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WCPSS ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT RESULTS, 2005-06

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ABSTRACT

The NC Department of Public Instruction revised the alternate assessment system for students with disabilities and/or limited English proficiency (LEP) in 2005-06. Four alternate assessments—two new and two continuing ones—were available for use in grades/courses where the state typically tests students. Results were mixed for the new NC Checklist of Academic Standards (option chiefly for English language learners new in U.S. schools): proficiency rates in language assessments were below 30%, while proficiency rates in mathematics, in some grades, were higher than those of LEP students taking standard EOG tests. Results for the other new option, NCEXTEND2 (for students without significant cognitive disabilities but with disabilities that preclude their attaining grade-level proficiency within a single school year), were less than 30% at each grade in reading and mathematics. These and other outcomes are detailed in this report.

BACKGROUND

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) Reauthorization of 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), all students with disabilities must be included in any state and districtwide assessments with necessary accommodations or alternate assessments as appropriate, and their results must be reported with the same frequency and detail as for students without disabilities. In response to guidance from the US Department of Education in early 2005, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) revised the state's alternate assessment system, effective with the 2005-06 school year, and now provides the options described in this report.

Results from alternate assessments are included in each school's annual state ABCs Performance Composite (percent of students performing at or above grade level) and the federal measure of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) required under NCLB. To meet AYP standards, a school must meet every performance target for each student subgroup in the school (including students with disabilities).

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) team is responsible for making decisions about the initial evaluations and reevaluations of students with disabilities. The written IEP/plan that a team develops for each student with a disability determines the instructional plan/goals for the student. The plan also specifies whether that student requires an accommodation or alternate assessment of some type in lieu of the standard state assessments that other students will take.

By law, members of a student's IEP team must include the following:

- A representative of the district who (1) is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities, and (2) is knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of district resources.
- At least one special education teacher or, where appropriate, one special education provider of the student.
- At least one regular education teacher of the student (if the student is or will be participating in the regular education environment).
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluations results (who may be one of the members described above).
- The parent(s) of the child.
- At the discretion of the parent(s) or the district, other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, including related-services personnel.
- The child, whenever appropriate.*

For the 2005-06 school year, four different alternate assessments were available for use in grades or courses where the state typically tests students: NCCLAS (NC Checklist of Academic Standards), NCAAAP (NC Alternate Assessment Portfolio), NCEXTEND2 EOG (based on grade-level course of study but using modified standards and test format), and the NC Alternate Assessment of Computer Skills. The results for 2005-06 for the students taking these assessments are detailed in the next sections of this report.

I. NCCLAS (NC CHECKLIST OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS)

NCCLAS is a grade-level alternate assessment measuring grade-level content and grade-level standards that may substitute for multiple-choice end-of-grade (EOG) tests in grades 3-8 and 10, multiple-choice end-of-course (EOC) examinations at the high school level, and writing assessments at grades 4, 7 and 10. These assessments must be specified either in a student's IEP or a written Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan. Typically, students identified for use of NCCLAS assessments are unable to access the paper and pencil test, even with assistive technology and approved accommodations. This test is designed for:

- Students who score below "Intermediate High" on the reading component of the state-mandated English language proficiency test (IDEA Proficiency Tests or IPT) and, for NCCLAS writing eligibility, score below "Superior" on the writing portion of the test AND have been in U.S. schools for less than two years. (Note: IPT testing/screening is required for all students entering WCPSS schools if they live in a home where English is not the primary language. These students continue to take the IPT annually until they meet the "proficient" standard in four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing.)
- Students who are newly blinded, have some forms of autism or recent traumatic brain injury, or have other physical disabilities that prohibit the manipulation of materials and information within standard tests, even with available accommodations.

*(See Section .1504 of the state 2004 Edition of *Procedures Governing Programs & Services for Children with Disabilities*. Viewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/ec/policy/policies/procedures>.)

NCCLAS assessments are in a folder format and consist of:

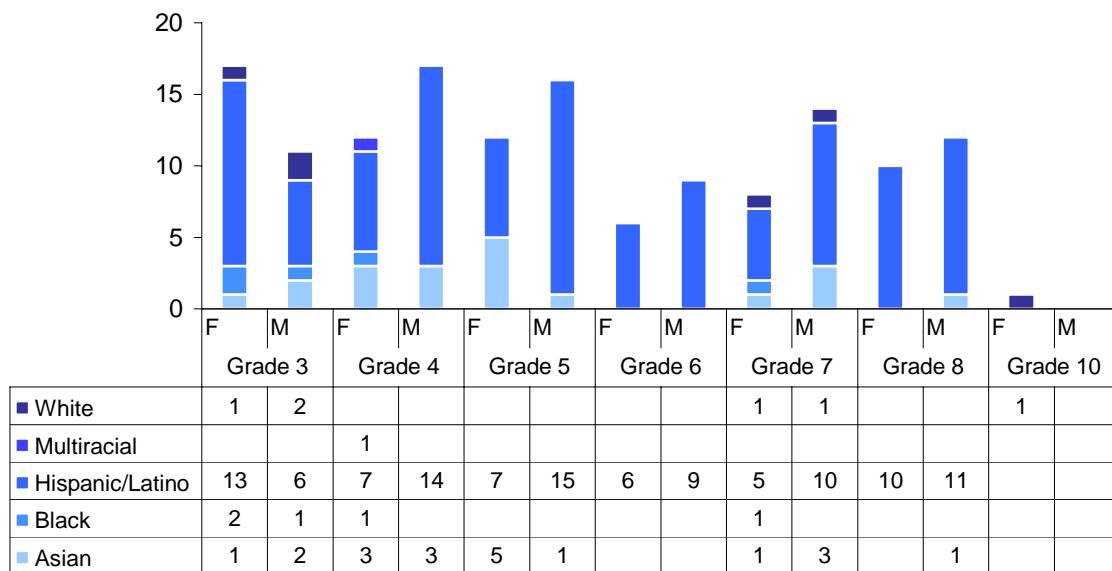
1. a checklist of skills based on specific objectives from the *NC Standard Course of Study*;
2. a scoring rubric with performance indicators for achievement levels, with an enclosed scoring sheet; and
3. a student profile and student work samples.

Two independent assessors are required for each student, with the first assessor being the primary instructor for the specific grade-level subject area (who documents the student’s academic performance with observations and work samples). The second assessor uses the student work samples and other written materials provided by the first assessor to complete another independent scoring. If final scores from the two assessors are not in agreement, a third independent assessor resolves the differences. Results are then submitted through an online system, where final score points and achievement levels are assigned.

NCCLAS EOG Results

In 2005-06, all WCPSS students participating in NCCLAS assessments were identified as LEP and had been in U.S. schools for less than two years. Selected characteristics of those students are shown in Figure 1. Of the 145 students identified for NCCLAS EOG assessments in 2005-06, the majority (78%) were Hispanic/Latino, and 14% were Asian American.

Figure 1
WCPSS Students Identified for NCCLAS EOG Assessments
in One or More Subject Areas by Gender, Race and Grade Level, 2005-06



The number of students identified for use of NCCLAS assessments, by content area and grade level, in 2005-06 is shown in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3. Also shown are WCPSS and statewide proficiency rates for both EOG and EOC NCCLAS assessments. With two exceptions, 3rd- and 6th-grade mathematics, proficiency rates tended to be lower in NCCLAS subject areas and grades, compared to results of the standard EOG and EOC assessments.

In both WCPSS and NC as a whole, more students were identified for use of NCCLAS mathematics assessments than NCCLAS reading assessments, likely because any student with a home language other than English and in U.S. schools *for less than a full school year* is not required to take the state reading tests. However, all students are required to take either the standard mathematics tests (with or without accommodations) or alternate assessments, based on the assumption that mathematics assessments require less knowledge of the English language.

Because of the small number of WCPSS students participating in NCCLAS assessments by grade level, caution must be used in interpreting the results. No more than 30% of WCPSS students participating in NCCLAS assessments at any grade achieved proficiency in reading or writing. Statewide results were similar (8-37%). As for mathematics, in WCPSS, students participating in NCCLAS assessments achieved the highest proficiency in 3rd grade (65%) and 6th grade (46%). In both instances, these proficiency rates were higher than those for both WCPSS and NC LEP students taking standard EOG tests at those two grades. Overall, WCPSS NCCLAS proficiency rates were higher than those of statewide NCCLAS rates in mathematics, but not in reading or writing.

Table 1
WCPSS and NC Results on NCCLAS Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results
for LEP Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

Subject Area and Grade	WCPSS				NC			
	Number Tested WCPSS NCCLAS	Percent Proficient WCPSS NCCLAS	Percent Proficient for WCPSS LEP Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All WCPSS Students: Standard EOG Tests	Number Tested NC NCCLAS	Percent Proficient NC NCCLAS	Percent Proficient for NC LEP Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All NC Students: Standard EOG Tests
Reading								
Grade 3	10	30.0%	65.3%	89.4%	295	27.8%	62.5%	82.9%
Grade 4	5	0.0%	68.1%	90.9%	312	16.7%	61.8%	83.4%
Grade 5	15	26.7%	66.8%	93.3%	315	27.6%	68.4%	88.4%
Grade 6	7	14.3%	60.8%	88.9%	28	26.3%	52.2%	81.5%
Grade 7	9	22.2%	57.6%	91.5%	335	24.2%	58.4%	86.4%
Grade 8	11	18.2%	57.3%	91.8%	363	36.6%	58.8%	86.9%
Grade 10	***	***	***	22.5%	95	8.4%	11.1%	18.5%
Mathematics								
Grade 3	20	65.0%	55.0%	78.2%	596	39.3%	51.5%	67.8%
Grade 4	26	38.5%	50.0%	76.1%	626	31.3%	43.7%	65.0%
Grade 5	26	34.6%	40.0%	73.6%	582	32.3%	40.4%	63.1%
Grade 6	13	46.2%	38.2%	73.8%	534	38.6%	35.3%	61.9%
Grade 7	17	23.5%	36.5%	73.1%	627	32.7%	34.1%	61.8%
Grade 8	21	33.3%	38.9%	72.0%	617	39.7%	36.8%	60.7%
Grade 10	***	***	14.3%	18.8%	104	7.7%	11.3%	17.6%
Writing								
Grade 4	9	22.2%	26.7%	58.9%	490	22.0%	21.1%	50.0%
Grade 7	10	10.0%	15.3%	59.5%	416	25.7%	17.2%	46.2%
Grade 10	***	***	***	65.5%	176	29.5%	10.6%	53.2%

Note: LEP students in US schools for two or more years must take standard EOG and EOC tests.
 *** Fewer than five students were assessed.

Visual representations of these comparisons are presented in Figures 2 and 3

Figure 2
WCPSS Results on New NCCLAS Reading Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for LEP Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

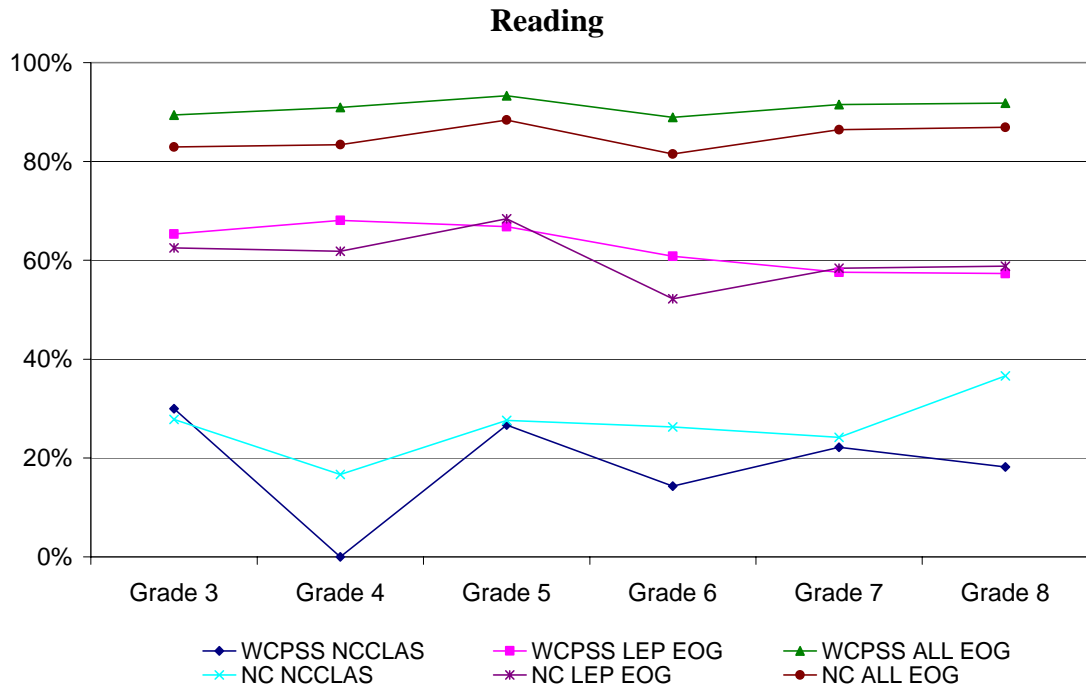
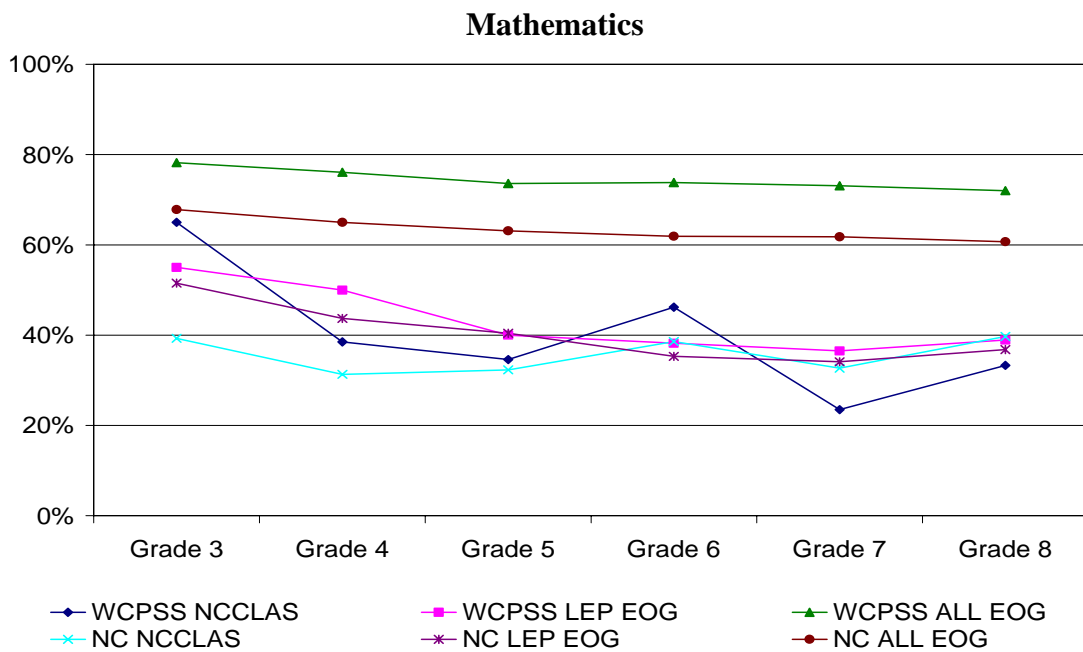


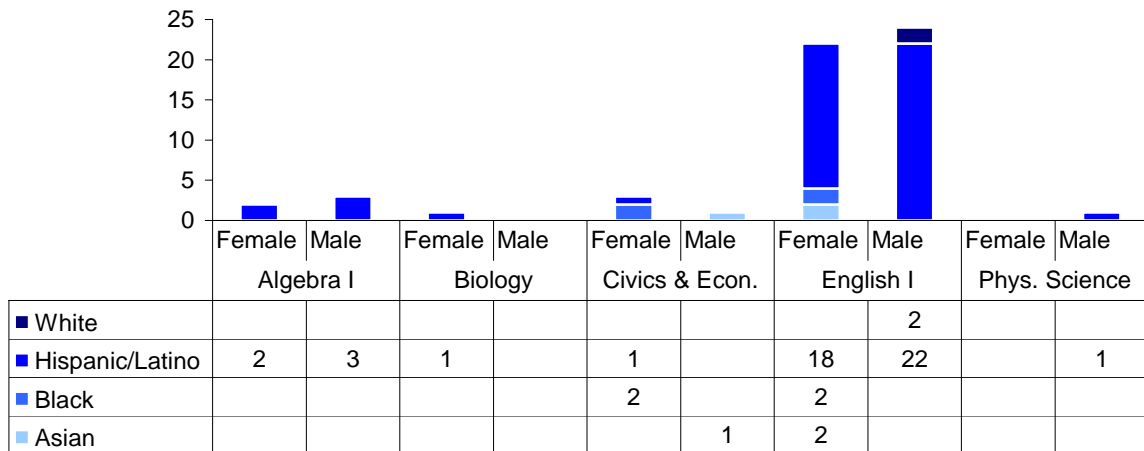
Figure 3
WCPSS Results on New NCCLAS Mathematics Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for LEP Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06



NCCLAS EOC Results

Selected characteristics of students assessed by EOC NCCLAS assessments are shown in Figure 4. Of the 55 students participating in NCCLAS EOC assessments in 2005-06, the majority (84%) were Hispanic/Latino students.

Figure 4
WCPSS Students Participating in NCCLAS End-of-Course Assessments in One or More Subject Areas by Gender, Race and Course, 2005-06



As shown in Table 2, the largest number of WCPSS NCCLAS EOC students assessed was in English I, but only 22% of those students and 37% of NC students scored at the proficient level on that assessment. In both cases, the proficiency rates on NCCLAS were lower than those for LEP students taking the standard EOC tests. Very small numbers of WCPSS students were identified for use of NCCLAS assessments in other courses. Passing the EOC tests/assessments in five core courses (Algebra I, Biology, Civics & Economics, English I, and U.S. History) is a requirement for high school graduation for students entering high school in 2006-07.

Table 2
WCPSS and NC Results on NCCLAS Assessments Compared to Standard EOC Results for LEP Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

	WCPSS				NC			
	Number Tested WCPSS NCCLAS	Percent Proficient WCPSS NCCLAS	Percent Proficient for WCPSS LEP Students: Standard EOC Tests	Percent Proficient for All WCPSS Students: Standard EOC Tests	Number Tested NC NCCLAS	Percent Proficient NC NCCLAS	Percent Proficient for NC LEP Students: Standard EOC Tests	Percent Proficient for All NC Students: Standard EOC Tests
Algebra I	***	***	74.5%	91.6%	246	60.2%	64.6%	82.6%
Biology	***	***	31.1%	73.7%	164	54.9%	26.7%	63.4%
Civics & Economics	***	***	29.4%	73.0%	150	48.0%	20.4%	60.1%
English I	46	21.7%	38.1%	87.2%	544	36.6%	44.6%	82.8%
Physical Science	***	***	34.0%	68.3%	37	59.5%	40.2%	69.1%

*** Fewer than five students were assessed.

Note: LEP students in US schools for two or more years must take standard EOG and EOC tests.

II. NCAAP (NC ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PORTFOLIO)

NCAAP assessments, implemented in 2000-01 for the NC alternative testing program, were used in 2005-06, but are being replaced by NCEXTEND1 assessments in 2006-07. Eligibility criteria for NCAAP/NCEXTEND1 assessments include the following:

- Students must have a significant cognitive disability and require extensive and explicit instruction to acquire, maintain, and generalize new skills in the tested areas.
- Students must exhibit severe and pervasive delays in multiple areas of development and in adaptive behaviors such as communication, daily living skills, and self-care.
- Students' IEP goals must focus on the functional application of academics, and instruction is based on a student's assigned grade-level *NC Standard Course of Study* (SCOS) Extensions/Essences with alternate achievement standards that differ in complexity from grade-level standards. (Information regarding SCOS Extensions is available at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/ncecs>.)

In WCPSS, it is typical for students in separate adapted curriculum classrooms (following SCOS Extensions) to be assessed via the NCAAP (and the new NCEXTEND1 in 2006-07). Adapted curriculum classrooms are identified as Autistic (AU), Severe Profound Mentally Disabled (SPMD), Trainable Mentally Disabled (TMD), and Multi-handicapped (MU).

The format and scoring for NCAAP assessments differ from that of NCCLAS assessments described earlier.

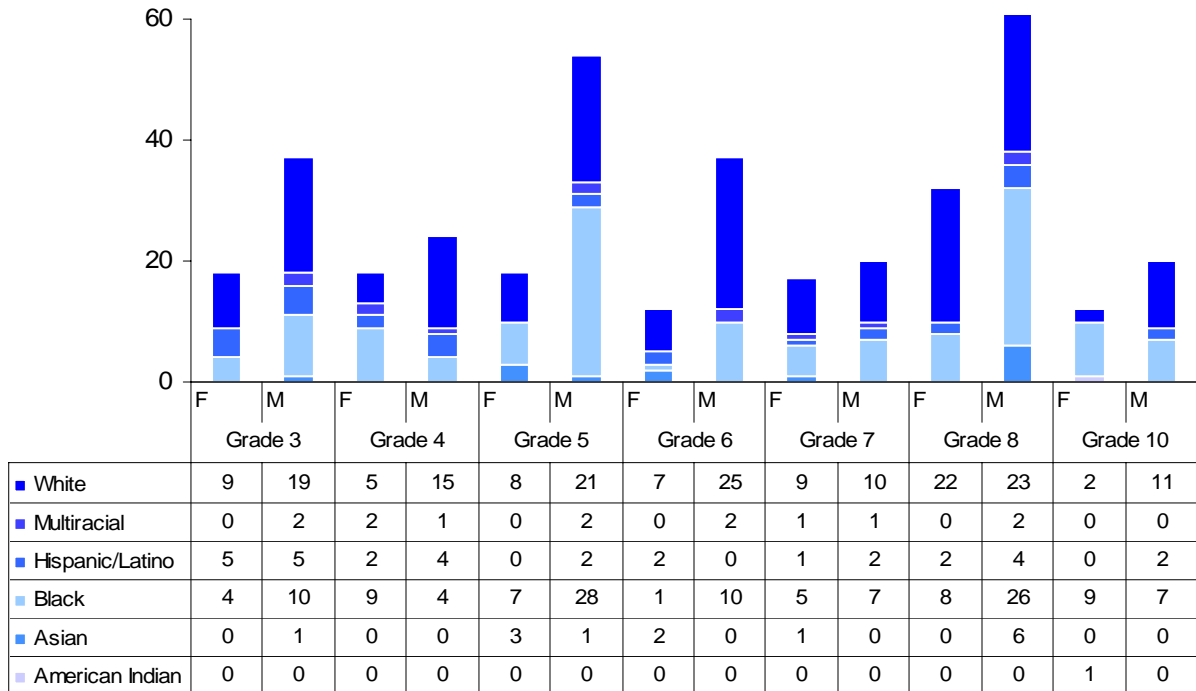
- Students are evaluated based on alternate achievement standards.
- There is a folder format in which student performance data are collected throughout the school year.
- Special education teachers independently choose the performance tasks for students, based on a student's IEP plan and objectives.
- Related service staff (teacher assistants and volunteers, as well as teachers) collect data on those tasks. This months-long process serves as the test administration.
- At the end of the school year, completed assessments are sent to DPI for scoring by two different—and independent—scorers using a standard rubric.

Unlike with other alternate assessments, students who are identified by IEP teams for use of an NCAAP assessment must use NCAAP assessments in all subject areas. For the 2005-06 school year, NCAAP served as an alternate assessment for reading and mathematics EOG tests at grades 3-8 and 10, as well as for writing assessments at grades 4, 7, and 10.

As shown in Figure 5, the performance of 380 WCPSS elementary and middle school students was assessed using the NCAAP in 2005-06. At each grade, more males than females were deemed eligible, perhaps because some syndromes and genetic disabilities are more prevalent in males versus females. Also, in grades 3-5, a slightly higher percentage of Black/African American students (37%) participated in NCAAP assessments, compared to their proportion (26%) in the grades 3-5 population. The largest number of students assessed with the NCAAP was at grades 5 and 8 (72 and 93 students, respectively), possibly because these grades are the retention/promotion gateways to the next levels of education: middle school or high school.

Perhaps more students are retained at those years in adapted curriculum classrooms, a topic to be pursued in future reporting.

Figure 5
Number of WCPSS Students at Grades 3-8 and 10, by Race and Gender, Identified for Use of NCAAP Assessments in 2005-06



The areas of identification in which 2005-06 NCAAP students were participating are shown in Table 3. Except for one student receiving resource services, all students were in full-time separate settings during the instructional day.

Table 3
Number of WCPSS Grades 3-8 and 10 Students by Areas of Identification With NCAAP Assessments in 2005-06

Areas of Identification	# Students	% Students
Autistic	125	32.90%
Educable Mentally Disabled	28	7.40%
Multi-Handicapped	57	15.00%
Orthopedically Impaired	1	0.30%
Other Health Impaired	8	2.10%
Severely/Profoundly Mentally Disabled	38	10.00%
Trainable Mentally Disabled	119	31.30%
Traumatic Brain Injury	2	0.50%
Visually Impaired	2	0.50%
Total	380	100.00%

A comparison of NC and WCPSS 2005-06 results of NCAAP assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing is shown in Table 4. Also shown are comparisons of NCAAP results with standard EOC results for students with disabilities (SWD) tested and all students tested.

Reading

- The proficiency rate on NCAAP reading assessments for WCPSS students ranged from 67% at grade 6 to 94% at grade 10.
- The percentage of WCPSS students achieving proficiency on the NCAAP was greater than that of students statewide at grades 3-5 and 10.

Mathematics

- Higher percentages of WCPSS students participating in NCAAP mathematics assessments were at/above grade level than for any comparison group, likely because earlier (pre 2005-06) mathematics standards/cut scores were still in use for NCAAP, while new state mathematics standards/cut scores were implemented in 2005-06 for standard EOG testing and new alternative assessments.
- Statewide, higher percentages of students achieved proficiency in NCAAP mathematics than in reading at every grade level. This was true for WCPSS students except at grades 4 and 10. (At grade 10, 94% of WCPSS students were proficient in both NCAAP reading and mathematics.)
- WCPSS students showed greater proficiency on NCAAP mathematics than students statewide at grades 3-5, 7 and 10.

Writing

- At 4th grade, 84% of WCPSS students were proficient on the NCAAP writing assessment.
- For WCPSS students, proficiency rates in writing ranged from 59% (7th grade) to 84% (4th grade). The proficiency rate for statewide students ranged from 64% (10th grade) to 71% (7th grade).

Table 4
WCPSS and NC Results on NCAAP Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

	WCPSS				NC			
	Number Tested WCPSS NCAAP	Percent Proficient WCPSS NCAAP	Percent Proficient for WCPSS SWD Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All WCPSS Students: Standard EOG Tests	Number Tested NC NCAAP	Percent Proficient NC NCAAP	Percent Proficient for NC SWD Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All NC Students: Standard EOG Tests
Reading								
Grade 3	55	80.0%	73.0%	89.5%	643	71.1%	64.5%	84.9%
Grade 4	43	88.4%	76.1%	90.9%	561	76.5%	62.1%	85.4%
Grade 5	72	83.3%	80.0%	93.3%	595	78.1%	71.2%	90.5%
Grade 6	49	67.3%	67.5%	88.9%	661	73.1%	54.4%	83.1%
Grade 7	39	71.8%	74.4%	91.6%	627	76.4%	62.9%	88.1%
Grade 8	93	69.9%	75.8%	92.0%	732	73.6%	64.0%	88.6%
Grade 10	32	93.8%	<=5%	6.3%	586	71.3%	<=5%	7.2%
Mathematics								
Grade 3	55	85.5%	59.9%	78.1%	643	80.1%	50.0%	68.8%
Grade 4	43	83.7%	52.9%	76.1%	561	83.4%	41.5%	66.0%
Grade 5	72	88.9%	46.9%	73.6%	595	80.7%	35.7%	64.0%
Grade 6	49	77.6%	43.1%	73.7%	661	79.4%	31.1%	62.6%
Grade 7	39	82.1%	44.0%	73.0%	627	81.0%	30.0%	62.4%
Grade 8	93	77.4%	43.1%	72.3%	732	80.1%	28.2%	61.3%
Grade 10	32	93.8%	6.6%	14.7%	586	81.1%	<=5%	12.8%
Writing								
Grade 4	43	83.7%	26.3%	59.3%	55	70.3%	17.5%	50.0%
Grade 7	39	59.0%	24.8%	50.6%	624	71.3%	10.0%	46.2%
Grade 10	32	81.3%	27.4%	65.5%	586	64.3%	13.3%	53.2%

<= Indicates "less than or equal to".

Visual representations for reading and mathematics results in grades 3-8 are presented in Figures 6 and 7.

Figure 6
WCPSS Results on NCAAP Reading Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

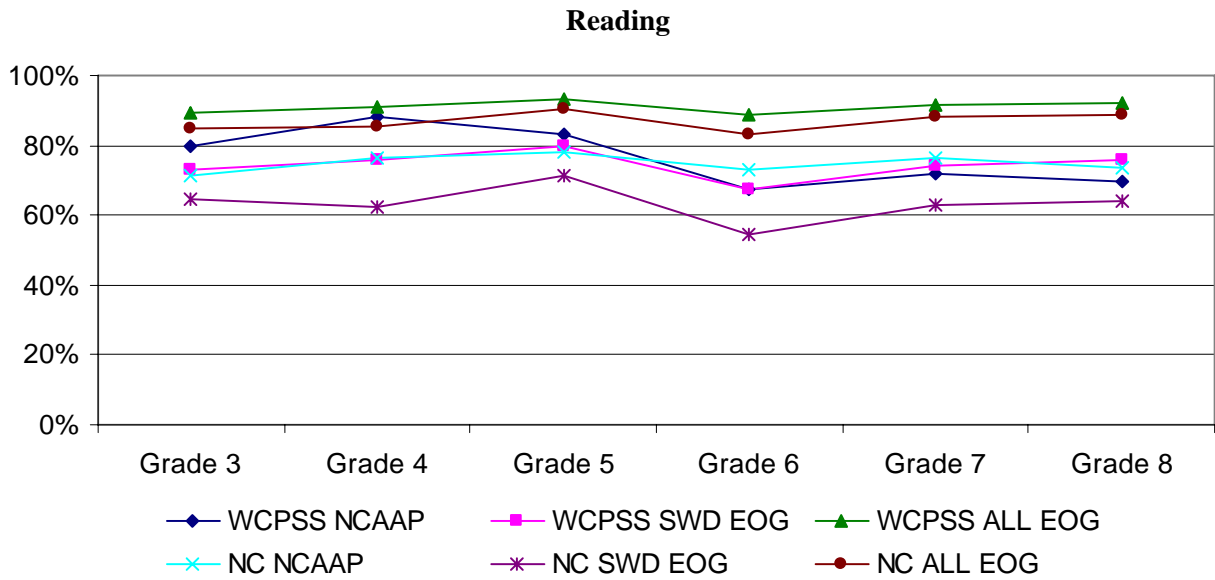
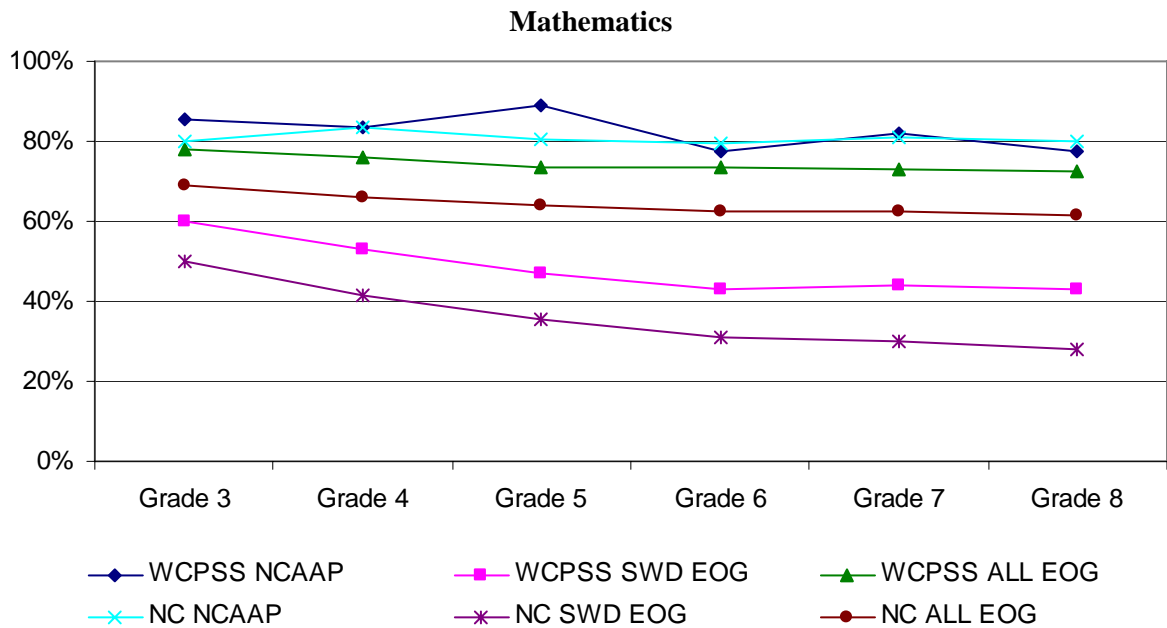


Figure 7
WCPSS Results on NCAAP Math Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06



III. NCEXTEND2

In 2005-06 the NC testing program was expanded to include new NCEXTEND2 assessments based on the grade-level NC SCOS content but with modified grade-level standards and a modified test format (i.e., shorter reading passages, simplified vocabulary, fewer multiple-choice test items, three rather than four response choices for each test item, and a modified page layout with only one or two items per page).

Student eligibility criteria considered by the IEP team include:

- not having a significant cognitive disability,
- having a disability that prevents the student from attaining grade-level proficiency in the subject area, with the best of instruction, within the school year covered by the IEP – as demonstrated by objective evidence of two or more measures such as standardized state tests, intelligence and aptitude tests, and psychological evaluations,
- having a disability that may require assessments of different design than standard tests and accommodations.

Additionally, IEP teams may recommend that a student be assessed by NCEXTEND2 in one or more subject areas, while participating in standard EOG testing in another area.

All students with disabilities participating in NCEXTEND2 assessments are receiving instruction in the grade-level NC SCOS. In 2005-06, NCEXTEND2 assessments were used in reading and mathematics at grades 3-8, and writing at grades 4 and 7. More than one thousand (1,032) WCPSS elementary and middle school students took NCEXTEND2 assessments in 2005-06. The areas of identification in which these students were participating are shown in Table 5.

Table 5
Number of WCPSS Grades 3-8 and 10 Students by Program
Taking One or More NCEXTEND2 Assessments in 2005-06

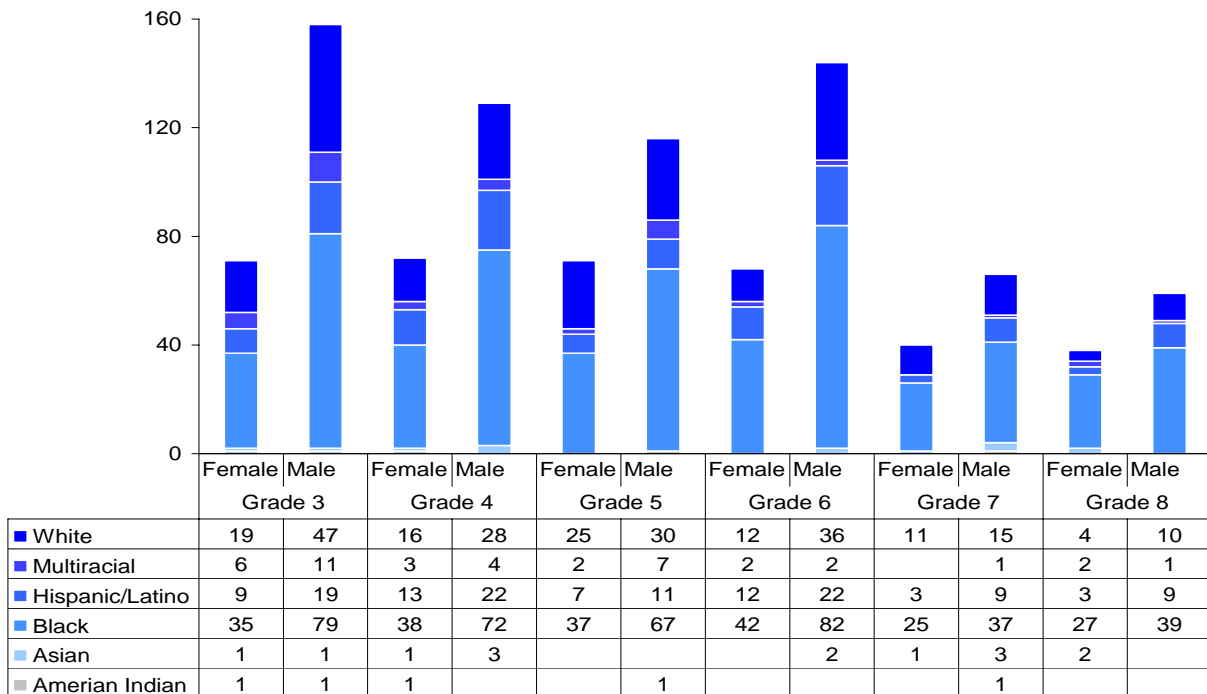
Program	Number of Students	Percent of Students
Autistic	86	8.3%
Behaviorally/Emotionally Disabled	51	4.9%
Educable Mentally Disabled	323	31.3%
Hearing Impaired	11	1.1%
Learning Disability	363	35.2%
Other Health Impaired	156	15.1%
Orthopedically Impaired	9	0.9%
Speech-Language Impaired	4	0.4%
Trainable Mentally Disabled	7	0.7%
Traumatic Brain Injury	5	0.5%
Visually Impaired	6	0.6%
In Transition	11	1.0%
Total	1032	100.0%

At each grade more males than females were identified for use of NCEXTEND2 assessments, and Black/African American students, followed by White students, participated most often in this alternative option, see Figure 8. At both the elementary and middle school levels, a disproportionate number of Black/African American students was identified for use of NCEXTEND2 assessments. At the middle school level, a disproportionate number of Hispanic/Latino students was also identified for NCEXTEND2 assessments.

- Although the grades 3-5 student population in 2005-06 included 54% White students and 26% Black/African American students, the student group taking NCEXTEND2 assessments was the inverse: 53% Black/African American and 27% White.
- The racial/ethnic composition of WCPSS middle school students in 2005-06 included 54% White, 29% Black/African American, and 8% Hispanic/Latino students. However, the composition of students taking NCEXTEND2 assessments was 61% Black/African American, 21% White, and 14% Hispanic/Latino.

The disproportionate number tested may reflect the disproportionate number of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students within the above areas of identification and educational settings.

Figure 8
Number of WCPSS Students at Grades 3-8, by Race and Gender, Taking NCEXTEND2 Assessments, 2005-06.



Statewide and WCPSS NCEXTEND2 results in reading, mathematics, and writing for 2005-06 are shown in Table 6. Also shown are comparisons of NCEXTEND2 results with standard EOG

results for other students with disabilities (SWD) tested and all students tested. Overall, the percentage of students with disabilities scoring at or above grade level on the NCEXTEND2 assessments was low—less than 30%—for both WCPSS students and students statewide. The performance of WCPSS students was slightly higher at five of six grades in reading and at three of six grades in mathematics.

Table 6
WCPSS and NC Results on NCEXTEND2 Assessments Compared to Standard EOG
Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06

	WCPSS				NC			
	Number Tested WCPSS NCEXTEND2	Percent Proficient WCPSS NCEXTEND2	Percent Proficient for WCPSS SWD Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All WCPSS Students: Standard EOG Tests	Number Tested NC NCEXTEND2	Percent Proficient NC NCEXTEND2	Percent Proficient for NC SWD Students: Standard EOG Tests	Percent Proficient for All NC Students: Standard EOG Tests
Reading								
Grade 3	222	18.9%	73.0%	89.5%	2,783	16.6%	64.5%	84.9%
Grade 4	189	23.8%	76.1%	90.9%	2,751	17.5%	62.1%	85.4%
Grade 5	181	22.7%	80.1%	93.3%	2,799	20.2%	71.2%	90.5%
Grade 6	101	19.8%	67.5%	88.9%	2,489	19.8%	54.4%	83.1%
Grade 7	101	21.8%	74.4%	91.6%	2,320	19.6%	62.9%	88.1%
Grade 8	89	12.4%	75.8%	92.0%	2,295	22.2%	64.0%	88.6%
Grade 10	n/a	n/a	<=5.0%	6.3%	n/a	n/a	<=5.0%	7.2%
Mathematics								
Grade 3	216	28.7%	59.9%	78.1%	2,378	24.1%	50.0%	68.8%
Grade 4	168	22.6%	52.9%	76.1%	2,256	22.7%	41.5%	66.0%
Grade 5	145	20.7%	46.9%	73.6%	2,292	23.4%	35.7%	64.0%
Grade 6	91	17.6%	43.1%	73.7%	2,220	25.7%	31.1%	62.6%
Grade 7	98	27.6%	44.0%	73.0%	2,118	26.6%	30.0%	62.4%
Grade 8	89	12.4%	43.1%	72.3%	2,135	27.9%	28.2%	61.3%
Grade 10	n/a	n/a	6.6%	14.7%	n/a	n/a	<=5.0%	12.8%
Writing								
Grade 4	151	25.2%	26.3%	59.3%	2,013	15.0%	17.5%	50.0%
Grade 7	77	3.9%	24.8%	50.6%	1,925	4.7%	10.0%	46.2%
Grade 10	n/a	n/a	27.4%	65.5%	n/a	n/a	13.3%	53.2%

<= Indicates "less than or equal to."

Visual representations for NCEXTEND2 reading and mathematics results in grades 3-8 are presented in Figures 9 and 10.

Figure 9
WCPSS and NC Results on NCEXTEND2 Reading Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06
Reading

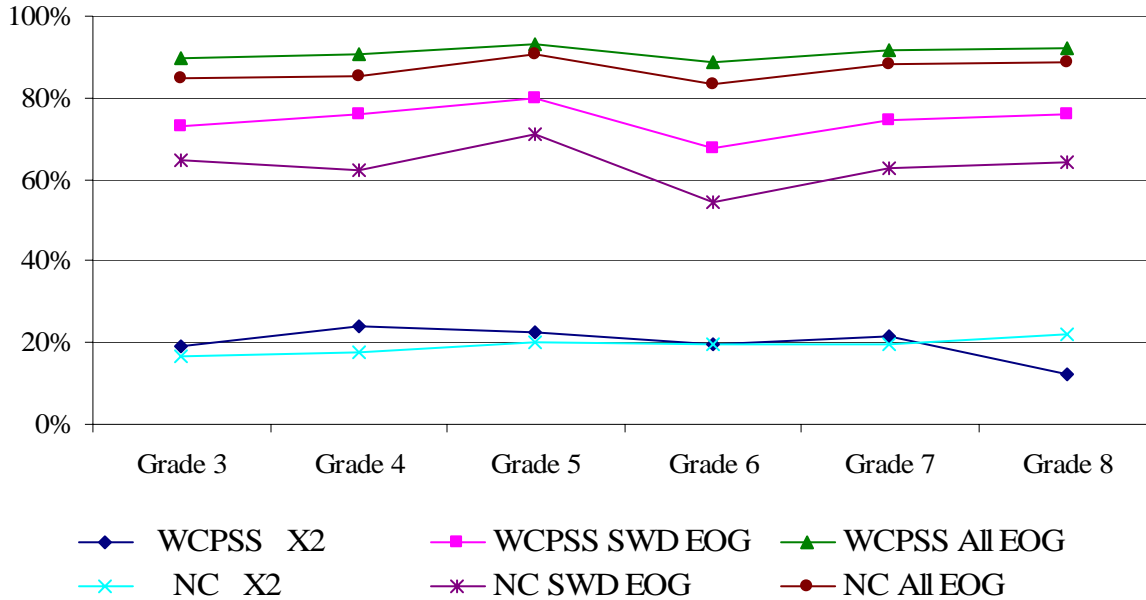
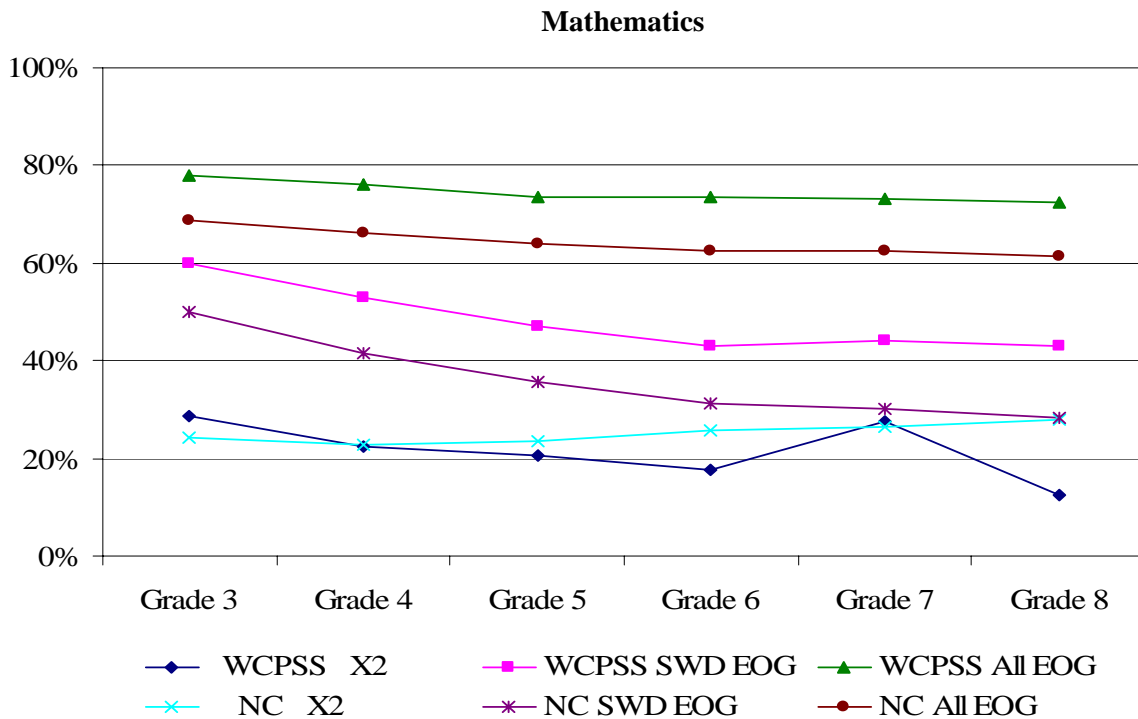


Figure 10
WCPSS and NC Results on NCEXTEND2 Math Assessments Compared to Standard EOG Results for SWD Students Tested and All Students Tested, 2005-06



IV. NC ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT OF COMPUTER SKILLS

Students eligible for the alternate assessment of computer skills include:

- Students who cannot access the NC Online Test of Computer Skills (at grade 8) as a result of technical/technology limitations at the building level, and/or
- Students with disabilities who, due to the nature of their disabilities, are unable to access the online test.

This alternate assessment is based on the NC SCOS and consists of a multiple-choice section of 35 items (that the student completes on an answer sheet) and a performance section with 25 computer-related tasks (that the test administrator observes and marks on the answer sheet).

In 2005-06, no WCPSS students were identified for use of the computer skills alternate assessment.

V. CHANGES IN THE ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM FOR 2006-07

Elementary and Middle School

NCEXTEND1 Assessments: NCAAP assessments, discussed earlier, were used in 2005-06, but were replaced in 2006-07 by NCEXTEND1 assessments – with the same eligibility criteria as for NCAAP assessments. Each fall, teachers use an online decision tree to give input on student abilities. Next, teachers receive individual student’s tasks to be worked on throughout the year. The tasks for the formal assessment at the end of the year consist of a subset of the original groups of assigned tasks. Two independent assessors evaluate student performance on the tasks during a six-week testing window, with each entering the results into the online system.

NCEXTEND1 end-of-grade assessments in reading, mathematics, writing, and science were field tested in 2005-06, and all except science are operational in 2006-07. As with the NCAAP in 2005-06, students identified by IEP teams for use of an NCEXTEND1 assessment in one subject area must use NCEXTEND1 assessments in all subject areas.

NCEXTEND2 EOG Science and Writing Assessments: NCEXTEND2 science assessments were field tested in grades 5 and 8 in 2005-06 (but do not become operational until 2007-08), and writing assessments are being implemented at grades 4 and 7 in 2006-07. Eligibility requirements are the same as for the other NCEXTEND2 assessments.

High School

NCEXTEND2 OCS Assessments are new alternates for required NC high school assessments in reading, mathematics, writing and science. Eligible students with disabilities are enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study (OCS) in their high schools, and must take the appropriate NCEXTEND2 OCS assessment at the conclusion of four courses:

- Occupational Mathematics I
- Occupational English I (reading)
- Life Skills Sciences I and II
- Occupational Writing

NCEXTEND2 OCS assessments, based on the OCS curriculum and with a simplified vocabulary and format, were field tested in spring 2006 and are operational in the 2006-07 school year.

DISCUSSION

In response to directives from NCLB and the U.S. Department of Education, NCDPI revised the alternate assessment system in 2005-06. Test administrators and assessors, as well as IEP teams and teachers districtwide, were trained in eligibility criteria and procedures. Two new alternate assessment options (NCCLAS and NCEXTEND2) and one continuing option (NCAAP) were implemented, and two other alternates were field tested within a single school year.

Results were mixed. Almost 400 students with significant cognitive disabilities were assessed via NCAAP (Alternate Assessment Portfolio), as used in previous years. Results: 67-94% of WCPSS and statewide students achieved proficiency in reading and 77-94% achieved proficiency in mathematics. These proficiency rates were similar to those of past years, but fewer students were assessed in 2005-06 than in the previous year. (Details available at <http://disag.ncpublicschools.org/2005/>).

New NCEXTEND2 assessments, based on the grade-level SCOS but with modified grade-level standards and simplified test format, were taken by more than 1,000 WCPSS students. At both the state and local levels, less than 30% of participating students scored at/above grade level in reading and mathematics.

In grades 3-8 and 10, the 145 WCPSS LEP students taking the new NCCLAS assessments in one or more subject areas showed 30% or less proficiency in reading and writing. Highest proficiency rates were in 3rd-grade and 6th-grade mathematics (65% and 46%, respectively), with 24-39% proficiency in mathematics at other grades. Statewide proficiency rates for NCCLAS assessments in reading, writing and mathematics ranged from 8-40%. At the high school level, where passing of state examinations in five core courses is required for graduation, 55 students took NCCLAS EOC assessments. Of the 46 students taking the NCCLAS English I assessment, 7 (22%) met the proficiency standard.

In short, the results of the two new alternate assessments in 2005-06—NCEXTEND2 and NCCLAS—were lower than desired and present a dilemma for decision makers:

On one hand, the development of the new alternate assessments reflects focused efforts to provide—for all students—improved access to and accountability for grade-level content in the NC SCOS. Two student groups were targeted for first-year implementation:

1. English language learners new to U.S. schools (eligible for NCCLAS), and
2. Students not having a significant cognitive disability but whose disabilities hinder them, even if significant growth occurs, from attaining grade-level proficiency within the single school year (eligible for NCEXTEND2). In the past, these were students sometimes using off-level assessments (i.e. a 3rd- or 4th-grade reading test when the student is in 5th grade).

No in-class measures were in place during 2005-06 to assess the degree to which these goals and instruction were being applied in the first year of implementation. However, the intent of the requirement that IEP goals and instruction—and assessment—be aligned with grade-level

content is to ensure that these students do have access to grade-level content and can work toward grade-level achievement.

On the other hand, most students taking the new assessments did not reach proficiency. This outcome leads to questions regarding purpose and appropriateness of testing, as well as alignment of instruction and resources. For example, some educators question the purpose and appropriateness of using another English language assessment (NCCLAS reading, writing, English I) for English language learners who have already been screened by IPT testing and have scores indicating limited English proficiency (LEP status). Mathematics outcomes were more positive, and IEP and LEP teams identified more students for NCCLAS EOG mathematics assessments (perceived as requiring less reading knowledge) than for language assessments.

Additionally, low results for SWD students taking new NCEXTEND2 assessments (less than 30% proficiency at each grade) raise questions regarding the intent and scope of the new assessment (and the underlying *SCOS Extensions*) and the degree to which instruction for these students is aligned with the new *SCOS Extensions*.

Historically, test scores for SWD students in WCPSS are lower during the first year of implementation than in subsequent years, in part because it takes time for educators and parents to process and implement new curriculum as well as new assessment eligibility criteria and the often lengthy and complex alternate assessment administration procedures. A second year of assessment results in 2006-07 can provide the comparison needed for refining current questions and concerns.

RESOURCES

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program (May 2006). *North Carolina Testing Program Assessment Options, 2006-07*.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Division of Accountability Services/North Carolina Testing Program (November 2006). *Preliminary 2005-06 Statewide Alternate Assessment Results*.

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. *NC Extended Content Standards*. Viewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/ncecs>.)

NC State Board of Education Policy 16 NCAC 6D .0506 *Accountability Standards for Students with Disabilities*. (01/06/2005). NC General Statutes 115C-12(9b); GS 115C-81(b)(4); NC Constitution, Article IX, Section 5.

Section .1504 of *NC Procedures Governing Programs & Services for Children with Disabilities* (2004 Edition). Viewed at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/ec/policy/policies/procedures>.)