



# Innovative Assessments

## Annual Evaluation Report

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## Executive Summary

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Friday Institute continued its partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to conduct an internal evaluation of the Innovative Assessments project. During this academic year, the Friday Institute sought to understand three different areas: (1) how teachers used, understood, and reacted to the class item report received after each administration of the NC Check-Ins 2.0; (2) parents' and caregivers' understanding of and reaction to the individual student report they receive after their child completes an NC Check-In 2.0; and (3) how teachers, administrators, and coaches experienced the *Understanding Reports* training module, which taught participants how to understand, interpret, and use the reports they receive after administering the NC Check-Ins 2.0.

Overall, the class item report for the NC Check-Ins 2.0 has been well-received by educators. During PLC discussions, teachers depend on it to gain insight into their students' progress, and they use it to target their individual student's needs. Educators discussed with one another different teaching strategies they can implement to address their students' needs, and they exchanged ideas about instructional practices with one another. Further, they used the report to form small groups of students who were struggling with the same concepts.

In terms of the individual student report (ISR), parents and caregivers shared suggestions for improvement to the information they receive. While the intention of the report is to inform parents of their child's progress on NC learning standards, parents and caregivers shared that the report could be more effective if they were provided with more and clearer data, such as a different rating scale of their child's performance. The evaluation team noted that moving forward, it may benefit parents and caregivers if DPI provided them with more explanation about and context of the ISRs so that parents have a better understanding of the data they are given.

Lastly, teachers, administrators, and coaches who participated in the *Understanding Reports* thirty-minute learning module overall found the course to be useful and effective. They felt like they were given a productive overview of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 and how to use the associated reports. The PEER Group noted that while the course was effective, many educators hope for changes in future courses, which most frequently surrounded specific learning tools, such as including videos and audio.

## Introduction

During the 2022-2023 school year, the Friday Institute continued its partnership with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to conduct an internal evaluation of the Innovative Assessments project. This year, the Friday Institute sought to understand three different areas: (1) how teachers used, understood, and reacted to the class item report received after each administration of the NC Check-Ins 2.0; (2) parents' and caregivers' understanding of and reaction to the individual student report they receive after their child completes an NC Check-In 2.0; and (3) how teachers, administrators, and coaches experienced the *Understanding Reports* training module, which taught participants how to understand, interpret, and use the reports they receive after administering the NC Check-Ins 2.0.

Table 1

<b>Data Collection Activity</b>	<b>Administration</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Professional Learning Community observations	March 2023	37
Professional Learning Community interviews and focus groups	March 2023-April 2023	20
Individual Student Report survey	January - June 2023	420
<i>Understanding Reports</i> teacher survey	April 2022 - May 2023	527
<i>Understanding Reports</i> coaches and administrator survey	April 2022 - May 2023	172

This report's findings are broken down into three sections, according to each evaluation activity. The first section presents findings from the observations, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews from the professional learning communities (PLCs). The second section details findings from the survey administered to parents about the information they received on the individual student report. The third findings section presents an updated version of the Friday Institute's January report about educators' experiences with and reactions to the thirty-minute training module about how to interpret, understand, and use the student performance data they receive on NC Check-Ins 2.0 class item reports.

The report concludes with recommendations for ways to move forward with this multi-year project.

# Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

## Background

During the third year of the partnership between NCDPI and the Friday Institute for the Innovative Assessments project, two of the main purposes were to better understand (1) educators' feelings toward the class item report and (2) how the class item report impacted instruction.

The Friday Institute worked with schools participating in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot program throughout North Carolina. The researchers conducted observations of professional learning communities (PLCs) dedicated to interpreting, analyzing, and discussing student performance on the second administration of the NC Check-Ins 2.0. The researchers then conducted follow-up focus groups with educators to gain more depth into how teachers experience working with data from the class item reports.

The following sections detail in-depth the methods that the Friday Institute used and provide major findings from observations and interviews.

## Methods

The PEER Group worked with NCDPI to create a list of schools to contact for the researchers to visit and observe. The team reached out to representatives from potential school/district participants, and the team had opportunities to conduct six in-person observations, and two virtual Zoom observations (due to blizzard warnings, the team opted to conduct the two observations at one school virtually.)

Throughout the month of February, the research team conducted eight PLC observations at six schools (two schools were each observed twice). Five of the schools were traditional public schools in four regions, and one was a charter school. During PLC observations, team members took field notes on their computers using an observation protocol approved by the NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing (see Appendix A to view the protocol).

After the completion of the PLC observations, the researchers conducted follow-up focus groups with six schools during February and March. Questions surrounded topics of data use, impacts of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 data on instruction and learning, support and needs, and paper manipulative kits. Similar to the observation protocol, the focus group protocol received input from and was approved by the NCDPI Office of Accountability and Testing (see Appendix B to view the protocol). Focus groups with educators lasted between 15 and 39 minutes.

The PEER Group conducted analysis of the data from the focus groups and interviews using Atlas.ti, a qualitative coding software. Initially, two researchers each coded one field notes document separately, then came together to discuss the codes and develop a shared understanding of the co-created codebook. One researcher then individually coded each of

the focus group interview transcripts and discussed the codes with the other two members of the team. The codes, both descriptive and interpretive, provide the basis for the findings and evidence in this report.

### General Findings

**PLCs had a similar organizational structure.** Noticeably, PLCs more or less contained the same components. These included beginning the session with a time to celebrate any successes educators had noticed in their students' performance on the NC Check-Ins 2.0. Often, conversations then shifted to a discussion about particular standards and questions, noting which ones gave students the most trouble. They discussed whether or not it was a class level or grade level issue, and depending on the issue, educators shared different teaching strategies, collaborating on different ideas to learn from one another. Sessions often ended in a discussion of next instructional steps.

**Class item reports received positive feedback from educators.** During PLC discussions and subsequent focus group interviews, educators shared how useful the data was that they received on the class item report. They felt they had enough pertinent data and rarely suggested wanting or needing more data. The report was manageable and gave them a clear picture of their class's current performance level.

*"I think it's very detailed. It tells us exactly what standard that we should be working on. It tells us exactly what standards for even individual children if I want to look back over which ones they missed. ... I can break it down to have individualized lessons if I needed to based on the data, so I don't think there's been any challenges with it. I think it provides us a lot of information. – Focus group participant*

**Educators are collaborative and learn teaching strategies from one another.** PLCs dedicated to the NC Check-Ins 2.0 were used as opportunities for teachers to review each other's performance and talk about different teaching strategies for particular standards. For example, grade level teachers recognized when one of their teammates was particularly effective at teaching certain concepts, so they used this conversation as a springboard to learn from one another the different strategies each of them was using, deciding whether or not it would work for their own classrooms.

*With that type of information, it gives us the opportunity if a teacher had a question that was higher, we can say, "Okay, what did you do to teach this topic to your kids?" And then that gives the other teachers the ideas of how to reteach it so that their kids can be just as high. – Focus group participant*

**Educators use the class item reports in PLCs to guide their discussions at a personalized student level.** Notably, teachers constantly brought the conversation down to the granular student-level data. Educators took particular care to discuss individual students and ensure that any who were struggling either received extra help and interventions or would be

monitored so that they did not fall further behind. Sometimes, the student-level data was cause for celebration as well, with teachers regularly noting how proud they were of students who were making progress.

*And I think across the grade levels too, with the data that we got, since we do have some interventionist in reading and in math at the middle school, we look at that data and say, "Well, this student is doing really well and has come far, but this other student is not," and switching out instead of the same kids staying in the intervention when we're doing well and can come out and others that need it. So I think being in the mindset that it's sort of a revolving door whoever needs it and taking that data and going from there. – Focus group participant*

**Class item reports helped teachers identify students who needed extra help and interventions.** Classroom teachers found it easy to see which students required additional support based on their performance on the NC Check-Ins 2.0. Based on the data in the report, teachers could immediately put students into different programming. For example, some students were given opportunities to participate in after school tutoring programs, while others were enrolled in state-funded programs to help them catch up.

*We have an amazing resource here that allows us to have an extra teacher sometimes. We're able to actually group kids either by standard. We look at maybe the thing they were most successful in or the thing that they were least proficient in and we'll group them based on that. And then they can spend time with the teacher focusing on that subject. And each of the three of us will take a different standard. – Focus group participant*

**Educators use data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 to form small groups.** One of the most frequently mentioned strategies teachers used to help their students and meet their individual needs was putting them into small groups to work on particular standards they may have struggled with. Data from the report made this fairly simple for teachers to do.

*... But through [looking at their scrap paper], then I was able to go around and see, "Oh, all these kids missed the multiplication question," and write their names down and then see the next multiplication question we come to, or is it still those same kids? Now ... I have small groups that I can work on for the next couple of weeks, and then writing what their error was. So, I now have a multiplication group and a division group ... – Focus group participant*

**The class item report is helpful in the immediate aftermath, but it is not usually used after a couple of weeks.** Teachers noted that while the NC Check-Ins 2.0 provides extremely useful data, they do not use it for long. Rather, it helps them decide some immediate next steps, which could be placing students in small groups, providing interventions on certain standards, or deciding as a grade level to pause for a week and review difficult concepts that entire

classes struggled with. Even though it is not used for long, it is an invaluable tool that acts as a helpful reset.

**Student data on the class item report informs next instructional steps.** It was notable that teachers almost always left their PLCs with concrete plans on what they would be doing next to address their students' needs. This could be revisiting the NC Check-Ins 2.0 data after having time to implement intervention strategies to see if student performance has grown by standard, or addressing smaller, though no less important, issues, such as working with students on how to approach technology-enhanced items and properly input answers into open-ended questions.

*I think yellows and reds are in the same intervention group; so let's start with warmups, because we're doing NS3 anyway and put perimeter in there and then put it in warmup, so we don't need to take that day.* – PLC observation field notes

**Those who accessed the class item report found the data easy to manipulate, an improvement from the original NC Check-Ins.** Educators found the NC Check-Ins 2.0 report to be much easier to work with than the original NC Check-Ins reports. Before, educators often had to print out reports and physically cut and paste them so that all students' data were in one spot. With this new report format, data could be downloaded into programs like Excel, which made reformatting for each teachers' particular needs much easier. Educators appreciate that DPI listened to their feedback and made improvements.

*Well, and the reports on Check-In 2.0 are so much better than, because we still have two grade levels doing the old Check-Ins that we'll transition next year. I honestly grumble when I have to do any data with them because the new reports are so much nicer, just the way they print and sorting.* – Focus group participant

**Educators use the class item report to compare their students in various ways.** Teachers not only use the data to compare how students are progressing—seeing how their students have done between the first and second administrations of the NC Check-Ins 2.0—but they also look to see how their students do in comparison to the state and school average. Several educators wished that they were able to compare their scores to the district/county performance, which was a part of the first iteration of the NC Check-Ins class item report.

*... I know that I used to be able to see the district percentage in mine ... And I mean there doesn't even need to be names on it because it doesn't matter who it is, I just want to know, did everybody have trouble with this problem?* – PLC observation field notes

## Paper-based NC Check-Ins 2.0

**Sticky notes were positively received by both the educator and the student.** While there was only one student during our observations who participated in the paper-based NC Check-Ins 2.0, DPI's choice of using sticky notes was positively received. They were easy for the student to understand and manipulate. The educator also did not have any trouble transporting the materials as the sticky notes did not fall off, which was a concern last year when DPI was considering using magnets.

**Logging and recording the student's data was a simple process.** Transferring the answers onto the assessment was very simple. The educator appreciated that she did not have to go to the district office to do that work but could do it herself and have the students' results on the same day as everyone else's.

*I was kind of like, "Oh yay! They chose the sticky notes!" Because I do think that it was very easy to transport it back to the main [office], because we have to actually leave the building to go to where our test administrator's office is. ... So in the past, we would bubble and then scan it in, send it off to be scanned. Logging onto it online was very easy. ... I actually preferred that to the bubbling and sending, because then we got the results. In the past, we would wait until all the tests were done and then it would take a couple more days. It was really nice to have that student's data at the same time as all the other students. – Focus group participant*

## Areas of Growth

**The individual student report received much less enthusiasm than did the class item report.** Educators had less to say about the individual student report, and some were not aware of its existence. When they did share about the ISR, it did not yield positive feedback. They explained that the report was rather unclear for parents, especially with its scale that went from *approaching* to *satisfactory*. While they shared that parents may not understand the meaning of the scale, they too struggled to make meaning of it. First, they found the word *approaching* to be frustrating because it did not adequately capture the urgency necessary for parents to address the issues their students faced. Further, without enough context, the scale became meaningless. Teachers said that if students were assessed on a standard and answered all the questions incorrectly, categorizing them as *approaching* is misleading. Additionally, because the ISR does not include the number of questions students were asked related to each standard, it made the scale feel inconsistent and unusable. Students may have received four questions for one standard and only one for another. Missing one question in either scenario would show very different performance levels.

*... the reports to parents [were not] as useful because they didn't have the numbers. I'm a parent myself and I think seeing the numbers as a parent really lets me know, "Is my child doing well? Are they where they should be in this area or not?" So for me, the teacher part, yes, love the numbers. The parents not seeing it, I think is a little bit of a concern. – Focus group participant*

**Teachers want access to more practice questions to prepare their students for technology-enhanced items.** They consistently asked for more ways to practice with their students, wishing that DPI would provide a larger bank of questions for students to test before the actual assessment. As many students are not accustomed to some of the question types, such as selecting multiple answers in a multiple choice type of question, reiterating that the directions might change by question type is important, and having opportunities to practice would be helpful. Some teachers had options outside of DPI-provided questions, such as using programs like Mastery Connect, but not all teachers shared that this was available to them.

*There's a lot more on Schoolnet this year compared to last year, but it's definitely an area that the state in general needs to continue to work on. If that's going to be a way that kids are assessed, we just need to expose them to... Because they can handle the tech piece of it. They know how to click and drag, and they know how to, but the strategy behind it, because the very first Check-In, I did on a one-on-one, and it was a pencil paper. The student only chose one answer every single time, every tech-enhanced. I know they missed every one of them. That was a conversation we then had with students of, "Okay, if there's only one answer, they would make that multiple choice. Every tech-enhanced is probably going to have more than one answer and let's talk about how to tackle that." Because everything she chose was right, but she didn't choose all of them because she chose one every time. – Focus group participant*

**Differences between the student view and teacher view of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 leads to confusion.** Teachers noted that there is a slight difference between what they see and what their students see when reviewing the results of the NC Check-Ins 2.0. While it was not a significant problem, it did add extra time to make sure everyone was looking at the same question. This was further complicated when the question numbers were different. For the student version, the questions were re-numbered when the “calculator active” questions began, but they were not re-numbered for the teacher version. Educators would appreciate more consistency between the teacher and student views.

*The way it's numbered on the Check-In, it's like 1 through 13. Then it starts back at number 1. Because when it switches to that calculator active piece, but on my stuff it says number 22. So I'm like, okay, it's number 22 if you numbered your paper that way. But if you didn't number your paper that way, it's on the calculator active number 8. They're having a hard time finding it. I think if they could keep the numbers consistent, that would be helpful. – Focus group participant*

*I think it's interesting to look at technology-enhanced versus not, because I think our scores got better from last year because we started using Mastery Connect to give our tests, and you can choose from different problems that have manually type in your answer or select all kind*

*of things. And so that practice I think has worked because it didn't go up a lot, but it went up more for me.* – Focus group participant

**Some assessment day logistical problems remain, including repeated student logouts during NC Check-Ins 2.0 administration.** Teachers at one school shared that their students faced issues when they moved their mouse while using the highlighter tool too far off screen. When this occurred, students were automatically logged out of their assessment. This occurred repeatedly, and teachers were constantly walking around the classroom to log their students back into the assessment platform. This type of bug can be disruptive for students and is a distraction to them as they try to concentrate.

*Highlighter would go off and shuts it down; led to a lot of unexpected exits; then they're like "I'm not highlighting anymore."* – PLC observation field notes

**Schools treat the NC Check-Ins 2.0 like an EOG, which has mixed results.** The researchers noticed that schools treat the NC Check-Ins 2.0 like a high-stakes test, which sometimes yielded negative results, including student testing anxiety. Many schools wanted to use the NC Check-Ins 2.0 as a way to practice how the EOG will feel, but depending on the school schedule and structure, this made it difficult. For example, one school had their fifth grade attached to the middle school, and they followed the middle school schedule. This meant that classes changed according to a bell schedule. The time limits put on the students caused student and teacher stress, and school administrators explained that there was almost no way around this issue.

**Concern around technology-enhanced items remains.** Educators noted that technology-enhanced questions could cause students problems. This could include students not being used to the format or not fully reading the directions. Students are not accustomed to selecting more than one correct answer. They also regularly input their answers incorrectly even when they understood the concept. This frequently occurred with questions that required a mixed number or improper fraction as an answer.

*"... some of the things that were upsetting to me was when I looked at my kids' answers, they clearly had the right answer. ... So they had the numbers in there correctly. ... but they were trying to put a comma in between the thousands and the hundreds and because they couldn't, they put a decimal in there, and so they actually worked the problem out correctly. They had the correct numbers, but then it's frustrating to me to know these kids knew how to do this, but it marked their answer wrong, and I understand why, but I know they can do it.* – Interview participant

**Educators want to understand the reasoning behind the technology-enhanced questions.** They were unsure of why there was drag-and-drop questions, when in their minds, it was no

different than a multiple choice question. They felt it was unnecessary to change up the question type when it offered no new information or data.

**Providing student responses to the technology-enhanced questions would help teachers target their instruction.** While educators view the class item report as beneficial, there were limitations to the results educators were shown regarding technology-enhanced questions. For example, the report's current format only shows whether the student got the answer correct or incorrect and does not indicate the students' actual answers. As students must select more than one answer, teachers are unsure if their students generally understand the concept but may not have selected every correct answer, or if their students are very confused and did not select any correct answer.

*The biggest issue would probably be with some of the technology-enhanced questions. We don't necessarily get to see exactly what the kid puts, so we can't really discuss easily why did the kids miss this because we don't see what the majority of them put.* – Focus group participant

*If it's a tech-enhanced, it doesn't tell you, it just says yes or no. If it's like multiple, if it's a tech-enhanced. It just says yes, they got all the answers, or no, they didn't. It'd be helpful if you could see which ones, if it was broken down.* – Focus group participant

**Educators remain concerned and confused about how the NC Check-Ins 2.0 will feed into the End-of-Grade test.** A frequent concern from educators was how the benchmark assessments actually lead to an adaptive End-of-Grade test. They remain unclear on how their students' performance would influence the difficulty level of the adaptive test, and they wondered if some students would be receiving an "easier" or "harder" EOG. They did not know how fair this was or what the differences between the different difficulty levels would be.

*How to prepare students for the 4th grade test for the adaptive test—used to give a percentage and so went into each individual standard and calculated on own to see the percentage on each different Check-In 2.0—is it the same percentage that they should focus on. If NBT.1 which had zero questions and NF.3 had 4 questions so would want to focus on that but if adaptive, what standards will students be tested on?* – PLC observation field notes

## Recommendations from Educators

Educators provided suggestions for improving the Check-Ins 2.0, with some examples listed below.

**Break down reading literature (RL) and reading for information (RI) questions.** Teachers explained that because these questions were not divided in the class item report, it took them extra time to do that work themselves to really understand the breakdown of their students' performance and distinguish between the two areas.

**Provide more technology-enhanced practice questions.** Participants shared how it would be helpful if DPI provided more opportunities for students to become accustomed to answering open-ended questions. This may help alleviate some of the issues students faced. Teachers shared frustration when their students knew the answer but input the answer incorrectly into the assessment.

**Display elapsed time.** One group of educators noted that it would be helpful for them to see the time that students spent on each question. This would provide an additional piece of data to better understand which questions caused students to struggle.

## Friday Institute Recommendations

**Keep the current data on the class item report but add extra data breakouts.** Educators felt like they had enough data to work with to adjust their classroom instruction to help their students succeed. The current data could be broken down further so that teachers do not have to do extra work when analyzing their students' performance. This was particularly clear in breaking out the Reading for Information and Reading Literature sections as well as providing students' answers on technology-enhanced items that asked students to "select all that apply."

**Communicate the reasoning behind technology-enhanced questions.** Not all educators were aware of why certain technology-enhanced items were included on the NC Check-Ins 2.0. They questioned the inclusion of drag-and-drop questions, which they felt offered no new information beyond what a regular multiple choice question could provide, as it seemed to make the assessment more complicated for students.

**Provide students' answer choices on the technology-enhanced questions.** The class item report does not display student answers on "select all that apply" questions, rather only showing the word "yes" if the student answered the question correctly, and "no" if answered incorrectly. This made it nearly impossible for teachers to understand to what degree their students did not understand the concept being assessed.

**Give teachers more state-vetted technology-enhanced practice questions.** Having more opportunities to practice with questions created by DPI will help students be more prepared to

answer technology-enhanced questions. It may help alleviate mistakes, especially when students understand the concept but are unsure of how to input the answers.

**Continue to communicate how the NC Check-Ins 2.0 are related to the EOG multi-staged adaptive test.** Teachers frequently wondered what the multi-staged adaptive EOG would look like, and they have many questions about it. In the coming months, it will be important for DPI to clarify how the NC Check-Ins 2.0 are related to the EOG.

**Strike the balance between treating the NC Check-Ins 2.0 like EOG practice and a formative assessment.** Educators appear to receive mixed signals about the NC Check-Ins 2.0. While DPI's messaging emphasizes the formative aspect of the assessment, the follow-through at the school level sometimes appears to be more high-stakes. This occurs when stringent measures around test security and tying these assessments to the EOG are emphasized.

**Consider making the individual student report more understandable and user-friendly for parents by providing more context and clearer data.** Providing both educators and parents/caregivers with more information about the individual student report has the potential to alleviate concerns surrounding student performance. It could also provide parents and caregivers with a more complete understanding of what the NC Check-Ins 2.0 are and how they can work with their child at home.

## Individual Student Report Survey

The evaluation team developed a short survey to understand parents' perceptions of and feedback about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 individual student report. Survey items included topics surrounding (1) parent perception of the clarity and usefulness of the report and (2) parent suggestions for NC Check-Ins 2.0 use and reporting.

The survey questions were based on previous DPI surveys during the Innovative Assessments project, with the Testing and Accountability team providing suggestions prior to the survey's launch. Anonymous links to the live survey were distributed via PowerSchool. There were 420 total surveys completed to some degree, and 571 total parent responses to the four open-ended questions on the survey when the data was pulled on June 5, 2023.

The researchers used Qualtrics and Excel to analyze quantitative responses and Atlas.ti, a qualitative coding software, to analyze open-ended survey responses. The findings below share percentages based on the number of participants answering each particular question. None of the questions on the survey were required to be filled in for survey completion. Answers to the open-ended questions were summarized and grouped for comparison, and multiple themes and topics were identified.

### Findings

Table 2

<b>The individual student report I received about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 ...</b>				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
contains clear directions on how to interpret my child's progress.	25%	30%	33%	11%
provides a clear explanation of how my child is performing.	25%	28%	36%	11%
is easy for me to understand.	21%	31%	36%	12%
clearly explains the meaning of the performance levels included on the report (i.e., approaching to satisfactory).	24%	32%	33%	11%

Note: rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The first question on the parent survey asked parents to indicate their perceptions about the ISR with Likert-type ratings (i.e., strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree). Notably, there was a spread of answers **leaning towards disagree and strongly disagree on all four stems**. More than half of survey participants responded either disagree or strongly disagree for all of the question stems. The item with the most agreement was, “The ISR I received about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 is easy for me to understand,” with 48% agreeing or strongly agreeing. Just as with the other items in the question, the strongly agree group was outnumbered by the strongly disagree group at a rate of almost two to one.

Due to the positive responses about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 from schools and teachers in surveys, interviews, and observations, the parent disagreement seems a strong contrast. The research team analyzed the responses to the open-ended questions keeping this in mind. Each of the four open-ended questions received many answers (~100+) from respondents, which provided more detail and largely pointed to the general theme that parents might need more communication surrounding the NC Check-Ins 2.0.

**In what way(s) has your child’s teacher communicated with you about the report’s content, either before sending it, or at the time you received the report?**

Parents feel they did not receive enough communication about the reports. There were 171 responses to the question above. Out of these, the majority (62% - 106/171) said or indicated they had received no communication other than the report itself.

*There has been no communication and nothing has been sent home. If I was not in education, I would not know anything about these tests.*

A small minority of parents heard about the report in various ways. Eight survey respondents shared that they found the individual student report in PowerSchool, and only ten respondents (6%) said they had received the report during or after a teacher conference. Some parents received communication about the report (at least regarding its availability) in a class app (e.g., Class Dojo), via email or newsletter.

*There was not communication regarding the report as test results were not received until beginning of next school year when I was able to see them in Powerschool.*

*No communication. We get a sheet of paper home with report cards with some random score in it that means nothing to us.*

## What did you like best about the new individual student report?

Some parents appreciated the readability of the individual student report. The largest number of respondents (23/147) indicated the report was easy to read and/or understand, and ten respondents also noted that they found the report to be accessible.

*I like (the) [ease] of readability. It is easy to see what they got right/wrong and easy to see how they performed next to their peers.*

*It's at hands reach and could easily download a copy for my records. I will not have to ask my student to tell me when these scores will be released. All I need to do is check this portal periodically.*

A small number of parents liked the indicator of progress or growth. There were a variety of other noteworthy answers: seven respondents said they liked the indicator of progress or growth, eight respondents appreciated the comparison to other student groups, and only six respondents mentioned the visual representation.

The largest category of answers, 33% (48/147) indicated there was nothing they liked about the report. Seven respondents said they were not sure what they liked, if anything, and another seven said it was not useful without more information. Two respondents shared that it was confusing. This means almost half of all responses (64/147) to the question about the best parts of the ISR were negative.

*Nothing. There's no context for anything. It doesn't unify anything. It's just more time spent being tested.*

*Impossible to answer as we do not know what we are looking at.*

## Please provide any suggestions or recommendations that might improve how student performance levels are shared with parents/caregivers.

Parents want more information about student performance levels. There were 137 total responses entered to the request for recommendations on performance levels. The most common code for these answers (n=32) was “not useful without more information.” Comments in this category sometimes alluded to the potential value of performance level information if an explanation was provided.

*I'd like to know exactly where my child is struggling or perhaps what they got wrong so I can help them. Telling me they are approaching or satisfactory tells me nothing other than they are struggling or not. It doesn't give enough specific information.*

This indication of the need for more communication was also expressed in the answers to other questions, even the question about what they liked about the ISR. For example, this parent liked the “Reading Learning Concepts Tested” section, but wanted more context:

*The Reading Learning Concepts Tested section, but without a clear understanding of what the Progress on Learning Concepts actually shows makes it worthless.*

**Parents are unsure of the relationship between the ISR and student performance in the classroom.** Survey respondents (n=20) did not know how the report or its information related to end-of-grade tests and/or children’s grades.

*There are no numbers on these reports. A dot somewhere between approaching and satisfactory is incredibly vague and unhelpful. Parents deserve the full picture. What is the scaled score? What is the percentage compared to peers? How does this translate to how they may score on the EOGs? What does a dot mean? There are several bullets in each category-- which one does the dot represent? All of them? Is it an average? Please give all the information you have. We deserve to be partners in our child's education.*

**Parents do not have a clear understanding about the meaning of the student performance scale.** Just as the previous parent showed, there was much confusion over the term “approaching” (14 of 137 or 10% mentioned it), and the accompanying visual.

*In addition to the visual, I would like to see the actual results like what is shown in the previous version of the check-in reports. Tracking where the dot is between approaching and satisfactory is not very helpful when I don't have a full sense of scale without information such as the number of questions. If my child misses one question out of only a small number of questions that would leave him much farther away from satisfactory even though it was only one missed question. Also, approaching and satisfactory do not seem like the best choices for the full scale. A student who gets all of the questions correct is only considered to be reaching a satisfactory level of understanding and performance...really? Likewise, at the other end of the spectrum, a student who answers all the questions correctly is considered to be approaching the target? While I don't mind the visual that the new version of the reports provides, the previous version was more informative.*

**What other recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the individual student report as a whole (e.g., information provided, how information is presented, etc.)?**

While most respondents gave no suggestions in response, many asked for more information about their students' scores. There were nearly 100 comments entered in response to this question, but 20 of those indicated that the respondent had no recommendations. Out of the remaining 75 entries, the largest number (17, or 23% of 75) continued along the same lines as previous answers, saying that the report itself was not useful without more information. More than one of those answers included desired details:

*What specific area was the problem for my child? What example question and answer can you provide? Did my child have sufficient time to complete the test? Did my child struggle with the time? How did my child score above the school average on check in 1 and drop 50% in check in 2? Does that look odd to anyone and go back to check if something is off? What material and specific areas can I as a parent use to coach my child at home?*

*I would like them to be presented more on a personal level! (In-person) I don't think, just getting the paper, answers a lot of my questions. I see the Q&A on the back and link for questions but how my child is measured in the classroom and how to further assist my kid is not on there.*

**Parents provided actionable feedback for improving the report.** They suggested ideas such as providing them with examples of the types of questions students encountered, sending reports more quickly (though these parents possibly mistook the report for an EOG report), sending home the paper version of the report (inferring these parents came across it electronically), and dropping or changing the performance scale.

*Information needs to be presented in a more direct form. The bar with Approaching to Satisfactory feels too subjective to give an accurate picture of my child's progress.*

*Send home letters to let us know how they are doing. Or send home a packet home on the stuff they need to work on.*

## Discussion

The negative sentiment expressed in the answers to the Likert-type question on the parent survey is concerning but understandable. The open-ended responses reveal that parent respondents have either not been given or somehow missed messaging about the purpose of the NC Check-Ins 2.0, which is a tool used by teachers and staff for planning and progress monitoring. The NC Check-Ins 2.0 are not intended to be a summative evaluation like the end-of-grade (EOG) tests. Parents who do not know what formative assessment is and are used to receiving NCDPI-generated reports about the EOGs could naturally assume that the state

generated report is about a high-stakes test, which will follow the student in official records and may be used to determine success or failure of teaching and learning for the year. Teachers, on the other hand, have received training and have access to many more pieces of information than parents are aware of or understand.

## Understanding Reports Survey

To help educators prepare for the NC Check-Ins 2.0, pilot schools in the North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool (NCPAT) program administered the 30-minute, *Understanding Reports*, training module. This professional development module was created through a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation to help educators understand the class item report and individual student report. As a part of the ongoing evaluation, participants responded to a short survey at the end of the module. It is necessary to note that while the course and accompanying survey were originally intended for NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot participants, the training and survey were opened up to other educators around the state who are outside of the pilot program. Between March 2022 and June 2023, 699 teachers, administrators, and coaches took the course and answered questions on a short survey.

Table 3

	September 2022		November 2022		June 2023	
Teachers	16	24%	487	75%	527	75%
Coaches	8	12%	46	7%	48	7%
Administrators	42	64%	117	18%	124	18%
Total	66		650		699	

A preliminary report in September provided information from 66 respondents. The proportion of teacher participants increased greatly (from 24% of responses in the September report to 75% of responses in the mid-year report), but there was no change in the proportions of the participant groups between November 2022 and June 2023. There was also virtually no change on who was required to complete the training; it was steady at 86% and 85%.

The overall rates of agreement on the first question (i.e., *As a result of my completion of this training, I have a better understanding of...*) went up slightly from the last report (from 87% and 88% to 89%). This sustained sentiment from the larger sample size on the survey is positive news about the course (from 66 to 650 to 699 total respondents). Over the last year, the substantial increase in the number of responses overall has provided significant input for analysis and for continued adjustment to both the training and the NC Check-Ins 2.0 process.

## Findings

Open-ended questions asked survey respondents to provide feedback on two areas: (1) the 30-minute *Understanding Reports* training module, and (2) the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot process as a whole. Analysis showed:

- Educators valued the training for working with data about student performance and being able to access and understand the reports.
- Supporting students' academic growth was a primary motivator for working with data and reports.
- Educators appreciated knowing how to use the reports to communicate with other educators and students' caregivers.
- Respondents wished the training course would be more interactive and include more video and audio content.
- Suggestions from participants about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 process (e.g., better alignment with classroom pacing, keeping the focus on students, and clear communication about the process) pointed toward the need for clear communication about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 process to maximize the benefits for all, but especially for students. Other suggestions were related to giving additional time and resources to more effectively implement the NC Checks-Ins 2.0.

## Close-ended survey results

The survey provided three Likert-scale questions (strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree) with multiple stems. These close-ended questions asked respondents to (1) report on their understanding of the module's learning targets, (2) share how the training might influence their professional practice, and (3) reflect on potential wider outcomes for students. To aid in analysis, the tables provided below break out responses for strongly agree and agree by teachers, administrators, and coaches.

**Training module learning targets.** The responses to this first question showed a change from previous reporting in that the coaches' and administrators' responses came more in line with the teachers. While the large majority of all three groups still agree with the item stems, all of them decreased slightly. The teachers' strongly agree and agree answers went down 1-2 percentage points, while the coaches and administrators showed 5-7 point decreases.

Table 4

<i>As a result of my completion of this training, I have a better understanding of...</i>						
	Teachers		Administrators		Coaches	
	November 2022	June 2023	November 2022	June 2023	November 2022	June 2023
how data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 might be used to inform instruction.	88%	87%	92%	85%	90%	83%
how to interpret the results in the Class Item Reports.	88%	85%	92%	85%	92%	85%
how to use the Individual Student Reports to interpret student performance data.	87%	86%	89%	82%	95%	88%

**Training influence on professional practice.** The reported value of the module in terms of potential impact on educator practice was generally lower than the assessment of module objectives, but the rates of agreement still showed a large majority of teachers, administrators, and coaches agreed that the training was useful in the indicated areas. Teachers' sentiment remains slightly less than that of the coaches and administrators. Pertaining to changes since the last report, the black font on the table means the percentage agreeing and strongly agreeing stayed the same from the last report. Green numbers show an increase of either one or two percentage points. None of the items had a decrease in positive sentiment for this question.

Table 5

<i>This training...</i>	Teachers		Administrators		Coaches	
	November 2022	June 2023	November 2022	June 2023	November 2022	June 2023
was relevant to my professional development needs.	73%	73%	85%	86%	87%	88%
met my immediate needs for using NC Check-Ins 2.0.	76%	76%	78%	79%	88%	88%
provided examples of effective practice I can apply in my professional setting.	76%	76%	81%	83%	80%	80%
will likely contribute to positive changes in my professional practice.	69%	70%	79%	80%	80%	80%
will likely contribute to positive changes in student learning.	72%	72%	80%	81%	85%	85%

**Potential for program outcomes.** Due to differences in job responsibilities, teachers and administrators received slightly different versions of the wider outcomes questions. The charts here display answer percentages for all stems and Likert points. Teachers showed the most agreement with their increased ability to target instruction to students’ needs. The most disagreement from teachers related to their ability to stay on pace with learning targets throughout the year.

## Teachers

Sentiment remained steady for the question, “As a result of my school's participation in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot program...” Any movement in percentages was very little (~1%) since the last time information was reported.

Figure 1

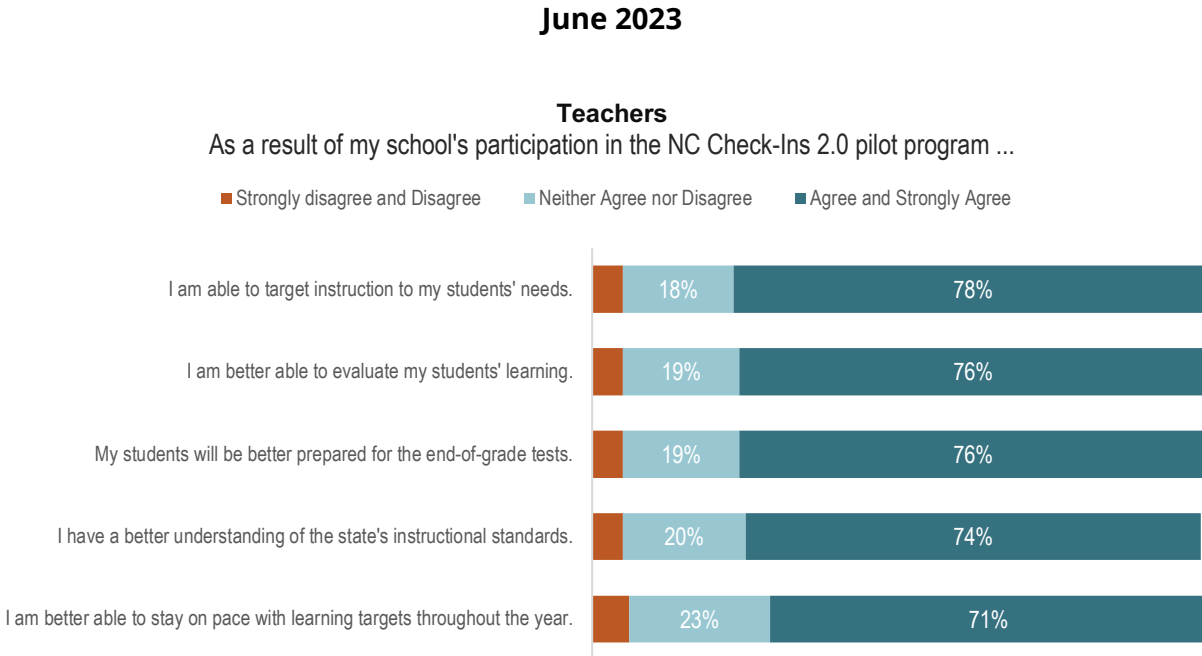
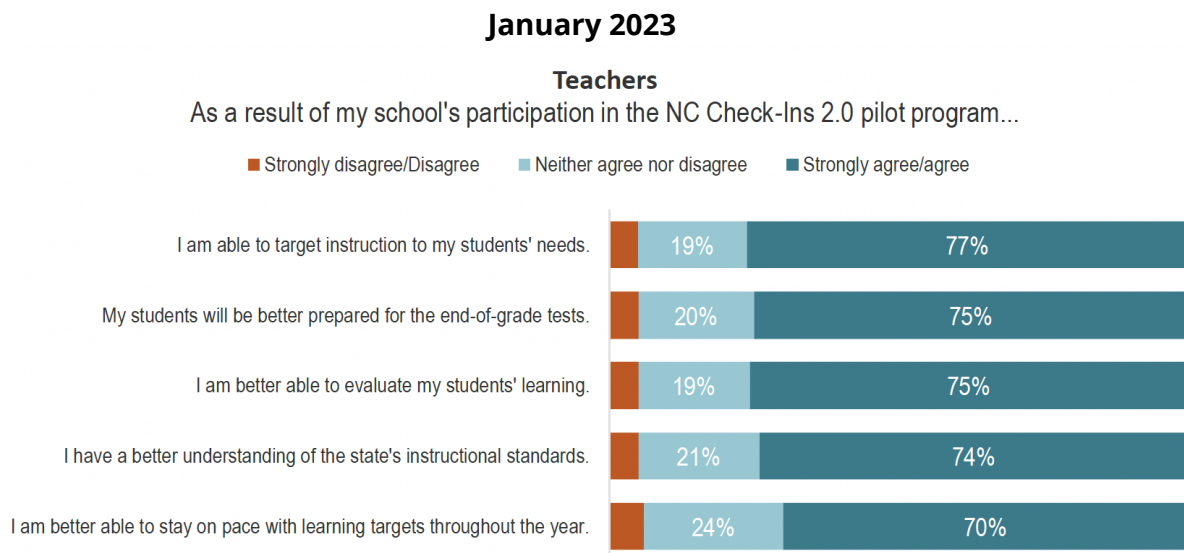


Figure 2



## Administrators

As with the previous reports, administrators showed more positive responses than teachers in all areas on the question, “As a result of my school's participation in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot program...” The highest rated result of the training was a better ability to support instruction, with 92% of administrator respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing. Just as with the teachers, the area of most disagreement came with pacing. The research team theorizes the lower rate of agreement may be related to some misunderstanding about test administration and the level of control schools have for administering the NC Check-Ins 2.0 in any order needed.

Figure 3

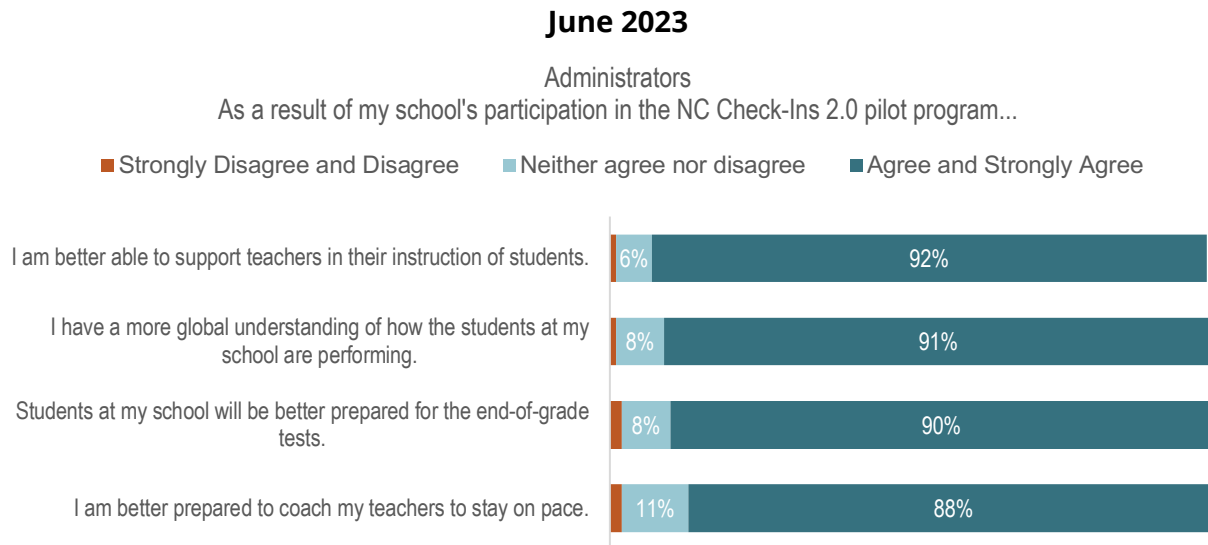
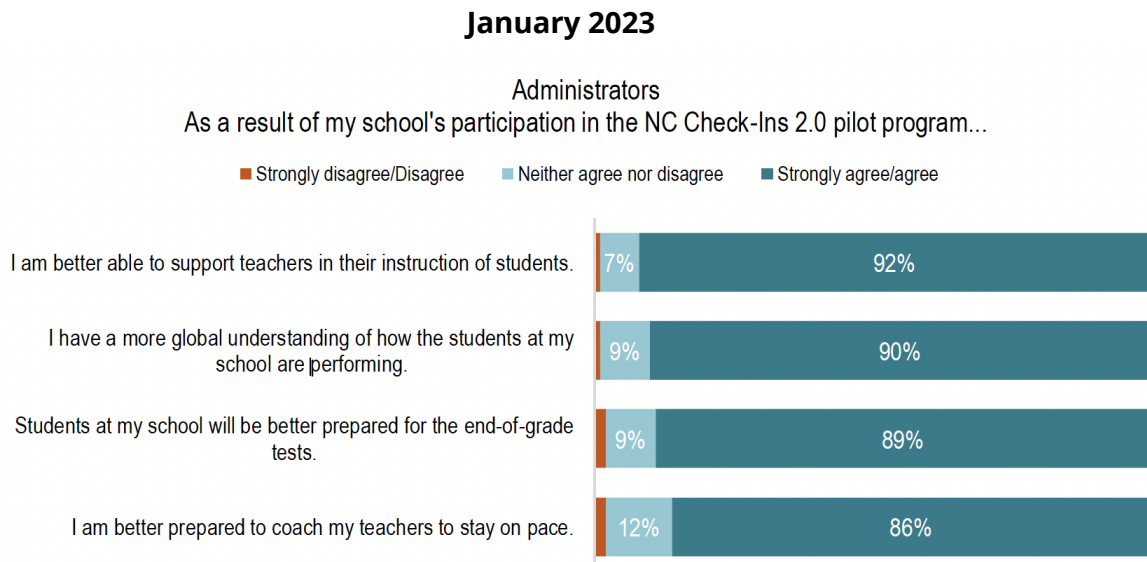


Figure 4



## Open-ended survey results

The researchers conducted an analysis of the four open-ended survey items using Atlas.ti, a qualitative data coding software. Each response was read and summarized to create descriptive codes for grouping and tallying. Once coded, similarities and patterns helped the researchers develop overarching themes in the data. The section that follows is divided into two sections: (1) training module feedback and (2) NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot feedback. The responses since November 2022 have been consistent with what was previously reported. For that reason, any sections with new insights (e.g., changes or additions since 2022) have been indicated.

### *Training Module Feedback*

**What was the most valuable aspect of this training in supporting your personal or professional learning goals?**

Many educators expressed how working with data was the most valuable aspect of the training module. This, and sharing that they appreciated learning about the different aspects of the report were stated more than twice as often as the next closest code, understanding the testing process. These answers show that knowledge gained from the module gave them a path forward for understanding and using data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 in their classrooms.

*I have never really looked at data from a NC Check-In before. This was very helpful in helping me understand the class and individual data information. -Teacher*

Educators emphasized the importance of supporting students' needs and growth. They emphasized how working with data and understanding the report would assist them in helping their students. This is a positive reflection of the purpose and function of the NC Check-Ins 2.0—to empower teachers' use of data for serving students in personalized ways.

*The training offers standard support to facilitate ongoing testing/data conversation in PLC throughout the district to identify instructional needs, improve instructional practice, and increase student achievement. - Administrator*

Teachers who instructed other subjects benefited from the module. While the Check-Ins are given in the subjects of Reading and Math, all teachers benefited from learning about the information provided by the Check-Ins. Written comments shared that the module provided useful information that could be utilized by teacher teams to support the work of Reading and Math teachers.

*As a Social Studies instructor, learning how to analyze the student data will allow me to support my colleagues in both Reading and Math. -Teacher*

Respondents appreciated having examples of reports to support their understanding of the NC Check-Ins. They liked that they could view an actual student report. This resource provided them with a clearer understanding of the data they will receive and gives them an inside view of how students understand the standards on which they were assessed.

*I appreciated the specific examples that were provided with sample data sets so that when I have my actual data I can refer back to the sample data notes that I made. - Teacher*

Educators use the report as a communication tool with stakeholders. They are able to share with caregivers how students are performing in the classroom at multiple points during the year.

*Seeing examples of the reports and the information on how to share with parents. I think parents will understand these reports much more than reports of the past. – Teacher*

### **What recommendations do you have for improving this professional development training?**

Incorporating video and audio options would make the course more engaging for participants. The most common recommendation for improving the thirty-minute course included having fewer words on the page and including other tools for learning. As one respondent noted, younger teachers learn through different media, and having audio options would encourage engagement.

*It would be great if this course could be presented with audio/video format. So many of our younger teachers view and receive information this way due to social media influences that it makes sense to enhance this course in this manner. -Administrator*

Add interactive components to the training. Some educators hoped to be more engaged through the training course. They expressed how they would appreciate hands-on activities that would help them learn how to use the data. This included wanting opportunities to use real student data to help them better contextualize the data they will receive on the class item reports.

*It would be better to have a dynamic presentation, videos, or interactive activities to make it easier to read and retain. - Teacher*

Provide more examples of reports. Survey takers would like to see more and varied examples of student reports. Teachers wished they had opportunities to view reports from other grade levels, not just the single grade level examples provided in the training module.

*Having all grade levels so they can see an example of their specific grade level NC 2.0 example so it will be more relevant to the individuals who need it for training purposes. - Teacher*

**Target training toward educators who use Check-Ins 2.0 and provide synchronous options.** Some respondents expressed frustration with being required to participate in the training. As they may not have taught the subject areas or grades assessed on the NC Check-Ins 2.0, they saw the training as a waste of their time. Others hoped that DPI would offer synchronous training sessions where they would have opportunities to receive in-the-moment feedback.

*We all teach content across the curriculum, but it might be helpful for this kind of training to be limited to the teachers who use this information in their classrooms daily. -Teacher*

### ***NCPAT Pilot Feedback***

#### **What have been the 1-2 most useful aspects of participating in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot?**

**Educators value the data they receive and appreciate learning how to interpret it.** Survey respondents find the reports to be helpful and easy to use, explaining how access to individual student responses makes the report more personalized. They expressed appreciation for training that taught them how to interpret their students' data and make it actionable for their needs.

*I believe that one of the most useful aspects of participating in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot is learning how to use the data to better understand my students and how to share it with parents. -Teacher*

**Individualized reports allow teachers to target instruction and monitor student growth.** Educators overwhelmingly noted that the data they receive is usable. They use data from the reports to inform their classroom instruction and target the standards with which their students struggle. Further, the data they receive provides them with opportunities to monitor individual- and classroom-level student progress.

*The Check-Ins 2.0 are much more informative for assessing student needs and growth. It will help us better target instruction. Being a part of the pilot program helps us to access these advantages earlier. -Teacher*

**Aligning NC Check-Ins 2.0 to the standards helps teachers and students target learning goals.** When teachers know the academic standards by which their students will be assessed, they have a clear roadmap for how to carry out their instruction during the school year.

Further, the results of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 allow teachers to hone in on which specific standards their students require additional support.

*It was useful to make decision[s] regarding students' learning process in terms of instruction and standard achievement. - Teacher*

**Educators view the NC Check-Ins 2.0 as a preview of the EOG.** Survey respondents explained that one of the major benefits of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 is exposure to EOG-like questions. They also indicated that the NC Check-Ins 2.0 provided their students with practice questions in a test-like environment. They liked that the NC Check-Ins 2.0 administration environment was more relaxed, which differs from their views on how the EOG gives their students anxiety.

*I like that my students are getting exposure to state-test style questions beyond the same released questions that we have access to each year. This allows for us to have discussions on question types they may see on the EO[G]. -Teacher*

**\* New \* Educators appreciate the insight gained through participating in NC Checks-Ins 2.0.** Survey respondents explained that being part of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 gives them insight into the new type of assessment. They explained that it helps them understand the overall purpose and testing procedures of the NC Check-Ins 2.0. They also have a better understanding of how students might be assessed and evaluated as they transition to this new type of assessment.

*[The most useful aspect is] understanding 'what is coming' in terms of full transition to this type of assessment [NC Check-Ins 2.0]. - Administrator*

### **What are 1-2 ways the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot could be improved?**

**\*New\*** Educators shared additional feedback focused on training improvements. This included many asking for video and audio to be included to make the training more interactive. Survey participants also mentioned implementing more hands-on learning such as allowing them to use personalized data relevant to their school during training. Others shared that they would need additional training prior to administering their first assessments, and some wanted more sample assessment questions to review with their students.

*More time to train and become familiar, perhaps the ability to run a short simulation of administering the test to imaginary students. -Teacher*

*Providing more samples of TE [technology-enhanced] questions. There are hardly any and then we expect students to just take a test on TE questions. -Administrator*

**Educators wanted better alignment between the NC Check-Ins 2.0 and classroom pacing.** Teachers shared that they did not feel the NC Check-Ins 2.0 adequately covered the materials

they were teaching in their classrooms. A small number of educators shared that the NC Check-Ins 2.0 questions were either too hard or covered too many standards at once, making it a frustrating and anxiety-inducing experience for their students.

*It would be nice if the passages were more on grade level text so the students don't have a heavy amount of new words they don't know. It would also be nice if the questions, especially for ELA, focused on 1-2 standards at a time, not up to three. There is at least one question that was worded in a way that made it difficult to understand and it was testing three different standards in one. It took my colleague and I a few tries to understand what it was asking. It is going to be extremely difficult to explain it to our students, especially since we don't have any resources from the state that have questions at this level for us to practice. - Teacher*

*In math, the Check-ins do not take into account that math teachers may be teaching units in a different order in order to build upon the previous unit. -Teacher*

Educators supplied a variety of answers for ways to improve the NC Check-Ins 2.0. As answers varied widely, three themes, in particular, were worth noting for DPI to consider as it moves forward with the process.

- **Educators may not be receiving all of the relevant information from DPI.** Although it was a small number of survey respondents, there were some who appeared unaware that they could administer the NC Check-Ins 2.0 in any order, particularly in Mathematics. Some educators were also unsure if there were sample questions.

*One way that the Check-In experience could be improved is to supply educators with sample questions, or types of questions, that students will experience on the Check-In so we can be best prepared to teach and engage all students. -Teacher*

- **Survey respondents emphasized the importance of keeping students' experience at the forefront.** They noted that when they were assessed on standards they had not yet taught in their classrooms, students felt discouraged and anxious.

*Please allow adequate time for instruction before giving the interims, especially the first one. It is impossible to get all of that in with truly teaching and make the data more relevant as well as not discourage students. -Teacher*

- **Clear communication is essential.** This theme included receiving information about the NC Check-Ins 2.0 process earlier as well as ensuring that communication to stakeholders related to the NC Check-Ins 2.0 process was simple and understandable. For example, educators advocated for clear explanations of the assessment scales on the individual student reports so that parents could easily understand their child's data.

*It could be improved by a written report accompanying the chart for the parents explaining the meaning of the chart if the parent cannot understand how to read the report. -Teacher*

- **\*New\*** Provide additional tools and resources for educators. Survey participants noted that providing teachers with additional resources to use in the classroom related to the NC Check-Ins 2.0 could positively impact overall teaching and student learning.

*Provide resources/passages/standard-based questions that teachers can use in the classroom to better prepare for the next test. - Teacher*

*It's missing EOG/EOC projections. Mastery View Predictive Assessment by Instructure ha[s] this feature and it has been very impactful for [the] district in terms of improving teaching and learning. - Coach*

- **\*New\*** Provide more time between assessments and time for data review. Having access to testing questions and data for longer periods of time would be beneficial for teachers. Additionally, starting assessments earlier in the year would allow more time in between assessments for student preparation.

*These questions could be made more readily available to teachers for longer than a short time. On a side note, it would be helpful if the state would update released test items more frequently than every 3-4 years. - Teacher*

*Have them all earlier in the year. (I have heard the second one comes right before finals). - Teacher*

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are from the FI team in response to the data which was gathered and presented above. Recommendations from teachers and parents are included in their respective sections.

### Training

- **Consider keeping the brief training as an option.** As teachers are already pressed for time, DPI may want to think about ways to keep future training modules short. If incorporating longer training is deemed necessary, DPI may consider encouraging districts to determine who might require a longer, in-depth training (e.g., new teachers, schools working to improve their use of data, etc.) and who might only need the 30-minute module.
- **Clarify the options for pacing NC Check-Ins 2.0 administration.** It may be beneficial for DPI to continue to emphasize that schools can determine the order of each Check-Ins 2.0 to fit the assessments into their instruction. Participants remain confused or unaware of the flexibility in administration.

### Technology-Enhanced Items

- **Provide more technology-enhanced practice questions.** Educators did not feel like they had enough resources for their students to confidently approach technology-enhanced items on the NC Check-Ins 2.0. Providing a larger bank of released questions can help teachers better prepare their students.
- **Explain the purpose of technology-enhanced items.** Educators remained unclear as to why the NC Check-Ins 2.0 incorporated technology-enhanced items (TEIs) when they did not feel it offered any different information from a typical multiple choice question. Communicating the reasoning behind including TEIs will be useful.
- **Show student answers on technology-enhanced items on the class item report.** For certain questions, educators can only see if their students answered the question correctly or incorrectly, but it does not show what the student's answer was. In these cases, it is difficult for teachers to pinpoint the student's misunderstandings.

### Administering Assessments and Conducting PLCs

- **Encourage continued collaboration.** The PLCs seemed to be useful for teachers in grade-level cohorts. For those educators in smaller schools without a grade level team, DPI may want to encourage school leadership to develop thought partnerships. For

example, core subject area teachers could be assigned partners who teach specials or other subjects.

- **Remind educators that this is not an EOG.** The messaging around the NC Check-Ins 2.0 may need to be clearer. While teachers understand that the purpose of NC Check-Ins 2.0 is formative assessment, tying it to the adaptive EOG provides them with mixed messages. Therefore, they are not always sure if they are allowed to use the questions to deconstruct wrong answers with their classes, and their students experience test anxiety during NC Check-Ins 2.0 administrations.
- **Keep students' experience at the forefront throughout NC Check-ins revisions and implementation.** Ensuring that students are not experiencing test anxiety and are fully understanding testing items throughout the implementation of this new kind of assessment will be important to accurately capture their academic progress and performance.

### **Communication with stakeholders**

- **Teachers.** Regular reminders that the NC Check-Ins 2.0 is a formative assessment will help keep this as a useful, low-stakes tool that can add value to their daily classroom instruction. Further, clearly communicating how the NC Check-Ins 2.0 is related to the adaptive EOG will alleviate concerns.
- **School leaders.** Similar to classroom teachers, reminding leaders that the NC Check-Ins 2.0 is a formative assessment will be important for ensuring that using the data is natural and not forced. Once again, similar to the classroom teachers, it would be beneficial if DPI clearly and regularly communicated how the NC Check-Ins 2.0 relates to the summative, adaptive EOG.
- **Parents.** Consideration should be given to the purpose of the report sent to parents. Based on the findings in this report, the PEER Group encourages DPI to reflect on whether parents need the report as a separate point of information. For the sake of transparency and treating parents as partners, the information should be available if parents want it. However, if the ISRs will be found in PowerSchool, where some said they found them, it would be helpful to have accompanying explanation tools, such as slides or a short video that reiterates the purpose of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 and what the information on the ISR means.

### **Revise the individual student report (ISR)**

- **Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the ISR.** Findings from the PLCs noted that not every educator was aware of the existence of the ISR. Likewise, findings from the

Individual Student Report Survey indicated that not every parent received communication about the ISR. It is possible that the lack of communication with educators regarding the ISR could have limited educators' communication with parents about the report.

- **Revise the performance scale to add clarity about students' overall performance and progress.** Overall, educators and parents agreed that the scale did not accurately capture student performance or inform parents about the issues their students were facing, with criticism specifically focused on the word *Approaching*. Stakeholders did not feel this term accurately captured student performance.
- **Provide additional contextual information to the reports.** Both educators and parents agreed that without additional context, such as the number or type of questions for each standard, parents are limited in their ability to support their students' progress.

## Conclusion

This report contains analysis of data gathered from surveys, interviews, and observations of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 for the 2022-2023 school year. As a whole, the information indicates that the short training module adequately prepared teachers and administrators for rapid implementation. The large majority of teachers, administrators, and coaches felt it was useful. The one area in which survey responses were lower (but still fairly high) was related to pacing. Challenges that arose during the administration of the assessments and use of results were addressed during iterative improvement, which has been a benefit of a long pilot period.

Adding schools to the innovative assessments program in waves could continue to facilitate (as opposed to adding all that are left at once) a smooth implementation of innovative assessments.

Finally, surveys, observations, and interviews indicate that data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 formative assessments are being used by teachers and their schools to target instruction to individual student and classroom needs. The strength of this program needs to be clearly communicated to parents, who will be key partners in their children's educational success.

## Appendix A

### 2022 - 23 NC Check-Ins 2.0 PLC Observation

<b>Public School Unit:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>School Name:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Date:</b>	Click or tap to enter a date.	
<b>Observer Name:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>PLC Observed:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4 Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5 Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 7 Mathematics <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 Reading <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 8 Mathematics
<b>Start Time:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>End Time:</b>	Click or tap here to enter text.	
<b>Follow up scheduling:</b>		

1. How many teachers were present? Click or tap here to enter text.
2. Describe what artifacts, resources, reports, or other PLC notes materials were used. (e.g., ISRs, Class reports, team notes documents, etc.). Click or tap here to enter text.
3. How many students completed the NC Check-In 2.0 before ninety minutes? Click or tap here to enter text.
4. Did any technology disruptions occur (e.g., unable to access a report)?  Yes  No  
If yes, explain the disruption(s) and how it was handled. Click or tap here to enter text.
5. Record scripted notes here. Periodically note the time. Click or tap here to enter text.

Salient features and notable aspects will be noted—  
Spring memo focused on potential themes:

- Collaborative culture, team processes
- Focus on learning and teaching
- Instructional strategies and interventions
- Support and resource allocation
- Overall impact

**Questions for reflection:**

- What did the teachers notice in the data?
- What successes do the teachers share with each other?
- What challenges do they identify with either the process, the check-in itself, or helping students address the content needing attention?
- In what ways are the reports impacting the teachers' practice and student success?
- In what ways do the teachers offer each other and students support, and in what ways do they allocate resources to offer targeting instruction?

## Appendix B

### NC Check-Ins 2.0 Reports Focus Groups with Pilot Schools Protocol - Spring 2023

#### Script Read to Teachers by Friday Institute

Hello, my name is [XXX], and I work for the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation at NC State University. Thank you for taking time out of your schedule to be here today. We value your feedback, and we plan to use only 45 minutes of your time. If you need to leave early, we understand as well.

We have been asked by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction to help collect information about how data in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 class item report is used by PLCs in their work.

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You don't have to answer any questions you feel uncomfortable with, and please feel free to ask clarifying questions at any time.

I'd also like to ask if you would be okay with me recording our conversation? Only members of the research team will have access to the recordings. When reporting to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, we will remove all names and potentially identifiable information. These recordings help us have a complete record of the interview, so we don't miss anything you say. Is that okay with you?

### Focus Group Questions

#### Data Use

1. What do you think was most notable, or most successful, about the PLC session that we were able to spend with you?
  - a. Why do you think this?
  - b. How did you use the data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 to inform this discussion?
2. In what ways have you and your colleagues been able to offer each other support as a result of using the NC Check-Ins 2.0 data?
  - a. What does this look like? (if they ask for examples, it could be in instructional strategies or interventions, support and resource allocation)
  - b. How often do you use NC Check-Ins 2.0 data to drive your conversations with one another? (either inside or out of the PLC meeting?)
3. What challenges do you find with **using data** from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 to address students' needs? Why are these barriers to your work?
  - a. What might you need to help you (or your colleagues or students) overcome these barriers?

## Impact

4. In what ways do you think the use of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 data impacts your classroom practice?
  - a. How does the class item report inform your classroom practice?
  - b. Does the individual student report help guide your conversations with parents about areas of strength and opportunities for growth for their student? How so?
5. In what ways do you think the use of the NC Check-Ins 2.0 data impacts your students' success?

## Support/Needs

6. How could school leadership, whether administrator or instructional coach, better support your understanding and use of data for targeting students' academic needs during PLC?
7. What, if any, data do you wish you had on the reports (class item report and individual student report) that are not currently available to you?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to share that we haven't asked you about?

## Paper Manipulative Kits

1. Did you have a student take the NCCI 2.0 on paper?
2. If so, why was the student not able to access the online test?
3. Is this student able to access online content during classwork instruction? If not, what accommodations are provided to help them access online class materials. Why did you select the manipulative form you chose for the student (repositionable note or Velcro for paper, magnet or Velcro for braille)?
4. Was the manipulative kit appropriate for your student?
5. Were there any issues with the paper kits?
6. Were there any issues transferring student responses into the online system?
7. Are any additional directions needed for the process to function?
8. Did the practice kit adequately prepare your student to interact with the manipulatives?
9. Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

## Appendix C

### Individual Student Report (ISR) Parent Survey

Fall 2022

Go Link: <https://go.ncsu.edu/isr>



#### Introduction

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, we thank you in advance for your participation in this survey. Your feedback is extremely valuable and will be used to inform the development of the individual student reports provided by NCDPI.

This survey will take approximately 3-5 minutes to complete.

Your individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be provided to any other person or group. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this survey at any time by closing your browser window.

#### Demographics

In which grade is your child(ren)? (*list K-8?*)

Did you use the English, or Spanish version of the report? (dropdown)

#### Individual Student Report

The individual student report I received about the NC Check-Ins 2.0...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
contains clear directions on how to interpret my child's progress.	◦	◦	◦	◦
provides a clear explanation of how my child is performing.	◦	◦	◦	◦
is easy for me to understand.	◦	◦	◦	◦
Clearly explains the meaning of performance levels included on the report (i.e., approaching to satisfactory)	◦	◦	◦	◦

*Follow up:* Please provide any suggestions or recommendations that might improve how student performance levels are shared with parents/caregivers.

[ ]

### Open-Ended General ISR Feedback

In what way(s) has your child's teacher communicated with you about the report's content, either before sending it, or at the time you received the report?

[ ]

What did you like best about the new individual student report?

[ ]

What other recommendations, if any, do you have for improving the individual student report as a whole (e.g., information provided, how information is presented, etc.)?

[ ]

## Appendix D

### NC Check-Ins 2.0 End-of-Training Survey

#### Introduction

On behalf of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) and the Friday Institute for Educational Innovation, we thank you in advance for your participation in this survey. Your feedback is extremely valuable and will be used to inform future professional development opportunities related to the North Carolina Personalized Assessment Tool (NCPAT).

This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Your individual responses will be kept strictly confidential and will not be provided to any other person or group. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may withdraw from this survey at any time by closing your browser window.

#### Demographics

Please select your district (*dropdown*)

Please select your school (*dropdown*)

Which of the following best describes your role in your school or district?

- Teacher
- Coach
- Administrator

#### Professional Development

Were you required to complete this training by your school and/or district?

- Yes
- No

[If no] Why did you decide to complete this training?

[ ]

As a result of my completion of this training, I have a better understanding of...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
How assessment data from the NC Check-Ins 2.0 might be used to inform instruction.	○	○	○	○	○
How to interpret the results in the Class Item Reports.	○	○	○	○	○
How to use the Individual Student Reports to communicate with parents to interpret student performance data.	○	○	○	○	○

This training ...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
was relevant to my professional development needs.	○	○	○	○	○
met my immediate needs for using NC Check-Ins 2.0.					
provided examples of effective practice I can apply in my professional setting.	○	○	○	○	○
will likely contribute to positive changes in my professional practice.	○	○	○	○	○
will likely contribute to positive changes in student learning.	○	○	○	○	○

What was the most valuable aspect of this in supporting your personal or professional learning goals?

[ ]

What recommendations do you have for improving this professional development?

[ ]

## Feedback on Innovative Assessments

*[If responding as a teacher]*

As a result of my school's participation in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot program ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am better able to evaluate my students' learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to target instruction to my students' needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a better understanding of the state's instructional standards.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am better able to stay on pace with learning targets throughout the year.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My students will be better prepared for the end-of-grade tests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*[If responding as an administrator/coach]*

As a result of my school's participation in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot program ...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree or Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am better able to support teachers in their instruction of students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a more global understanding of how the students at my school are performing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am better prepared to coach my teachers to stay on pace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students at my school will be better prepared for the end-of-grade tests.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What have been the 1-2 most useful aspects of participating in the NC Check-Ins 2.0 (Innovative Assessments) pilot?

[     ]

What are 1-2 ways the NC Check-Ins 2.0 pilot could be improved?

[     ]



College of Education  
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