

Weekly Message – State Superintendent June Atkinson

North Carolina Public Schools <NCPublicSchools@public.govdelivery.com>

Tue 12/1/2015 4:53 PM

Inbox

To: Lynda Fuller <Lynda.Fuller@dpi.nc.gov>;

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)



Nov. 23, 2015



Last week, I presided over the final Council of Chief State School Officers event of my tenure as president of that organization. As is our tradition in that group, the outgoing president's final official duty is to host the fall policy conference, held this year in Charlotte.

It was a great opportunity to showcase North Carolina's public education system as well our state's beauty and industry. It was a pleasure to welcome my counterparts here. I am thankful to have had the opportunity to serve as CCSSO president, which gave me an inside look at federal policy and the opportunity to get to know more of my counterparts across the nation.

I am thankful during this week of Thanksgiving for the network of educators who care so deeply about teaching and learning and serving students. Thank you for your commitment to North Carolina's students, and I look forward to seeing each of you on Dec. 4 in Greensboro at the Grandover Resort for our quarterly meeting.

School Calendar Law Reminders

School Business staff have been receiving a large number of calls regarding school calendars for the 2016-17 school year. Please refer to the School Calendar [website](#) for information on this topic. Following is a reminder of the legislation regarding the opening and closing dates (General Statute 115C-84.2).

Schools without a waiver to opening date:

- The opening date for students shall be no earlier than the Monday closest to Aug. 26, and the closing date for students shall be no later than the Friday closest to June 11.
- For the 2016-17 school year, the earliest opening date for students is Monday, Aug. 29.

Schools with a waiver to the opening date due to history of missed days:

- The local board of education may set an opening date no earlier than the Monday closest to Aug. 19, to the extent that school calendars are able to provide sufficient days to accommodate anticipated makeup days due to school closings.
- For the 2016-17 school year, the earliest opening date for students is Monday, Aug. 22.

Closing date for all LEAs:

The initially approved calendar must adhere to the closing date no later than June 9, 2017, but a local board may revise the scheduled closing date if necessary in order to comply with the minimum requirements for instructional days or instructional time.

Opening and closing dates do not apply to:

- Cooperative Innovative High Schools
- Charter Schools
- Year round schools
- any school that a local board designated as having a modified calendar for the 2003-04 school year or to any school that was part of a planned program in the 2003-04 school year for a system of modified calendar schools, so long as the school operates under a modified calendar.

For questions, please contact the School Business Division at 919.807.3708.

Webinar Focuses on Meeting Participation Requirements and Alignment Study Report

NCDPI staff will host a [webinar](#) on Monday, Dec. 7, at 10:30 a.m., on meeting participation requirements and the alignment study report. The target audience includes district-level leadership, testing/accountability staff, and curriculum and instruction staff.

The webinar will address two topics:

1. Participation requirements for state assessments. The webinar will include an overview of 2014–15 participation rates and a discussion of how to increase participation. Contributing to the discussion will be two districts that will share their approaches to meeting participation.



2. Overview of the Report to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on the Alignment Characteristics of State Assessment Instruments Covering Grades 3-8, and High School in Mathematics & Reading.

In September 2014, NCDPI commissioned the Wisconsin Center for Education Research to conduct an in-depth, independent study of the alignment of the state's newly developed end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) assessments for mathematics, reading and science to the content standards.

North Carolina hosted a content analysis workshop as part of the alignment study in January 2015 in Raleigh. Subject-based teams of content analysts were formed from active North Carolina teachers and other content specialists and trained to conduct independent analyses of assessment forms for mathematics, reading, and science for all assessed grades. The resulting alignment [report](#) was presented to the State Board of Education on June 4.

Alignment results for the EOG science at grades 5 and 8 and EOC biology assessments will be presented to the SBE at its December meeting. The alignment report including all appendices will be posted to the NCDPI/Accountability Services Technical Notes [webpage](#) prior to the webinar.

You may register for Meeting Participation Requirements and an Overview of the Alignment Study Report [online](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. Questions may be directed to your [Regional Accountability Coordinator](#).

Released Item Sets for Fall Semester 2015 NC Final Exams Available

The NCDPI Test Development Section staff have finalized a set of released items for each fall semester 2015 NC Final Exam (NCFE). Each NCFE received additional released items. All new released items for ELA, Math, and Science were added to the end. All new released items for Social Studies were added to the end of the multiple-choice section.

These released items are available [online](#) to the public. Released items for NC Final Exams administered only at the end of the year (i.e., science grade 4, social studies grade 4, and social studies grade 5) will be posted in early 2016. Items cannot be selected for release until the spring test forms are finalized.

The answer key includes the following information for each item:

- The standard or clarifying objective assessed by the item.
- The percentage of students who answered the item correctly.
- The general scoring rubric is provided for released constructed response items.

Please share this message with your schools. Questions may be directed to your [Regional Accountability Coordinator](#).

Educators to be Surveyed on Schoolnet Resources

Over the next few weeks, teachers and district/school curriculum leaders will be asked to participate in a

survey about their use of instructional materials within Schoolnet, the Instructional Improvement System. Schoolnet currently has over 130,000 materials available for educators to use.

Staff would like some detail on what and how these materials are being used, as well as information about the quality of the materials available. It is important as we move forward with the Instructional Improvement System that we get feedback from teachers and district/school curriculum leaders to ensure the materials and resources provided are of a high quality and high value-add in terms of improving instruction and student performance. Please encourage your teachers and staff to participate.



Multi-Tiered System of Support: Strengthening the Core

Defining the instruction that all students receive in a district or school is part of building a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). District MTSS Teams or School Leadership Teams (not individuals) define and document essential elements of Core by grade level and subject area. In order to ensure a strong, differentiated Core, these teams define, analyze and adjust Core at predetermined times throughout the year.

As Core is explicitly designed, differentiated and implemented, teams will review data and ask the question: Is our Core strong enough to meet the needs of most of our students across all subgroups? Strengthening Core includes making instructional practices stronger through:

- expecting high student engagement and eliciting frequent responses;
- designing instruction which allows for explicit teaching and differentiation;
- providing immediate feedback;
- scaffolding instruction such as pre-teaching critical vocabulary; and
- ensuring opportunities for deliberate, retrieval and distributed practice.

In an upcoming message, staff will discuss strengthening Core thru the lens of curricular and environmental components.

CTE Graduation Rates

More than 95 percent of NC Career and Technical Education (CTE) concentrators graduated on schedule in 2015, according to data from NCDPI. Concentrators are students who earn four or more related CTE credits, at least one at the second level.



In 2014-15, 95.7 percent of CTE concentrators graduated within four years of their ninth grade entry, compared to 85.6 percent of all students. This represented a 1.6 percentage point increase for CTE over 2013-14, when 94.1 percent of concentrators graduated.

The graduation results for more than 42,500 concentrators are part of this calculation. Because of the amount of time it takes for students to become concentrators, results are not directly comparable to those of non-concentrators.

The CTE data indicates the graduation rates also exceed 90 percent for concentrators who are considered “at-risk,” such as students with disabilities and those who are identified as economically disadvantaged.

CTE reports on the graduation rate of concentrators as part of its annual federal reporting required by the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006. Reports also look at students’ academic and technical attainment, long-term positive outcomes, and success in reaching non-traditional students. District and school results on all the CTE measures will be released early in December.

Connected Educator Series: Second Session Scheduled



NCDPI District and School Transformation staff in partnership with The Northeast Leadership Academy will host the second session of the Connected Educator Series on Dec. 9, at The William and Ida Friday Center, Chapel Hill.

The event will feature author Shelly Arneson as participants build more effective communication skills as leaders. Registration for the event is open, but limited to 150 participants.

Further details, including registration, is available on the NC Priority/SIG Support [website](#).

Guilford County Schools’ STEM Team Places Third in National Competition

Congratulations to Team AeroHead from STEM Early College NC A & T (Guilford County Schools) for placing 3rd nationally in The Real World Design Challenge. This annual high school STEM competition focuses on Unmanned Aerial Systems and precision agriculture.

Teams representing 19 states participated in this year’s challenge. Visit the NCDPI [Newsroom](#) to read more.





Latest Messages Online

Nov. 19, 2015 [Principals' Biweekly Message](#)

Nov. 20, 2015 [Finance Officers' Newsletter](#)

Weekly Message Breaks for the Holiday

Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, there will be no Weekly Message for Superintendents sent Monday, Nov. 30. Special messages will be sent as appropriate.

NCDPI staff wish your family and you a safe and happy Thanksgiving holiday!



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
Department of Public Instruction

Stay Connected with North Carolina Public Schools:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:
[Manage Subscriptions](#) | [Help](#)

This email was sent to lynda.fuller@dpi.nc.gov using GovDelivery, on behalf of: North Carolina Public Schools · 301 N. Wilmington St. · Raleigh, NC 27601

