

Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • William Cobey, Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., State Superintendent

Understanding the Five Achievement Levels

April 24, 2014

This brief is available on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Accountability Services Division website at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/briefs/>.

This publication and the information contained within must not be used for personal or financial gain. North Carolina school system/school officials and teachers, parents, and students may download and duplicate this publication for instructional and educational purposes only. Others may not duplicate this publication without prior written permission from the NCDPI Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program.

The Five Achievement Levels

In October 2013, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted college-and-career readiness Academic Achievement Standards and Academic Achievement descriptors for the End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests and their alternate assessments. After considering much input on the importance of having more definitive discrimination for student achievement reporting, the SBE adopted at its March 2014 meeting a methodology to add a new achievement level. With this additional achievement level, the State will report five levels as follows:

Revised Achievement Level	Meets On-Grade-Level Proficiency Standard	Meets College-and-Career Readiness Standard
Level 5 denotes Superior Command of knowledge and skills	Yes	Yes
Level 4 denotes Solid Command of knowledge and skills	Yes	Yes
Level 3 denotes Sufficient Command of knowledge and skills	Yes	No
Level 2 denotes Partial Command of knowledge and skills	No	No
Level 1 denotes Limited Command of knowledge and skills	No	No

Tests Affected

The five academic achievement levels are effective with the 2013–14 school year for all EOG and EOC tests and their alternates.

Specifically, this includes the following tests:

- Biology EOC
- English II EOC
- Math I EOC
- English Language Arts (ELA)/Reading, grades 3–8 EOG
- Mathematics, grades 3–8 EOG
- Science, grades 5 and 8 EOG
- **NCEXTEND2** Biology EOC
- **NCEXTEND2** English II EOC
- **NCEXTEND2** Math I EOC
- **NCEXTEND2** ELA/Reading grades 3–8 EOG
- **NCEXTEND2** Mathematics grades 3–8 EOG
- **NCEXTEND2** Science grades 5 and 8 EOG
- **NCEXTEND1** Grades 3–8, 10, and 11

The Beginning-of-Grade 3 ELA/Reading test uses the same achievement levels (scale scores for each level) as the ELA/Reading EOG grade 3 test.

New Achievement Level 3

The new Achievement Level 3 identifies students who are prepared for the next grade but do not meet the college-and-career readiness standard. This distinction assists schools in the delivery of differentiated instruction that best meets the needs of the individual student.

The new Level 3 minimum scale score was created by subtracting one conditional standard error of measurement (CSEM) from the original Level 3 scale score. The new Level 2 range of scores for many of the math assessments became too small relative to the CSEM to support reliable classification decisions. To

improve classification consistency and vertical alignment across grades, a new Level 2 scale score was created for each math assessment by subtracting one CSEM from the prior scale score.

Below is the new achievement level descriptor for Level 3:

Students performing at this level have a **sufficient command** of grade-level knowledge and skills, but they may need academic support to engage successfully in this content area in the next grade level. They are prepared for the next grade level but are not yet on track for college-and-career readiness without additional academic support.

Reports

North Carolina will report the percent of students who meet the college-and-career readiness standard (Level 4 and above) and the percent of students who meet grade-level proficiency (Level 3 and above). The READY accountability reports and the NC Report Card will report both measures, emphasizing the importance of preparing students to be college-and-career ready.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) will be provided with a method for producing revised class rosters for fall 2013 Beginning-of-Grade 3, EOC and *NCEXTEND2* EOC tests as well as revised class rosters with grades (0-100) based on Level 3 for EOC and *NCEXTEND2* EOC tests. Class rosters with grades based on the State Percents method will not be affected. It is a local decision whether or not to revisit final grade calculations for fall 2013. Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be redesigned to report both a student's on-grade-level proficiency standard (Level 3 and above) and college-and-career readiness standard (Level 4 and above) for spring 2014 administrations.

The grade-level proficiency standard (Level 3 and above) will be accepted as an indication of proficiency for the Read to Achieve reading promotion standards and will be used for calculating School Performance Grades.

The accountability reports will not be recalculated for the 2012–2013 school year.

The new levels will be applied to the summer 2013 and the fall 2013 data files, and reports will need to be updated to identify students who now meet the revised standards.

The college-and-career readiness standard (Level 4 and above) will be used for the Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) that are part of federal reporting. AMOs were set in 2012–13 using the college-and-career readiness standard; therefore, targets will not be redefined. Proficiency on state school performance grades will be calculated using Level 3 and above.

Report	On-Grade-Level Proficiency (Level 3 and above)	College-and-Career Readiness (Level 4 and above)
NC Report Card	✓	✓
READY Accountability	✓	✓
Individual Student Report	✓	✓
Read to Achieve	✓	
School Performance Grades	✓	
Federal AMOs		✓

Resources

Achievement level ranges and a complete list of achievement level descriptors are available by test at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/shared/achievelevel/>. Raw score ranges by achievement level are available by test at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/technicalnotes>.

In compliance with federal laws, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law. Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:

*Dr. Rebecca Garland, Deputy State Superintendent
Academic Services and Instructional Support
6368 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6368
Telephone (919) 807-3305; fax (919) 807-4065*