



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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TO LEA Superintendents
Principals
Teachers
School Administrators

FROM Rebecca B. Garland, Chief Academic Officer
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MSL/Common Exams Spring 2013 Update

We are moving forward with what we know will be a successful administration of the Measures of Student Learning: NC's Common Exams this spring. One reason for this is that we can draw upon the wisdom of those who administered these exams for the fall semester.

Approximately 40 LEAs administered Common Exams last month. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) has invited testing and accountability staff members from a few of these districts to share best practices and lessons learned from these administrations.

We have scheduled three webinars for this purpose. They will be held on February 28, March 7 and March 12. Registration information for these webinars has been posted on the Testing News Network (for testing directors/coordinators) and Academic Services News Network (for academic leaders).

The LEAs that administered Common Exams for the fall semester have given us some very useful feedback. These observations and concerns came from teachers who administered the exams, as well as from testing and accountability staff members. In addition, NCDPI staff members were in many of the schools during Common Exam administrations to experience firsthand how things were going and also provided valuable information.

In response, we have made several key changes for the spring 2013 administrations. The following chart outlines specific concerns and observations garnered from the feedback we received, along with the respective change or changes that have been made in response.

No.	Concern/Observation	Change
1	Students were unable to complete the tests because the tests are too long.	The number of multiple-choice items will be decreased on the following tests: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Advanced Functions and Modeling2. Algebra II

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Pre-calculus 4. Geometry 5. Physics 6. English I, III and IV
2	While the additional information on "discrete answers" was helpful, teachers would also like examples of possible responses when the rubrics indicate "answers may vary."	The rubrics are being revised to provide more information on the score points. Also, information on training teachers to score items will be addressed during the MSL/Common Exams webinars planned for February 28, March 7 and March 12.
3	The stop sign at the end of Part I was confusing for districts that administered the exams in one sitting.	The stop sign is being removed. The test may be administered in one session or two sessions.
4	Teachers would like more high school examples in the existing scoring module (at least one example for each of the 22 content areas), as well as examples of each score point for each sample item.	Modules are being reviewed for revisions and for the inclusion of more sample items.
5	Districts are struggling with customizing the scripts for their own use. In particular, they need reminders on providing blank and graph paper, calculators and reference materials.	The NCDPI will ask the districts featured on the webinars to discuss how they customized the scripts, and the sample scripts will be reviewed for possible revisions.

In addition, all AP and IB courses will be exempt from the spring 2013 Common Exams based on feedback from the field and further analysis of associated standards. Fall scores in these courses also will not count in determining Standard Six ratings for teachers.

AP and IB courses will have a different process for measuring student learning that will be piloted in fall 2013. NCDPI is considering the use of student growth portfolios to better understand teacher effectiveness for teachers of AP and IB courses due to the unique nature of these courses.

Following are the dates for delivery of materials to LEAs in advance of spring 2013 administration:

Date	Deliverable
March 1	Release of fall 2012 constructed response items
No Later Than April 1	Release of high school sample items
No Later Than April 1	Release of elementary and middle school sample items
No Later Than April 1	Release of revised high school scoring module
No Later Than April 1	Release of elementary and middle school scoring module
No Later Than April 1	Release of test forms (PDFs and scoring rubrics)

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