



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

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

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TO LEA Superintendents
Charter School Directors

FROM Dr. Rebecca B. Garland, Deputy State Superintendent
Office of the Deputy State Superintendent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "R. Garland", written over the "FROM" line of the letterhead.

DATE July 16, 2014

ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS FOR THE ACT AND ACT PLAN FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

As you are aware, the State Board of Education (SBE) requires all public school students, including traditional, charter, and regional school students, who are enrolled in grade 11 for the first time to participate in The ACT, and all public school students, including traditional, charter, and regional school students, in grade 10 to participate in the ACT Plan. In the 2013 Session, the North Carolina General Assembly passed House Bill 587, which requires the administration of an alternate assessment to The ACT and to the ACT Plan. These alternate assessments are designed for students who (1) exhibit severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development and in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills and self-care, and (2) who are following the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, or are following a course of study that, upon completing high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree.

For the 2014–15 school year, several alternate assessments are available to eligible students with disabilities to measure their career and college readiness. The alternate assessments for participation in The ACT include the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11 and the *NCEXTENDI* at Grade 11. These two assessments are administered during The ACT accommodations testing window of March 3–17, 2015. New for the 2014–15 school year, is the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10. This alternate assessment is for participation in the ACT Plan and is administered simultaneously with the ACT Plan administration of October 1–31, 2014.

For consideration for participation in any one of the above listed alternate assessments, the following procedures must be completed:

- A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must determine that the student meets the specific eligibility criteria for one of the alternate assessments to the participation in The ACT or the ACT Plan. To determine student participation in the alternate assessments, the eligibility requirements are attached to this letter and can also be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/alternateassess/>.

DIVISION OF ACCOUNTABILITY SERVICES

6314 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-6314 | (919) 807-3769 | Fax (919) 807-3772

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

LEA Superintendents/Charter School Directors

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- A parent or guardian must receive notification from the school that outlines the procedures to be completed for consideration for participation in an alternate assessment. (See attached parent letters.)
- A parent or guardian must complete the *Alternate Assessment to Participation Parental Request Form*. (See the attachment.)

For additional information on the procedures to follow for students to participate in any of the aforementioned assessments, see the attachment *The ACT and ACT Plan Alternate Assessment Process*.

Please share this information locally. If you have questions or need further clarification regarding information contained in this memo, please contact your Regional Accountability Coordinator.

RBG:wh

c: LEA Testing Directors/Coordinators
LEA Exceptional Children Program Directors
Regional Accountability Coordinators
Exceptional Children Regional Consultants
Dr. June St. Clair Atkinson
Dr. Tammy Howard
Mr. William Hussey
Dr. Joel Medley
Mrs. Jo Anne Honeycutt
Dr. Nancy Carolan

Attachments

The ACT and ACT Plan Alternate Assessment Process

If a student meets specific criteria, he/she may be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment to The ACT (College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11 or **NCEXTEND1** at Grade 11) or to the ACT Plan (College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10). The following procedures must be followed in order for a student to participate in any one of the alternate assessments.

To Be Completed by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team:

- The student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must determine the student meets the specific eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment. The eligibility criteria for the College and Career Alternate Assessment at Grades 11, the **NCEXTEND1** at Grade 11, and the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10 can be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/alternateassess/>.
- The IEP team must document participation in the alternate assessment along with alternate assessment justification in the student's IEP.

To Be Completed by the Parent/Guardian:

- The parent/guardian must complete the Alternate Assessment to Participation Parental Request Form.
- Requests must be submitted to the principal or the principal's designee no later than:

Grade	Test	Submission Date
Grade 10 (Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and Career Readiness Alternate at Grade 10 	September 2, 2014
Grade 11 (ACT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11 • NCEXTEND1 at Grade 11 	January 15, 2015

To Be Completed by the Principal or Principal's Designee:

Upon IEP team approval and receipt of the parental request, the school principal or the principal's designee must complete the following procedures:

- Verify that the IEP team has determined eligibility for the student for the alternate assessment to participation in The ACT or the ACT Plan.
- Verify the student's participation in the alternate assessment is documented in the IEP and the alternate assessment justification has been completed.
- Complete the FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY box on the parental request form.
- Make a copy of the request form and keep it on file at the school.
- Send the original request form to the LEA Test Coordinator no later than
September 30, 2014 for grade 10 requests (Plan)
February 16, 2015 for grade 11 requests (ACT)

Send approved requests only to the LEA Test Coordinator.

Note: Charter Schools must send the original request form to their Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC).

- Notify the student and parent/guardian of the decision.

To Be Completed by the LEA Test Coordinator:

Upon receipt of an **approved** Alternate Assessment to Participation Parental Request Form, the LEA Test Coordinator must complete the following procedures:

- Verify the request has been filled out appropriately and completely.
- Ensure the appropriate testing materials are ordered for the student.

Parental Request Form

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY	
Date Received	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	_____
	(Principal's Signature/Date)
<input type="checkbox"/> Denied	_____
	(Principal's Signature/Date)

Alternate Assessment to Participation in ACT Plan or The ACT

Students with current Individual Education Programs (IEPs) who meet specific eligibility criteria and have parental permission may be eligible for participation in an alternate assessment to participation in ACT Plan or The ACT. Failure to include all required information may result in the need to resubmit the request or may cause a delay in the response.

Requests for an alternate assessment to participation in the ACT Plan will be honored only through September 2, 2014. Requests for an alternate assessment to participation in The ACT will be honored only through January 15, 2015. Please allow up to two weeks to process the request.

To Be Completed by the Parent/Guardian:

Complete the following information and submit the form to the school principal for review.

1. Today's Date: _____

2. Student's Name as it appears on school records:

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

3. Student's PowerSchool Student Number: _____

4. School Name: _____

5. Parental Request:

My child's IEP team has determined that my child meets the eligibility criteria for an alternate assessment to participation in (check one)

ACT Plan at grade 10

The ACT at grade 11

I request my son/daughter be administered an alternate assessment to participation in ACT Plan or The ACT.
(circle one)

Parent's/Guardian's Signature: _____ Date: _____

To Be Completed by the School Principal or the Principal's Designee:

1. Upon receipt of the request, confirm that the student has a current IEP, and that the IEP team has determined the student meets the specific eligibility criteria for the designated alternate assessment (i.e., College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10, College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11, or **NCEXTEND1** at Grade 11).
2. Once determination for participation in the alternate assessment is approved/denied,
 - a. The principal/principal's designee must complete the For School Use Only box located on this form.
 - b. The student and parents/guardians must be notified of the school's decision.
 - c. A copy of this form must be kept on file at the school.
3. The original request form must be sent to the LEA Test Coordinator no later than
 - a. September 30, 2014, for grade 10 (ACT Plan) and
 - b. February 16, 2015, for grade 11 (The ACT).
 - c. **Send approved requests only** to the LEA Test Coordinator.
Note: Charter Schools must send the original request form to their Regional Accountability Coordinator (RAC).

SAMPLE: PARENT LETTER—The ACT Plan Alternate Request

(School Address)

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The ACT Plan will be give free of charge to all North Carolina tenth grade students from October 1–31, 2014. The ACT Plan results may be used at the high school level to identify students who need assistance with certain subject areas or academic skills, to evaluate effectiveness of instruction, and to make adjustments to curriculum to improve instruction.

North Carolina also offers an alternate assessment to the participation in the ACT Plan for students with disabilities who have current Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and meet specific eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment (i.e., the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10) are listed on the following page. The student's IEP team will determine if he/she meets the eligibility criteria.

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, the student must have written parental permission before being allowed to take the alternate assessment.

For consideration for participation in the alternate assessment to ACT Plan participation, the following procedures must be completed:

- A student's IEP team must determine that he/she meets the specific eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment to the participation in the ACT Plan.
- A parent/guardian must complete a copy of the *Alternate Assessment to Participation Parental Request Form* (available at the school) and submit the request to the principal or the principal's designee no later than **September 2, 2014**.

If you have questions or concerns about the alternate assessment for participation in the ACT Plan, please contact *(Name of contact and email address/phone number)*.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Eligibility Criteria—The ACT Plan Alternate Request

North Carolina Testing Program

North Carolina Alternate Assessment System

College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment Grade 10

Eligibility Criteria

July 2014

The College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 10 is designed as the alternate assessment to participation in the ACT Plan. The decision to assess a student on this alternate assessment must be made as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

To determine student participation in the assessment, the following eligibility requirements must be considered:

- The student is enrolled in grade 10 according to PowerSchool. (Note: Only those students enrolled in 10th grade for the first time are required and permitted to take the assessment.)
- The student must have a current IEP.
- The student **DOES NOT** have only a current Section 504 Plan.
Note: Students with only Section 504 Plans (i.e., students who do not have a current IEP that designates participation in an alternate assessment) are not eligible for participation in any of North Carolina's alternate assessments. These students may participate in the standard test administration with or without accommodations as documented in their individual Section 504 Plans.
- The student, if identified as limited English proficient (LEP), must also have a current IEP.
- The student exhibits severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development and in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills, and self-care.
- The student is following a course of study that, upon completing high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree (i.e., the Occupational Course of Study).
- The student **IS NOT** receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards.
- The student meets the criteria above **AND** has a written parental request for an alternate assessment.

SAMPLE: PARENT LETTER—The ACT Alternate Request

(School Address)

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

The ACT College Admissions Assessment will be give free of charge to all North Carolina 11th grade students on March 3, 2015; the makeup date is March 17, 2015. The ACT is part of North Carolina's school accountability program. The ACT results may be used at the high school level to identify students who need assistance with certain subject areas or academic skills, to evaluate effectiveness of instruction, and to make adjustments to curriculum to improve instruction. In addition, colleges use The ACT for admission decisions, course placement, academic advising, and loans and scholarships. Students participating in the statewide administration of The ACT can select for free up to four colleges (or other reporting agencies) to receive their ACT scores.

North Carolina also offers two alternate assessments to the participation in The ACT for students with disabilities who have current Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and meet specific eligibility criteria. The eligibility criteria for these two alternate assessment (i.e., the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11 and the *NCEXTENDI* Alternate Assessment at Grade 11) are listed on the following two pages. The student's IEP team will determine if he/she meets the eligibility criteria.

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria, the student must have written parental permission before being allowed to take either alternate assessment.

For consideration for participation in an alternate assessment to ACT participation, the following procedures must be completed:

- A student's IEP team must determine that he/she meets the specific eligibility criteria for one of the alternate assessments to the participation in The ACT.
- A parent/guardian must complete a copy of the *Alternate Assessment to Participation Parental Request Form* (available at the school) and submit the request to the principal or the principal's designee no later than **January 15, 2015**.

If you have questions or concerns about the alternate assessments for participation in The ACT, please contact *(Name of contact and email address/phone number)*.

Sincerely,

(Signature)

Eligibility Criteria—The ACT Alternate Request

North Carolina Testing Program

North Carolina Alternate Assessment System

College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment Grade 11

Eligibility Criteria

July 2014

The College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment at Grade 11 is designed as the alternate assessment to participation in the ACT. The decision to assess a student on this alternate assessment must be made as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process.

To determine student participation in the assessment, the following eligibility requirements must be considered:

- The student is enrolled in grade 11 according to PowerSchool. (Note: Only those students enrolled in 11th grade for the first time are required and permitted to take the assessment.)
- The student must have a current IEP.
- The student **DOES NOT** have only a current Section 504 Plan.
Note: Students with only Section 504 Plans (i.e., students who do not have a current IEP that designates participation in an alternate assessment) are not eligible for participation in any of North Carolina's alternate assessments. These students may participate in the standard test administration with or without accommodations as documented in their individual Section 504 Plans.
- The student, if identified as limited English proficient (LEP), must also have a current IEP.
- The student exhibits severe and pervasive delays in all areas of conceptual, linguistic, and academic development and in adaptive behaviors, including communication, daily living skills, and self-care.
- The student is following a course of study that, upon completing high school, may not lead to admission into a college-level course of study resulting in a college degree (i.e., the Occupational Course of Study).
- The student **IS NOT** receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards. (Note: Students receiving instruction in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards may be eligible for the *NCEXTENDI* Alternate Assessment at Grade 11.)
- The student meets the criteria above **AND** has a written parental request for an alternate assessment.

Eligibility Criteria—The ACT Alternate Request

North Carolina Testing Program
North Carolina Alternate Assessment System
***NCEXTENDI* Alternate Assessment at Grade 11**
Eligibility Criteria
July 2014

The *NCEXTENDI* is designed for students who have a severe intellectual disability; it is not designed for students who have a specific learning disability. The assessment process requires students to complete performance-based, multiple-choice items. The *NCEXTENDI* at Grade 11 measures student performance in English Language Arts/Reading, Mathematics, and Science.

To determine participation in the *NCEXTENDI* at Grade 11, the following eligibility requirements must be met:

- The student must have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- The student is enrolled in grade 11 according to PowerSchool. Note: Only those students enrolled in 11th grade for the first time are required to take the *NCEXTENDI* Alternate Assessment at Grade 11.
- The student is instructed in the North Carolina Extended Content Standards in **ALL** assessed content areas.
- The student has a **SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY** (i.e., exhibits severe and pervasive delays in **ALL** areas of conceptual, linguistic and academic development and also in adaptive behavior areas, such as communication, daily living skills, and self-care).

The vast majority of students with disabilities do not have a significant cognitive disability. The *NCEXTENDI* is **NOT** appropriate for the following students:

- Students who are being instructed in **ANY OR ALL** of the general grade-/course-level content standards of the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.
- Students who demonstrate delays only in academic achievement.
- Students who demonstrate delays due primarily to behavioral issues.
- Students who demonstrate delays only in selected areas of academic achievement.
- Students pursuing a North Carolina high school diploma (including students enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study).