

Student Accountability Standards

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Standards

What are the student accountability standards?

- **Gateway 1** - In addition to meeting local promotion requirements, students at grade 3 shall demonstrate proficiency by having test scores at Level III or above on end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics. Implementation year: 2001-02
- **Gateway 2** - In addition to meeting local promotion requirements, students at grade 5 shall demonstrate proficiency by having test scores at Level III or above on end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics, and make adequate progress in writing, as determined by the 4th grade writing assessment with a score of 12 or above. Implementation year: 2000-01
- **Gateway 3 - The Middle School Standard** - Students shall demonstrate proficiency by having test scores at Level III or above on end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics, meet all local promotion requirements, and make adequate progress in writing, as determined by the 7th grade writing assessment with a score of 12 or above. Implementation year: 2001-02
- **Gateway 4 - The High School Standard** - Effective with the class entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2006-2007 school year, students who are following the career preparation, college technical preparation, or college/university preparation course of study shall meet the following new exit standards:
 - perform at Achievement Level III or above on the end-of-course assessment for English I, Algebra I, U.S. History, Biology, and Civics and Economics; and
 - successfully complete a graduation project that is developed, monitored, and scored within the LEA using state-adopted rubrics

Students will continue to be required to demonstrate computer proficiency by passing the computer skills assessment.

Students following the Occupational Course of Study are required to meet rigorous exit standards as outlined in State Board of Education policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D. 0503).

How did the State Board of Education develop the student accountability standards?

The State Board of Education (SBE) sought input from teachers, parents, principals, students, education organizations and other associations, business leaders and other stakeholders. Based on input from the various groups, NCDPI staff drafted the policy that was approved by the SBE on April 1, 1999.

The student accountability standards rely heavily on the end-of-grade/end-of-course tests. Were these tests designed to be used this way?

The tests are one factor in promotion. Some have described them as the "screen" that gauges a child's needs. Other factors teachers and principals will use if students are not at grade level on the state tests are

documentation of other work, portfolios and their professional judgment. These evidences of student work may be considered in the final promotion decision. The courts have determined that the end-of-grade/end-of-course tests can be used to grade and promote students in North Carolina but may not be used as the sole determining factor.

How does the student accountability standards affect the diploma a student receives when he/she graduates from a NC public school?

The student accountability standards raise the achievement level North Carolina students must meet to graduate.

Why were grades 3, 5, 8, and 12 chosen as the grades for these standards?

Grade 3 is the first year that students participate in end-of-grade tests; thus, this is the earliest opportunity to determine a student's proficiency based on the statewide testing results. Grade 5 is the gateway to middle school, while grade 8 is the gateway to high school. By grade 12, students should be able to demonstrate their readiness to enter a two/four-year community college or university, the military, and/or work.

Does this mean that students in other grade levels who are required to take end-of-grade assessments or students who are enrolled in other courses that require an EOC assessment do not have to meet proficiency standards?

Local promotion policies are in effect for other grade levels and courses that have EOC assessments; the state standards apply to grades 3, 5, 8 and the five courses required for graduation that have EOC assessments (i.e. Algebra I, English I, Biology, Civics and Economics, and U.S. History).

How long can a student be retained at any grade?

The State Board decided to let local boards of education determine how many times students can be retained.

Gateways 1, 2, and 3 are based on performance in reading, writing, and mathematics. Why are these subjects chosen?

The General Assembly and the State Board of Education are concerned about the number of students who are not at grade level in basic skills of reading, mathematics, and writing. Since the implementation of the ABCs program, the number of students performing at grade level has increased. But there still are many students who are not achieving at an acceptable level. Reading and mathematics are core, foundation skills on which other learning is based. That is why these standards are directed at reading and mathematics in grades 3, 5 and 8 and writing at grades 5 and 8.

Why does the new high school exit standards EOC assessment requirement include two social studies assessments?

The assessment requirements are made up of the five courses that all students following the career preparation, college technical preparation or college/university preparation course of study must take and receive credit for prior to graduation.

Do the student accountability standards apply to exceptional children and students identified as limited English proficient (LEP)?

Yes. The student accountability standards apply to exceptional children and students identified as limited English proficient. Testing options are available for exceptional children and students identified as LEP.

For more information, see the publication Testing Students with Disabilities <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/testing/alternate/disabilities/testingstudents.pdf> and Testing Students Identified as Limited English Proficient http://www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/accountability/policyoperations/LEPGuidelines_Sept05.pdf

Do the student accountability standards apply to charter schools?

Yes. The standards do apply to students in charter schools.

Do these standards apply to students enrolling in a North Carolina public school from a home or private school?

Yes. The standards apply to all students who enroll in North Carolina public schools.

How do the accountability standards affect students who enroll from another state during the school year?

The student accountability standards apply to all students who enroll in a NC public school from another state. Local school district operational procedures for testing and grade classification of these students will apply.

Why do some call this the end to social promotion?

Social promotion is the practice of promoting students from grade to grade regardless of whether they have mastered the appropriate material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. The student accountability policy calls for an end to the need for social promotion. It is designed to ensure that all students reach proficiency and therefore are adequately prepared for the next grade level. The policy requires local boards of education to report annually on their progress in increasing the number of students who meet the standards. Percentages of students at or above grade level proficiency and those who have moved from Level I to Level II will be used to compare progress.

How have the student accountability standards helped students who are at risk of dropping out?

Any student scoring at Level I or II on end-of-grade or end-of-course tests or who shows indicators of potential failure is identified as a student at-risk. Schools have put many intervention programs and policies in place that are resulting in students achieving at higher levels. Based on data, more students are reaching grade level proficiency than ever before.

Can local districts have standards that are higher than the state standards?

Yes. Local boards of education can establish higher standards than the state's.

How do student accountability standards tie into the ABCs school accountability program?

Student accountability standards are considered to be the next level of accountability in the ABCs. The ABCs moved accountability from the district to the school level, and the student accountability standards resulted in students and their parents being more accountable for performance.

Policy

How will graduation projects be managed at the local level, be consistent across schools and districts, and be used by universities, community colleges and/or employers?

Local districts will decide how to manage graduation projects. To ensure consistency of implementation across schools and districts, an implementation guide will be distributed from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to the local districts. In addition, required professional development in the four components of the graduation project will be provided for school-based teams beginning in the Spring of 2006.

The standardized transcript includes a space for recording graduation project completions. Universities, community colleges, and/or employers may require a student to provide a copy of his/her transcript when applying for admission or employment.

When will students have the opportunity to be retested on an end-of grade or end-of-course test?

Students scoring below Level III with one standard error of measurement on an end-of-grade or end-of-course test will be given the opportunity to retest within 3 weeks from the receipt of test results. A student will have up to two opportunities for retesting.

Is there an opportunity to be retested in writing at gateways 2 and 3?

No. The principals and teacher(s) shall use locally developed and scored writing samples during grades 5 and 8 to determine if students have made adequate progress in order to be promoted to the next grade. The writing tests are screens to determine whether students need focused intervention.

What is focused intervention?

A key component of the student accountability standards is focused intervention, getting help to students who do not meet the standard. Intervention may occur during or after the school day, on Saturdays, during breaks in year-round schools or in summer school. Students in grades 3, 5 and 8 who still do not meet the standards may be retained if the principal determines that is the best course of action. In high school, students who do not meet the standard on one of the 5 required EOC assessments (i.e.; Algebra I, English I, Biology, Civics & Economics, and US History) may be required to repeat the course associated with the EOC. There must be a review process in place locally.

When and how is intervention provided for end-of-grade and/or end-of-course assessments?

All students must be provided focused intervention prior to the second retest opportunity. When and how to provide focused intervention is a local decision. Assessment of student learning should be ongoing in every class.

Strategies may include but are not limited to: alternative learning models, special homework, smaller classes, tutorial sessions, extended school day, Saturday school, modified instructional programs, parental involvement, summer school instruction, retention and others. More instructional time and/or smaller class size appear to be the primary strategies.

Must a child be retained if he/she does not score at or above 12 on the writing test at grades 4 and 7?

No. The writing test is a screen to identify students who need writing intervention. Teachers should continually assess writing progress throughout an entire school year. The writing tests serve as an indicator as to what type and amount of extra help a student needs. Writing is one indicator a teacher uses to determine promotion from the 5th grade to the 6th grade and from the 8th grade to the 9th grade.

When must focused intervention for writing take place?

State Board of Education policy requires that focused intervention for writing must occur at the 5th and 8th grades. However, that doesn't mean that intervention cannot take place immediately after the test administration and during summer school. The 5th and 8th grade teachers also must give extra assistance and continued writing instruction. The amount and type depends on the students' needs.

What money may be used for focused intervention?

Funds PRC 69 and PRC 72 can both be used by LEAs to develop focused intervention for students. The use of these funds is a local decision, (e.g., after-school programs, summer school, tutoring, etc).

When may a parent request a review?

A parent may request a review after the second or third administration of an end-of-grade or end-of-course test, but not both.

When does an individual student's review process end?

The decision by the principal, based upon the review committee's recommendation(s) and local school district operational procedures, will denote the end of the review process.

According to the State Board of Education policy, when are PEPs required?

PEPs are required at the elementary, middle, and high school levels for students who do not meet level III with one standard error of measurement or above on an end-of-grade or end-of-course test required as part of the accountability standards. In addition, the school is required to keep documentation (e.g., a portfolio) of the student's performance. The PEP and documentation is placed on file after the first retest (Retest 1), used during focused instruction, is updated after the second retest (Retest 2), and is used by the committee during the review process.

Must you have a Personalized Education Plan (PEP) for a student who does not score a 12 or above on the fourth or seventh grade writing test?

It is not mandated. For the State Board of Education's purposes, focused intervention must take place at the fifth and eighth grades. Teachers should continue ongoing assessment of writing.

What are the components of a Personalized Education Plan (PEP)?

A PEP should consist of: (1) a diagnostic evaluation of a student's strengths and weaknesses, (2) intervention strategies which include extra assistance beyond the classroom, acceleration of learning, and extra help, and (3) monitoring strategies which include a variety of assessments including writing samples reviewed on a regular basis.

Who prepares the Personalized Education Plan (PEP) for students?

It is a local decision. It is recommended that a team of teachers and instructional support personnel develop the plan. The team members should know the student's strengths and needs. If the PEP is for a student with disabilities, the IEP (Individualized Education Program) team must be involved.

Where is the PEP stored?

The PEP should be stored in a place that is easily accessible to the teacher(s) who are instructing the student. It should be a roadmap to guide student instruction.

Should exceptional children have PEPs in addition to IEPs?

Yes. The IEP and PEP are two separate documents intended to serve different purposes. However, they can be combined if everyone involved understands that they are combined. If an IEP serves as a PEP, the IEP must include the three components of the PEP: diagnosis, intervention, and monitoring. Additionally, it must include components of the IEP including the student's needs due to his or her disability. Combining an IEP and PEP is a local decision. Documentation must be a part of the IEP and PEP development, and parents and school personnel should understand that they are combined.

If a student's PEP includes classroom accommodations for that student, will the accommodation be permitted for the end-of-grade/end-of-course test administration?

The accommodations for students on end-of-grade and end-of-course tests are controlled by the student's IEP team and are only allowable for students with disabilities. The IEP team should be aware of what accommodations are permissible for state tests. The PEP may not specify testing accommodations. Only the IEP may specify testing accommodations.

Roles and Responsibilities

What is the role of the state and local districts in student accountability?

It is the responsibility of the State Board of Education to set standards for local school systems. Local boards, superintendents and schools design the strategies to reach the state standards. Local boards develop intervention strategies to ensure that students are at grade level before being promoted and have met all exit standards prior to receiving a high school diploma.

Superintendents and local boards of education provide leadership in ensuring that all educators, students, parents and other stakeholders understand and participate in implementing the student accountability standards. They also are responsible for identifying resources to provide intervention/acceleration so that all students will meet the expected proficiency levels.

What is the role of the principal in classifying students?

It is a principal's decision to grade and classify students. This decision should be based on transcripts and other records. The principal makes the final decision for promotion at grades 3, 5, and 8 and meeting the exit standards for graduation. However, the principal must report to the local board of education, community and the State Board of Education the number of students not scoring at Level III who are promoted or deemed to have met the exit standards.

What role do parents/guardians have with the standards?

Each local board of education must develop procedures on how to involve parents in the student accountability standards. Parents/guardians should be aware of the student accountability requirements to monitor and support student progress.

Parents/guardians are to be notified within a reasonable time from the receipt of test results at the local school. How they are to be notified is determined by the local school district. If necessary parents/guardians should be involved in the intervention plan that is determined to best meet his/her child's needs.

How are parents/guardians involved in the intervention or review process?

During the review process, parents/guardians shall have the right to be a nonvoting participant, and further shall have the right to speak on behalf of their child.

How are teachers involved in student accountability decisions?

Teachers serve on review committees and make recommendations to the principal. The principal makes the final decision as to whether the student met the student accountability requirement(s).