable of the nature and forms of new assessments before students are subjected to new assessments. Regularly release forms of assessments to local school administrative units to use as benchmarks.
 - j. Provide an electronic system of tracking students during their enrollment in North Carolina public schools. This system should provide all the rules and nuances of tracking students for graduation purposes, including who is counted, who is not counted, diploma students, certificate students, and a process for when a school closes or a new school opens.
 - k. Define the High School Cohort Graduation Rate so that it includes students who complete their graduation requirements in five years or less and also includes those students who choose to complete their high school diploma or GED at a community college within this five years.

- l. Develop a new formula for the ABCs growth calculation and the payment of bonuses. Consider using outside experts to develop the formula or issue a Request for Proposals (RFP).
 - m. Fund an accountability director for each local school administrative unit.
 - n. Fund testing coordinator positions in the schools based on one testing coordinator for each 2,000 students.
- (2) Develop a proposal for a new testing and accountability plan for implementation no later than the 2009-2010 school year as follows:
- a. Develop a new curriculum which limits learning objectives at each grade level to only those that are of undisputable importance and can be successfully taught and accurately assessed in the time available, and that measure cognitive skill mastery rather than memorized facts.
 - b. Construct all assessment tasks, such as selected response or constructed response to require the students to employ:
 - 1. Cognitive skills;
 - 2. The evaluative criteria that will be used to judge their response; or
 - 3. Both of these.
 - c. Require that the construction of assessment items be done by experts in the field. The number of items per learning outcome should be sufficient to provide instructional information back to the school and the teacher. The number of test items should be limited to that number that can reasonably be completed in a 90-minute setting or less depending on the grade level of the student.
 - d. Create companion assessment descriptions that spell out the essence of what is measured by State test items or tasks. The teacher would be able to ensure alignment of instruction to assessment, and students would have a depth of cognitive skills rather than a surface knowledge of memorized facts.
 - e. Establish an expert review panel of teachers and specialists for each test developed. The test items and descriptions should receive a review at a level of difficulty commensurate with the intended use of the test.

APPENDIX E

***NCLB GRANT PROGRAMS
2006-07***

**NCLB Grant Programs
2006-07**

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| 21st Century Community Learning Centers | 20,531,376 |
| Education Technology State Grants..... | 5,719,148 |
| Homeless Children and Youth | 1,069,443 |
| Improving Teacher Quality | 61,048,159 |
| English Language Acquisition | 11,953,729 |
| Math and Science Partnership..... | 4,563,757 |
| Rural Low Income | 4,461,969 |
| Safe and Drug Free Schools..... | 5,810,114 |
| Title I - Basic Grant | 278,096,368 |
| Title I - School Improvement..... | 11,123,856 |
| Title I - Even Start..... | 1,924,858 |
| Title I - Reading First..... | 22,223,148 |
| Title I - Migrant Education | 5,920,138 |
| Title I - Neglected and Delinquent Children..... | 1,011,629 |
| Title V - Innovative Programs | 2,284,098 |
| Administration | 28,035,428 |
| Total | 465,777,218 |

APPENDIX F

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MISSION AND GOALS



FUTURE-READY STUDENTS For the 21st Century

The guiding mission of the North Carolina State Board of Education is that every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st Century.

NC public schools will produce globally competitive students.

- ⌘ Every student excels in rigorous and relevant core curriculum that reflects what students need to know and demonstrate a global 21st Century environment, including a mastery of languages, an appreciation of the arts, and competencies in the use of technology.
- ⌘ Every student's achievement is measured with an assessment system that informs instruction and evaluates knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions needed in the 21st Century.
- ⌘ Every student will be enrolled in a course of study designed to prepare them to stay ahead of international competition.
- ⌘ Every student uses technology to access and demonstrate new knowledge and skills that will be needed as a life-long learner to be competitive in a constantly changing international environment.
- ⌘ Every student has the opportunity to graduate from high school with an Associates Degree or college transfer credit.

NC public schools will be led by 21st Century professionals.

- ⌘ Every teacher will have the skills to deliver 21st Century content in a 21st Century context with 21st Century tools and technology that guarantees student learning.
- ⌘ Every teacher and administrator will use a 21st Century assessment system to inform instruction and measure 21st Century knowledge, skills, performance, and dispositions.
- ⌘ Every education professional will receive preparation in the interconnectedness of the world with knowledge and skills, including language study.
- ⌘ Every education professional will have 21st Century preparation and access to ongoing high quality professional development aligned with State Board of Education priorities.
- ⌘ Every educational professional uses data to inform decisions.

NC public school students will be healthy and responsible.

- ⌘ Every learning environment will be inviting, respectful, supportive, inclusive, and flexible for student success.

- ⌘ Every school provides an environment in which each child has positive, nurturing relationships with caring adults.
- ⌘ Every school promotes a healthy, active lifestyle where students are encouraged to make responsible choices.
- ⌘ Every school focuses on developing strong student character, personal responsibility, and community/world involvement.
- ⌘ Every school reflects a culture of learning that empowers and prepares students to be life-long learners.

Leadership will guide innovation in NC public schools.

- ⌘ School professionals will collaborate with national and international partners to discover innovative transformational strategies that will facilitate change, remove barriers for 21st Century learning, and understand global connections.
- ⌘ School leaders will create a culture that embraces change and promotes dynamic continuous improvement.
- ⌘ Educational professionals will make decisions in collaboration with parents, students, businesses, education institutions, and faith-based and other community and civic organizations to impact student success.
- ⌘ The public school professionals will collaborate with community colleges and public and private universities and colleges to provide enhanced educational opportunities for students

NC public schools will be governed and supported by 21st Century systems.

- ⌘ Processes are in place for financial planning and budgeting that focuses on resource attainment and alignment with priorities to maximize student achievement.
- ⌘ Twenty-first century technology and learning tools are available and are supported by school facilities that have the capacity for 21st Century learning.
- ⌘ Information and fiscal accountability systems are capable of collecting relevant data and reporting strategic and operational results.