



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

Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Statewide Administration of the Testing
Program

SL 2019-165 (SB 343), 115C-174.12
Section 2.1 (d) (e)

Date Due: December 15, 2020
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2020–2021

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Introduction

General Statute §115C-174.12 (d) requires “by October 1 of each year, each local board of education shall notify the State Board of Education (SBE) of any local standardized testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit at the direction of the local board of education in its schools and the calendar for administering those tests. The local board of education shall include the following information:

- (1) the source of funds supporting the local testing program;
- (2) the time allotted to administer each test;
- (3) whether the test is a computer-based test or a paper-based test;
- (4) the grade level or subject area associated with the test;
- (5) the date the test results are expected to be available to teachers and parents;
- (6) the type of test, the purpose of the test, and the use of the test results; and
- (7) estimates of average time for administering tests required by the local board of education by grade level.”

Section (d1) states “in each even-numbered year, each local board of education shall review all local standardized testing administered to students by the local school administrative unit at the direction of the local board of education for the prior two school years, in order to determine the number of tests administered to students and the number of hours required for students to complete the tests. If the average over the prior two-year period of either (i) the number of tests administered or (ii) the number of hours required for students to complete the tests exceeds the State average over the prior two-year period, as published pursuant to subsection (e1) of this section, the local board of education shall submit to the Department of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education, by October 1 of the even-numbered year, a plan to eliminate certain local standardized testing in order to ensure that neither the number of tests nor the number of hours required for students to complete the tests exceeds the State average. The State Board of Education shall waive the requirement that a local board develop and submit a plan if the State Board finds that the local board has made significant progress toward reducing local testing to the State average.”

Section (e) of the same legislation requires the SBE to “submit a report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee containing information regarding the statewide administration of the testing program, including the number and type of tests and the testing schedule, and a summary of any local testing programs reported by local boards of education to the SBE in accordance with subsection (d).”

Section (e1) of this legislation requires “by September 1 of each year, the Superintendent of Public Instruction shall publish on the Web site of the Department of Public Instruction a uniform calendar that includes schedules for state-required testing and reporting results of tests for at least the next two school years, including estimates of the average time for administering state-required standardized tests. The uniform calendar shall be provided to local boards of education in an electronic format that allows each local board of education to populate the calendar with, at a minimum, the information required by subsection (d) of this legislation. The uniform calendar must be searchable by local school administrative unit and denote whether a test on the calendar is required by the state or required by a local board of education.”

This report addresses the above legislative directives with respect to the 2020–21 school year. The report has three sections: the first section provides the information regarding the Annual Testing Program, the second section provides information gathered from local boards of education regarding local testing programs, and the third section provides a summary of the two-year averages (2018–19 and 2019–20) for the total local tests administered and the total amount of local testing time.

Section 1: Annual Testing Program

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s (NCDPI) Accountability Services Division (<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability>) ensures that North Carolina’s Annual Testing Program meets the requirements of all applicable state and federal laws. These laws are designed to promote student academic achievement and to assist stakeholders in understanding and gauging this achievement against standards. To these ends, the NCDPI Accountability Services Division endeavors to accomplish the following three main objectives:

- (1) Design and develop reliable and valid testing instruments,
- (2) Uniformly implement and provide access to suitable assessment instruments for all students, and
- (3) Provide accurate and statistically appropriate reports.

To meet these objectives, the NCDPI supports and administers an array of statewide standardized tests ranging in purpose from placement to summative measurement of academic achievement and ranging in grade from kindergarten to grade twelve. The NCDPI ensures that all tests are accessible to every North Carolina student, including students with disabilities. Per G.S. §115C-174.12(a)(4), “all annual summative assessments of student achievement adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) and all final exams for courses are administered within the final ten (10) instructional days of the school year for year-long courses and within the final five (5) instructional days of the semester for semester courses.” The Beginning of Grade 3 Reading Test is administered by the 20th day of face-to-face instruction. The W-APT and the WIDA Screener are placement tests administered to newly arrived English Learners within the first forty-five (45) days of enrollment in a school. The career-and-college readiness testing, which includes Pre-ACT, ACT, and ACT WorkKeys, occurs during predetermined windows in the fall and spring semesters.

Funding sources for the North Carolina Testing Program are the North Carolina Public School Fund (approximately seventy-five percent) and a State Assessment Grant from the federal government (approximately twenty-five percent). A separate allocation from the General Assembly funds the ACT suite.

In response to Section (e1) of this legislation, on September 1, 2020, the Superintendent of Public Instruction published on the NCDPI website a uniform calendar that includes the administration dates and times for all state-required testing and reporting results of tests for the next two school years. On August 17, 2020, a uniform calendar (survey) was provided to local boards of education in an electronic format which allowed each local board of education to populate the calendar with, at minimum, the information required by subsection (d) of the legislation. The uniform state and local calendars are published on the NCDPI’s website at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/local-testing>. These

calendars are searchable by LEA and denote whether a test on the calendar is required by the state or required by the local board of education.

In addition, the NCDPI annually publishes the North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar. The operational calendar for 2020–21 is located at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability> and is as follows:

**North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar
2020–21 School Year–Summer**

Assessment	Grades Tested	Frequency of Administration	Administration Time in Minutes	Testing Window
W–APT ¹	Kindergarten and First Semester Grade 1	Once upon initial enrollment	60–70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
WIDA™ Screener ¹	Second Semester Grade 1 through Grade 12	Once upon initial enrollment	70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
End-of-Course Tests	The grade in which the course is taken	Once at the completion of the course	Biology–120 English II–150 NC Math 1–180 NC Math 3–180	Final 5 instructional days of the summer school course
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments ²	For EOC tests only	One Day	Biology–120 English II–150 NC Math 1–180 NC Math 3–180	July 20–31, 2020
Read to Achieve Test ³	Grade 3	One Day	120	Locally determined date at the conclusion of reading camp

¹ To be identified as English Learners (ELs), students indicating a language other than English on the Home Language Survey (HLS) must be assessed using the state EL identification test at initial enrollment. The W–APT™ is the state-identified EL proficiency identification assessment given to students in kindergarten and in first semester of grade 1. The WIDA Screener is the state-identified EL proficiency identification assessment given to students in second semester grade 1 through grade 12. All students identified as ELs must be annually assessed using the state EL proficiency test.

² Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) is the process by which public school units shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

³ Students who have not demonstrated reading proficiency at or above the third-grade level by the end of the third-grade year are provided an opportunity to take the Read to Achieve Test at the end of reading camp on a day designated by the LEA.

Summer Administrations of End-of-Grade and End-of-Course Tests for Accountability

Public school units may administer end-of-grade (EOG) and end-of-course (EOC) tests during summer programs that have been approved by their local board and occur after the regular academic year is completed. Summer program scores submitted by July 6 are included in accountability for achievement, but not for growth.

**North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar
2019–20 School Year–Makeup Testing¹**

Students who were scheduled to take the spring 2020 administration of the ACT, the College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment, or the NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment will be provided with makeup dates in fall 2020 as outlined in the chart below. These students were unable to test in Spring 2020 due to school closures.

Assessment	Grades Tested	Frequency of Administration	Administration Time in Minutes	Testing Window
ACT® (Standard Administration)	Current 12 th grade students	One Day	175	<u>Paper Testing only, with Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 22, 2020 • October 6, 2020 • October 20, 2020
				<u>Paper Testing, without Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial: February 23, 2021 • Makeup: March 9, 2021
				<u>Online Testing, without Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial: February 23–25, 2021 and March 2–4, 2021 • Makeup: March 9–11, 2021 and March 16–18, 2021
ACT® (Accommodations Testing Windows)	Current 12 th grade students	One Day	175 (varies by timing code)	<u>Paper Testing only, with Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 22, 2020–October 2, 2020 (weekdays) • October 6–12, 2020 (weekdays) • October 20–26, 2020 (weekdays)
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) ²	Current 12 th grade students	One Day	150	<u>Paper Testing, without Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial: February 23–26, 2021 and March 1–5, 2021 • Makeup: March 9–12, 2021 and March 15–19, 2021
NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment ³	Current 12 th grade students	One Day	Untimed (unique to each individual student)	<u>Online Testing, without Writing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial: February 23–25, 2021 and March 2–4, 2021 • Makeup: March 9–11, 2021 and March 16–18, 2021

¹ The tests included in this chart indicate rescheduled makeup testing from the Spring 2020 test administrations.

² The grade 11 College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment is an alternate assessment to the ACT.

³ The grade 11 NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment is the alternate assessment to the ACT.

**North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar
2020–21 School Year–Fall**

Assessment	Grades Tested	Frequency of Administration	Administration Time in Minutes	Testing Window
W–APT	Kindergarten and First Semester Grade 1	Once upon initial enrollment	60–70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
WIDA Screener	Second Semester Grade 1 through Grade 12	Once upon initial enrollment	70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
Beginning-of-Grade 3 Reading Test	Grade 3	One Day	90	By the 20 th day of face-to-face instruction.
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments	For EOC assessments only	One Day	Biology–120 English II–150 NC Math 1–180 NC Math 3–180	September 17– October 14, 2020
PreACT ^{®1}	Grade 10	One Day	130	October 12, 2020–May 14, 2021
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) ¹	Grade 10	One Day	150	October 12, 2020–May 14, 2021
ACT [®] WorkKeys	Concentrators (High School)	One Day	165	November 16–December 15, 2020
End-of-Course Tests	The grade in which the course is taken	Once at the completion of the course	Biology–120 English II–150 NC Math 1–180 NC Math 3–180	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses)
Read to Achieve Test ²	Grade 3	One Day	120	Locally determined date by November 1, 2020

¹ The PreACT and College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) will have an extended window that opens in the fall and closes in the spring. The grade 10 CCRAA is an alternate assessment to the PreACT.

² Schools may make the local decision to administer the Read to Achieve Assessment by November 1, 2020, to students retained in grade 3 for reading deficiency, including students retained in grade 3 who are placed in a 3/4 transitional class or accelerated class.

**North Carolina Testing Program Operational Calendar
2020–21 School Year–Spring**

Assessment	Grades Tested	Frequency of Administration	Administration Time in Minutes	Testing Window
W–APT	Kindergarten and First Semester Grade 1	Once upon initial enrollment	60–70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
WIDA Screener	Second Semester Grade 1 through Grade 12	Once upon initial enrollment	70	Initial assessment required within 45 days of initial enrollment
ACCESS for ELLs ^①	Kindergarten through Grade 12	Once annually	Varies by domain (4 domains)	January 25–March 5, 2021
Alternate ACCESS for ELLs ^②	Grades 1–12	Once annually	Varies by domain (4 domains)	January 25–March 5, 2021
Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) Phase 1 Assessments	For EOC assessments only	One Day	Varies by CDM assessment	February 15–March 5, 2021
ACT [®] (Paper-and-Pencil)	Grade 11	One Day	175	February 23, 2021 (initial) March 9, 2021 (makeup)
ACT [®] Accommodations Testing Window (Paper-and-Pencil)	Grade 11	One Day	175 (varies by timing code)	February 23–26, March 1–5, 2021 (initial) March 9–12 and March 15–19, 2021 (makeup)
ACT [®] –Online	Grade 11	One Day	175	February 23–25, March 2–4, 2021 (initial) March 9–11, and March 16–18, 2021 (makeup)
College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment ^③	Grade 11	One Day	150	February 23–26, March 1–5, 2021 (initial) March 9–12 and March 15–19, 2021 (makeup)
NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment ^④	Grade 11	One Day	Untimed (unique to each individual student)	February 23–26, March 1–5, 2021 (initial) March 9–12 and March 15–19, 2021 (makeup)
ACT [®] WorkKeys	CTE Concentrators (High School)	One Day	165	February 16–May 28, 2021
NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessments ^⑤	Grades 3–8, 10	One Day	Untimed (unique to each individual student)	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
End-of-Course Tests	The grade in which the course is taken	Once at the completion of the course	Biology–120 English II–150 NC Math 1–180 NC Math 3–180	Final 5 instructional days of the semester (4x4/semester courses); Final 10 instructional days of the school year (yearlong courses)
End-of-Grade Tests	Grades 3–8 Reading & Math; Grades 5 & 8 Science	Once at the completion of the school year	Reading–120 Math–120 Science–120	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
Read to Achieve Test ^⑥	Grade 3	One Day	TBD	Final 10 instructional days of the school year
End-of-Grade Retest ^⑥	Grade 3	One Day	120	Final 10 instructional days of the school year

^① The ACCESS for ELLs is the state-designated EL proficiency assessment administered annually to kindergarten through twelfth-grade students who have been identified as ELs assessing the following four domains: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

² The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is for students in grades 1–12 who are classified as ELs and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent their meaningful participation in the general ACCESS for ELLs assessment. The following four domains are assessed: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing.

³ The grade 10 College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment (CCRAA) is an alternate assessment to the PreACT. The grade 11 College and Career Readiness Alternate Assessment is an alternate assessment to the ACT.

⁴ The grade 11 NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessment is the alternate assessment to the ACT.

⁵ The NCEXTEND1 Alternate Assessments at grades 3–8 and 10 are the alternate assessments for the end-of-grade and end-of-course tests of reading, mathematics, and science.

⁶ Students in grade 3 who failed to demonstrate reading proficiency on the initial (first) administration of the EOG Reading test may take the Read to Achieve Test and/or the EOG Reading Retest as an option to satisfy the requirements of the Read to Achieve legislation.

2020–21 School Year–National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)¹

Assessment	Grades Tested	Frequency of Administration	Number of Schools Participating	Administration Time in Minutes	Testing Window
NAEP Reading and Mathematics Assessment	Grades 4 and 8	Yearly	84	120	January 25, 2021– March 19, 2021

¹ The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) selects a nationwide and statewide sample of schools and students for participation in NAEP 2021. Local education agencies (LEAs) and schools selected to participate were notified in September 2020.

The NCDPI Accountability Services Division also provides accurate and statistically appropriate reports for public use through the following websites:

- Accountability and Testing Results (<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/school-accountability-and-reporting>)
- NC School Report Cards (<https://www.dpi.nc.gov/data-reports/school-report-cards>)

Section 2: Local Testing Programs

Background

“General Statute §115C-174.12 (d) requires each local board of education to “notify the SBE of any local standardized testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit at the direction of the local board of education in its schools and the calendar for administering those tests.”

To standardize and make comparable the information submitted by local education agencies (LEAs) in response to the legislation, the NCDPI created a standard format and specific requirements for LEAs to use for their submissions. The NCDPI collected the LEA submissions from August 17, 2020, through October 1, 2020. In the instructions and supporting materials the NCDPI provided to LEAs, “local testing” was defined, for the purposes of this report, as follows:

- “Testing that is administered in schools within local school administrative units as initiated by the LEA and administered either LEA- or school-wide (including for all students of one grade in a district or school).”
- Testing that is initiated by classroom teachers was to be considered part of the teachers’ instructional practice and thus, not considered local testing for the purposes of this report.
- Testing that is required by the state (including testing that offers local discretion related to the particular “brand” or form used) was not considered local testing for the purposes of this report.

As directed by G.S. §115C-174.12(e), “a summary of any local testing programs reported by local boards of education to the State Board of Education in accordance with [the legislation]” is provided in this report.

Student Teams Achieving Results (STAR) Research Study

In 2017, a team of University of North Carolina (UNC) Master of Business Administration (MBA) and undergraduate students participating in the Student Teams Achieving Results (STAR) program, conducted a study at the request of the State Superintendent on testing burden and district-reported tests. The team evaluated the survey used by the NCDPI to collect local test information and analyzed the resulting data. Team members made recommendations for ways to improve the survey, used interactive tools to provide visualizations of the data to inform stakeholders and the public, and noted areas of potential inefficiencies or duplication. Their work led to more accurate data collection and an interactive report available on the NCDPI website at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/testing-and-school-accountability/local-testing>. The interactive report is intended to allow viewers to create customized views based on their areas of interest, whether they are interested in state-level or district-level information, for all grades or for specific grade levels. Both an instructional guide and a video that explains how to use the tool is provided.

Summary of Information Submitted by Local Boards of Education

All 115 LEAs reported the “local testing” that is initiated by the LEA and administered either LEA- or school-wide. The extent of local testing appears to vary widely across the LEAs, ranging from zero to 18 tests. Only two LEAs¹ do not administer district-mandated tests. Unless otherwise noted in this report, a total of 761 local tests were reported statewide.

The NCDPI used the data to describe the following aspects of local testing (as required by the legislation):

- “local testing to be administered to students by the local school administrative unit at the direction of the local board of education in its schools,
- the calendar for administering those tests,
- the source of funds supporting the local testing program,
- the time allotted to administer each test,
- whether the test is a computer-based test or a paper-based test,
- the grade level or subject area associated with the test,
- the date the test results are expected to be available to teachers and parents,
- the type of test, the purpose of the test, and the use of the test results, and
- estimates of average time for administering tests required by the local board of education by grade level.”

Local Testing: Type of Test, Test Subject, and Grade Level

Across the 113 LEAs, the focus of local testing programs appears to be benchmark or interim and formative assessments. Of the 761 local tests reported, over 350 fall into these two

¹ Craven County and Whiteville City
NCDPI/ODSI/AS/LM/November 4, 2020

categories. “Benchmark” and “interim” are two terms used typically, and often interchangeably, by district and school personnel to describe tests that are administered throughout the school year, but not at the end of the school year. These tests, designed to measure a point in time of a student’s progress toward mastery of content, may or may not be directly aligned with the state end-of-grade (EOG) or end-of-course (EOC) summative assessments. Since some local districts use the term “interim” for this type of test, while others use the term “benchmark,” the local testing data collection offered LEAs either term as an option for describing local testing. As seen in Figure 1, the terms are combined for purposes of understanding the type of local testing being conducted in North Carolina.

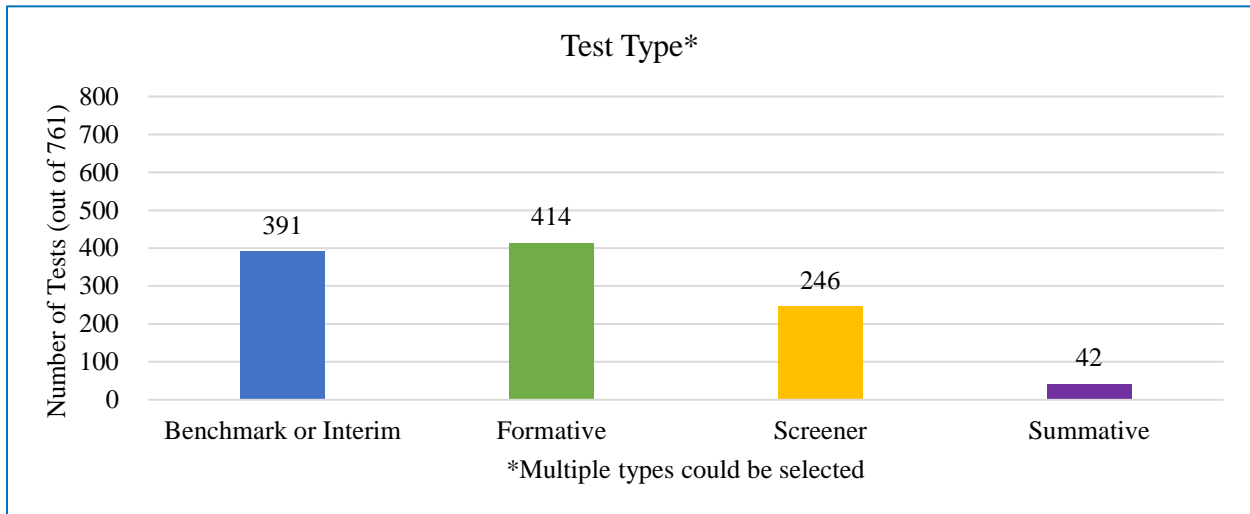


Figure 1. Type of tests administered locally.

The focus of local testing appears to be on the core subject areas of reading and mathematics (see Figure 2). These subjects are the focus of the statewide EOG and EOC tests used for state and federal school accountability purposes.

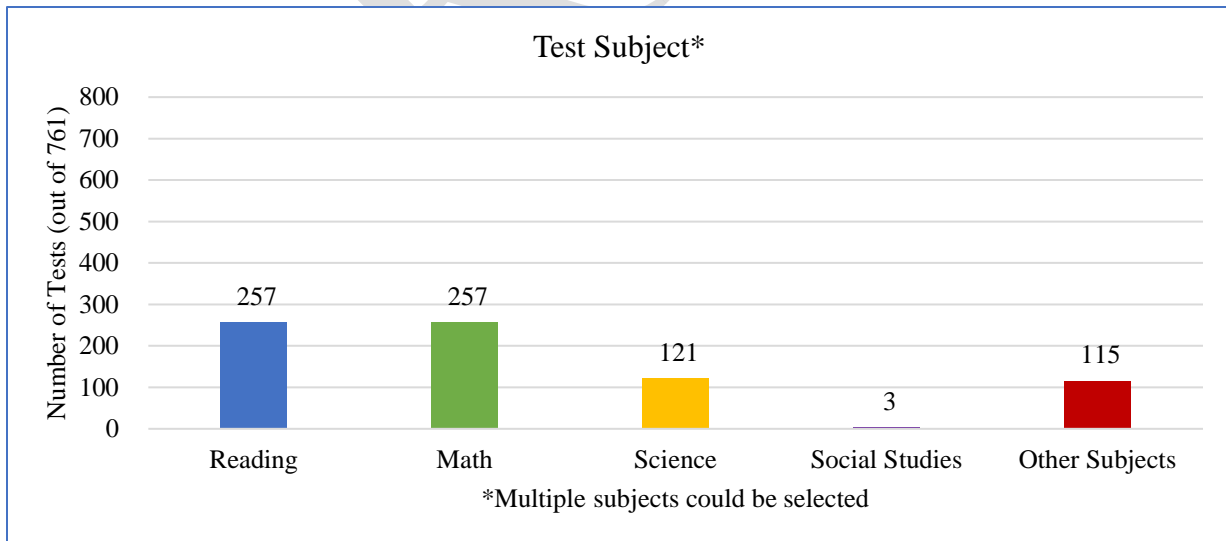


Figure 2. Subject areas tested locally.

As seen in Table 1 and Figure 3, more local testing occurs in grades 3, 4, 5, and 8. Overall, students in grades 3 through 8 are tested more than students in elementary grades K–2 and high school grades 9–13.

Table 1. *Grades Tested**

Grade Level	Frequency	Percent of 761 Tests Given
Kindergarten (K)	141	18.5
Grade 1	171	22.5
Grade 2	187	24.6
Grade 3	429	56.4
Grade 4	425	55.9
Grade 5	522	68.6
Grade 6	378	49.7
Grade 7	372	48.9
Grade 8	483	63.5
Grade 9	149	19.6
Grade 10	95	12.5
Grade 11	85	11.2
Grade 12	50	6.6
Grade 13	2	0.3

*Districts could select more than one option for the grades tested. Percentages in this case will sum to over 100, and the N will sum to over 761.

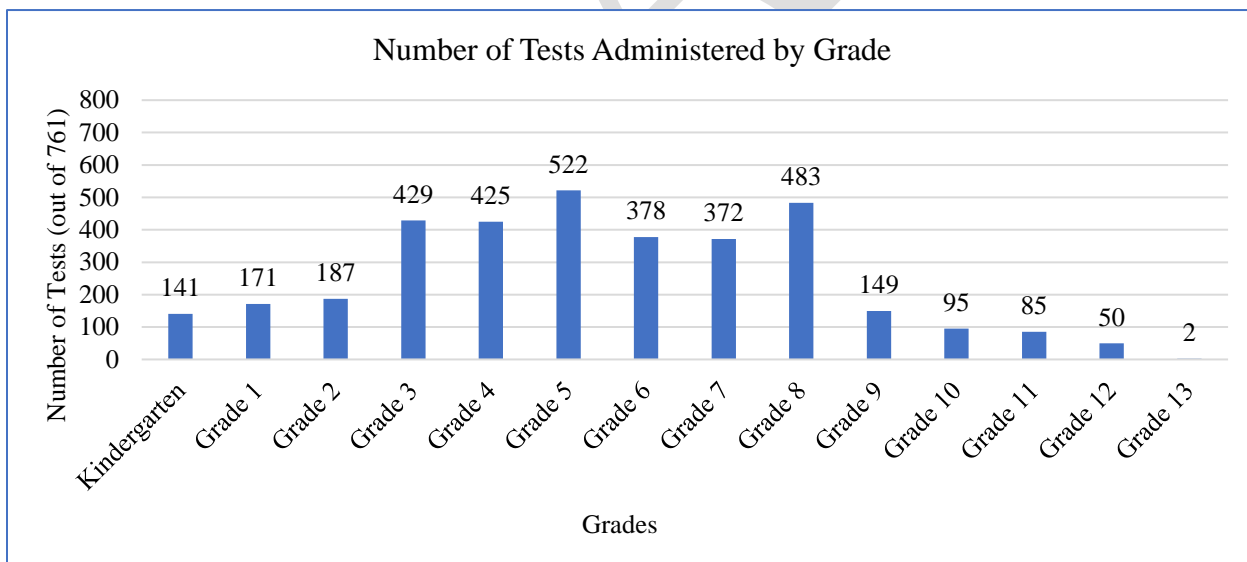


Figure 3. Number of tests administered by grade.

Delivery Mode

Over fifty percent of the 113 LEAs reported that local testing was administered online rather than paper-and-pencil (see Figure 4). Effective with the 2017–18 school year, the Annual Testing Program began providing all state tests in both online and paper-and-pencil format. Many of the state-administered tests are required online administrations (i.e., all EOC tests [English II, NC Math 1, NC Math 3, Biology]; EOG Science tests; EOG Mathematics tests [grades 5 and 8];

WIDA Screener; ACCESS for ELLs; and NCEXTEND1 Reading, Mathematics, and Science [Grades 3–8 and 10]). The NCDPI encourages districts and schools to continue to move toward online tests as much as their local technical infrastructure will allow.

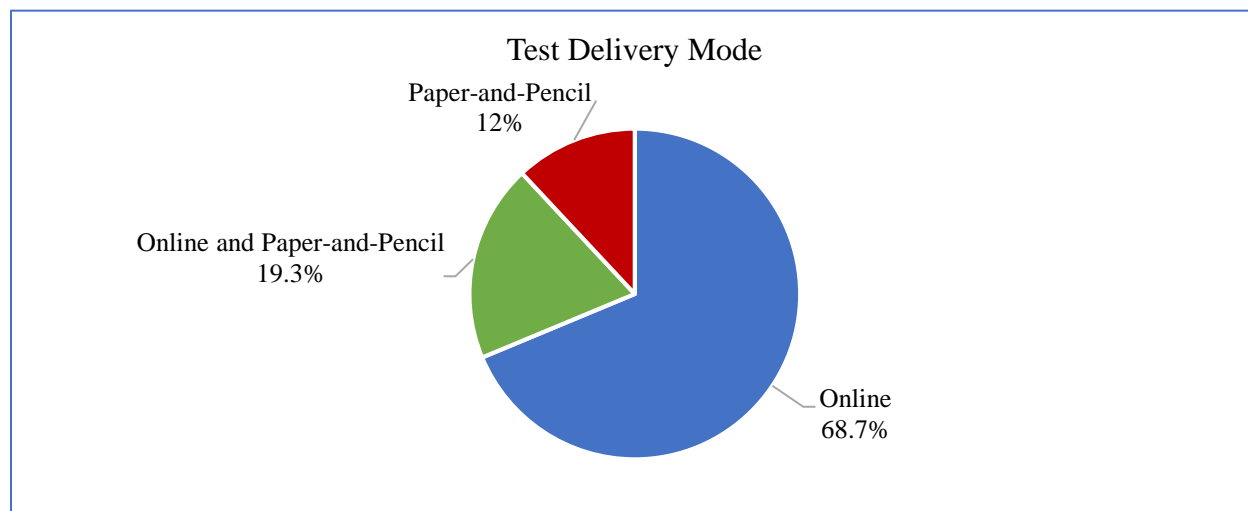


Figure 4. Test delivery mode.

Calendar for Administering Local Testing

To administer local tests, LEAs establish testing windows during which each test is to be given either LEA-wide, sometimes staggered to occur at different times at particular schools, or for particular grades. These testing windows typically have a start date—the initial date on which students may be tested somewhere, if not everywhere, in the LEA—and then schools have discretion regarding when they schedule school- or grade-wide testing. Some of the testing may even be scheduled on a given day for students in small groups or for individuals, depending upon a school’s resources and/or the accommodations required by individual students. A testing window may therefore be many days long, so that all students in the target population can be tested, but that does not imply that each individual student undergoes testing more than once in the window or for an extended period of time. For example, during a scheduled LEA testing window of 15 days for a particular benchmark or interim, each student may undergo less than one full school day of testing. That said, a summary of testing windows does provide insight into how much time LEAs are building into their academic calendars to administer local testing programs.

Statewide, in every month of the school year, at least one local testing window is scheduled to begin. The most common months during which local testing windows begin are January and April. (see Figure 5).

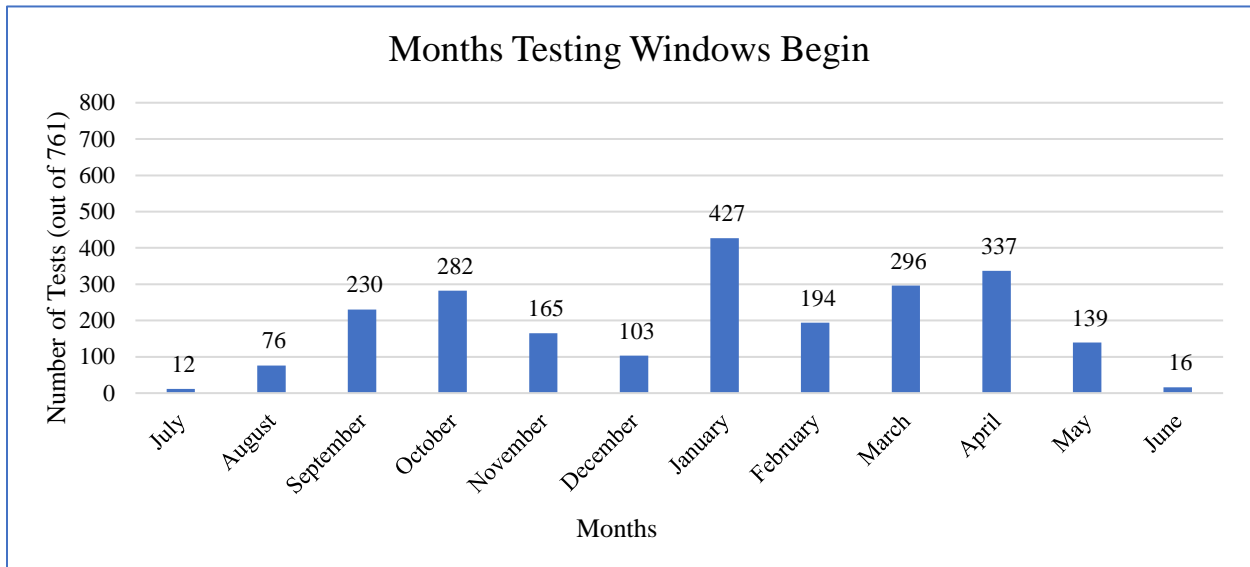


Figure 5. The months local testing windows begin.

Figure 6 is a picture of one of the interactive calendar maps that are available under the *Total Time Allotted For All Tests By Grade and Month* tab of the [Interactive Local Testing Report](#), found on the Accountability Services website. This calendar map shows the total number of minutes allotted for all tests by grade and month. The purpose of this calendar map is to show the months where students take tests for the longest amounts of time. Two additional interactive calendar maps show (1) the average number of minutes allotted for local tests by grade and month and (2) the total number of local tests given in the state each month by grade.

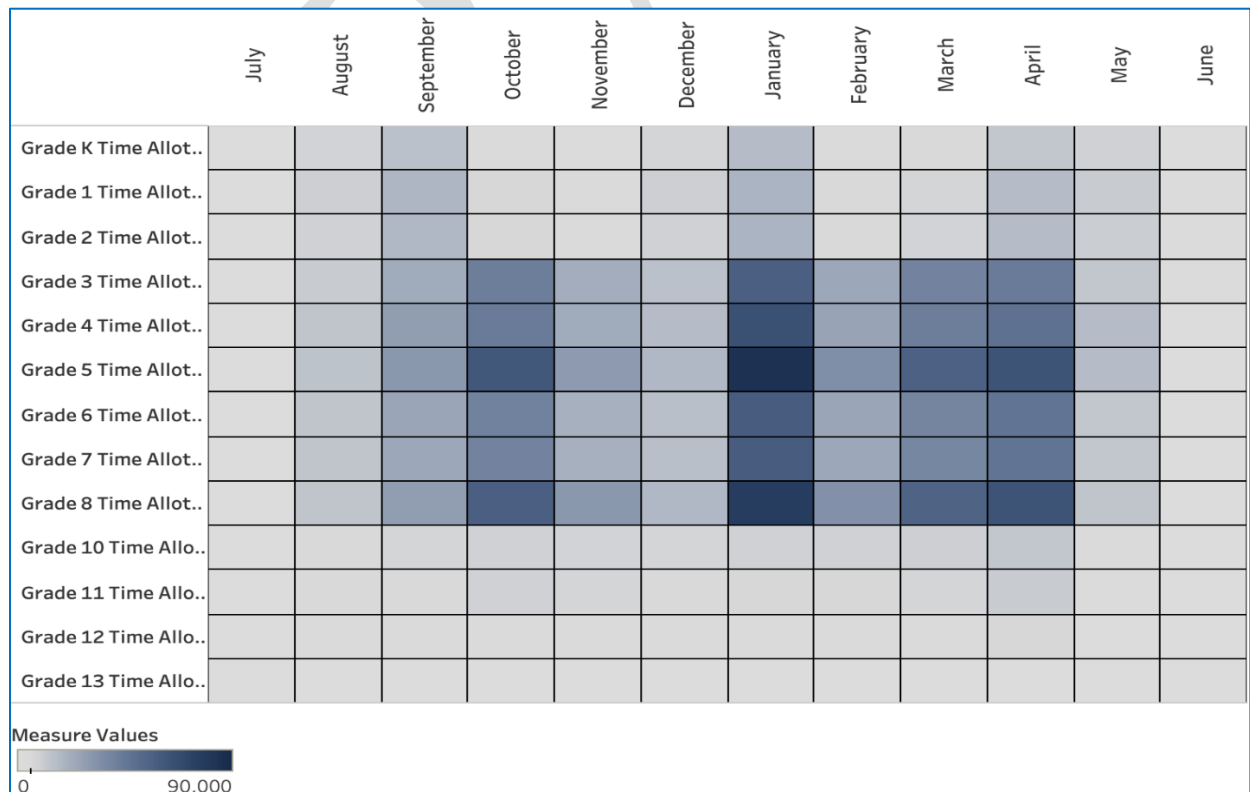


Figure 6. Total Minutes for All Tests by Grade and Month.

As shown in Figure 7, the length of scheduled testing windows appears to vary between one day and more than fifteen days, with a five day testing window most commonly reported.

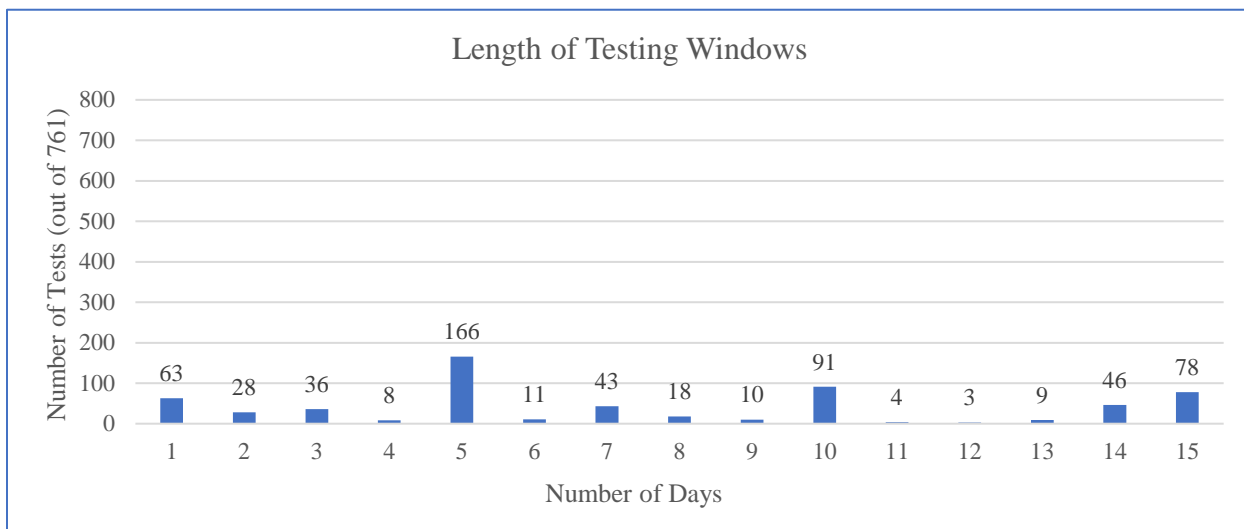


Figure 7. The length of testing windows in days.

Time Allotted for Standard Administration

The time LEAs allot for standard administrations of local tests varies from 30 minutes or less to more than five hours (see Figure 8). Across the 113 LEAs, nearly forty-five percent (45%) of the tests administered require 61 to 90 minutes for the standard administration.

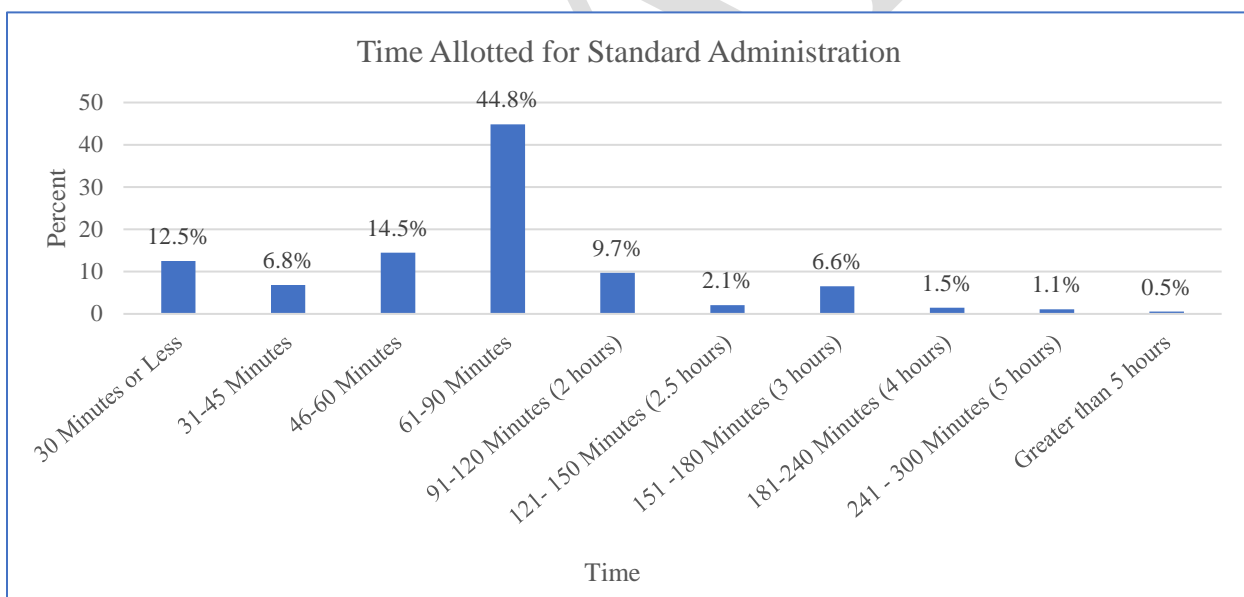


Figure 8. LEAs' estimated time for standard administration of local tests.

The map in Figure 9 shows the time allotted per year for local tests administered by LEA at grade 3. Interactive maps for grades kindergarten (K) through grade 13 are located in the [Interactive Local Testing Report](#), found on the Division of Accountability Services website, under the *Grades K–13: Time Allotted for Testing* tabs. The interactive, grade level maps include the average frequency (the number of times the test is administered per year), the average time allotted per test, the average time allotted in minutes, and the average time allotted in hours by district.

Grade 3: Hours Allotted For Testing

The following map shows the time allotted for local tests administered by district.

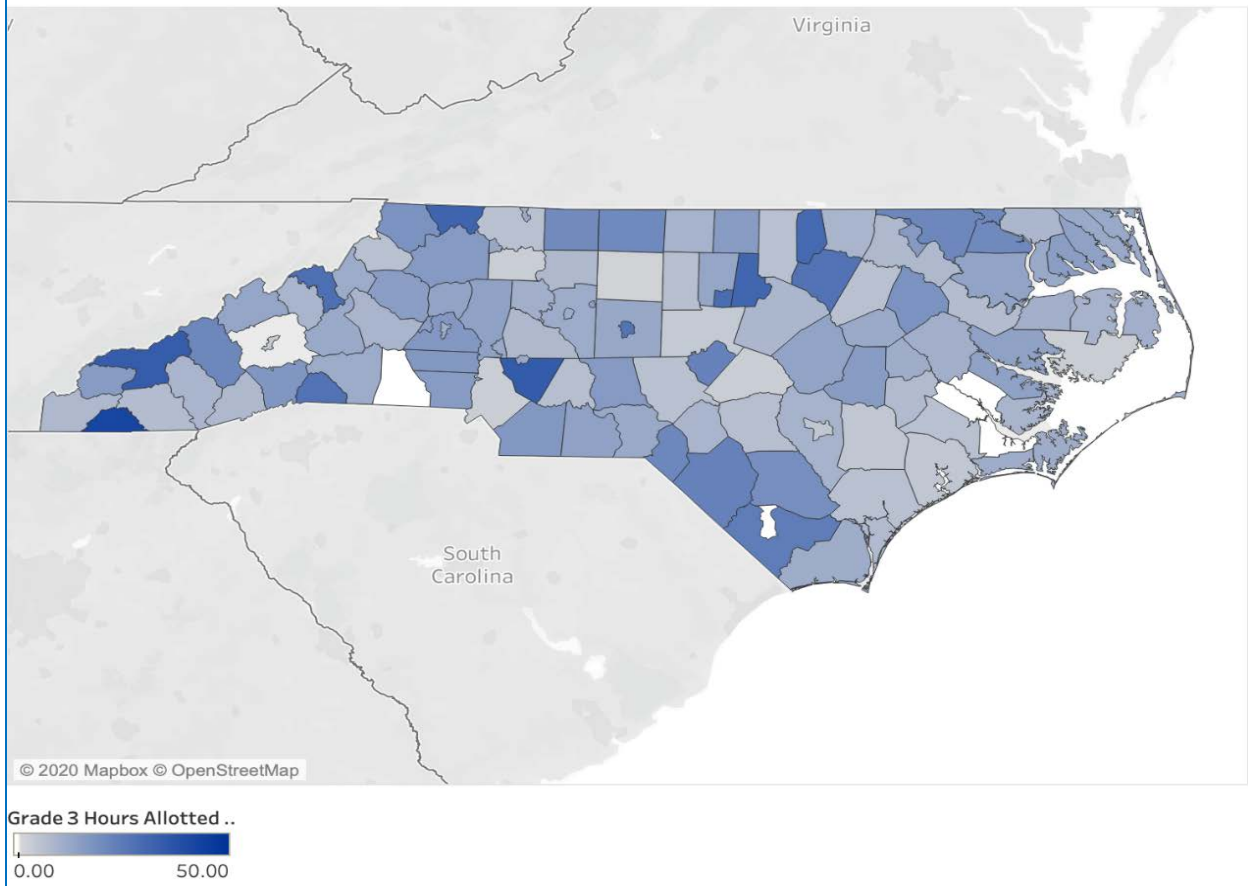


Figure 9. Hours Allotted for Testing in Grade 3 by District.

Test Format and Availability of Results

Regardless of the format of delivery (i.e., online or paper-and-pencil), tests that contain multiple-choice test items only allow LEAs to get test results within the same day of the test administration. Tests that contain performance items, such as constructed response or short answer items, take longer to score. The scoring process for performance items usually begins the morning after the test record is received by the vendor or scorer. The results are returned to the LEA within approximately five to seven business days. A summary of the data in Figures 10 and 11, shows that most of the local tests contain multiple-choice items only (83.8%), and that most of the teachers (67.5%) receive results from these tests on the same day that the test is administered, or within one day of the administration.

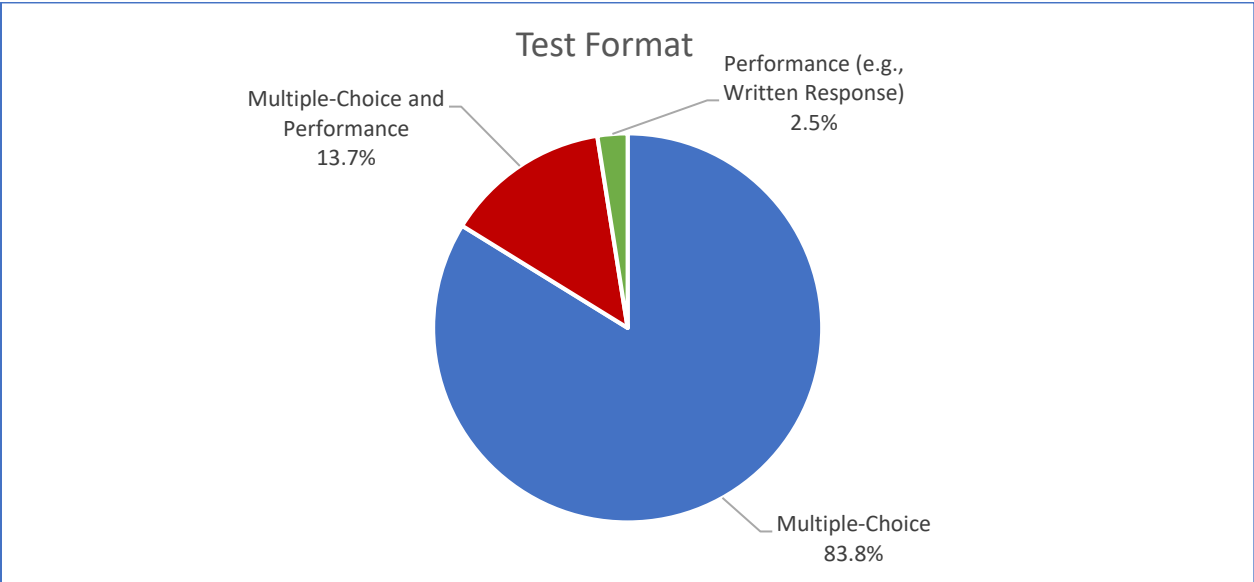


Figure 10. Test format.

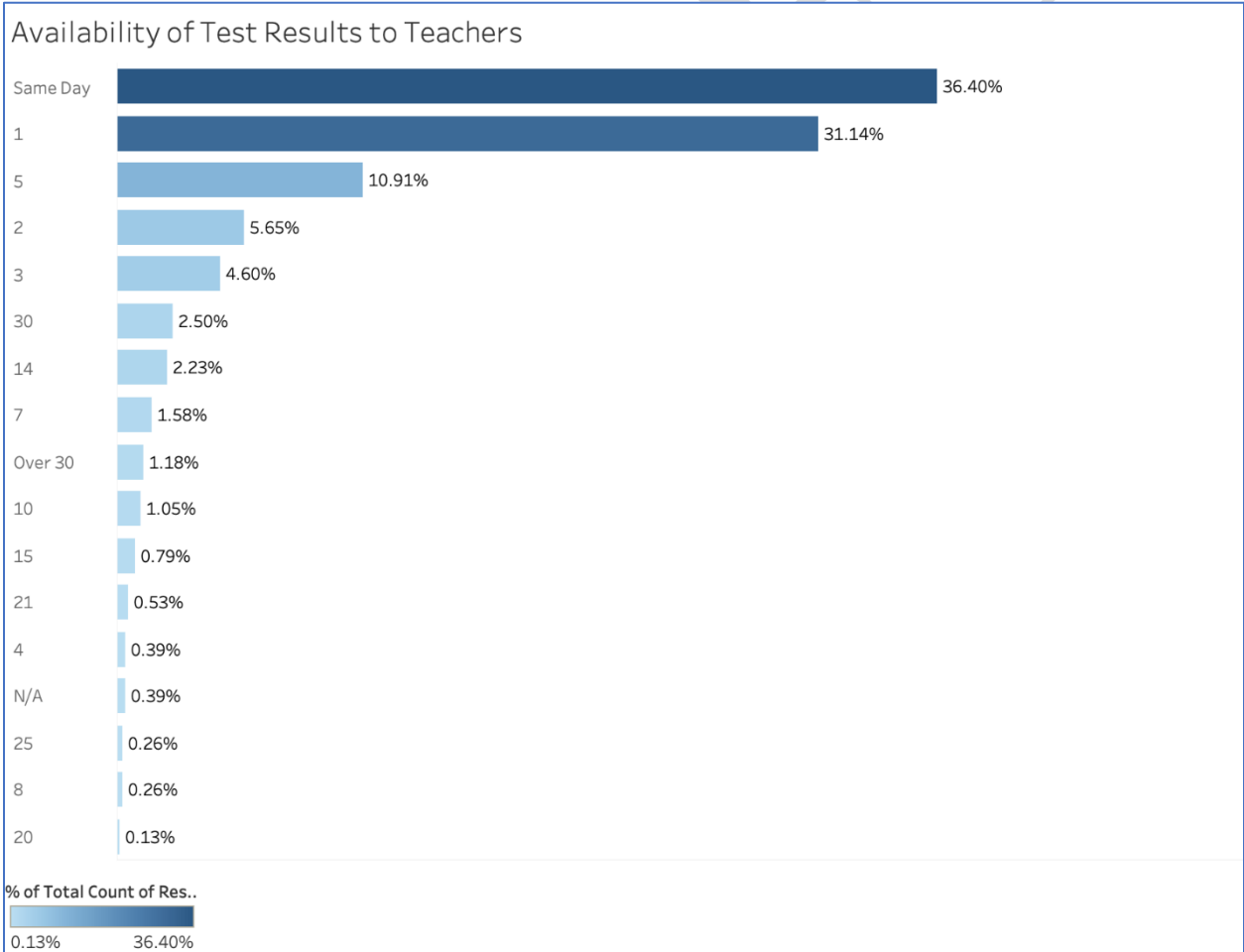


Figure 11. Availability of Test Results in Days for Teachers.

State Board policy TEST-001 states the following:

“(g) LEAs shall, at the beginning of each school year, provide information to students and parents or guardians advising them of the districtwide and state-mandated tests that students will be required to take during that school year. In addition, LEAs shall advise students and parents or guardians of the dates the tests will be administered and how the results from the tests will be used. Also, information provided to parents shall include whether the State Board of Education or the local board of education requires the test(s).

(h) LEAs shall report scores resulting from the administration of districtwide and state-mandated tests to students and parents or guardians along with available score interpretation information within thirty (30) days from generation of the score at the LEA level or receipt of the score and interpretive documentation from the NCDPI.”

Figure 12 shows the number of days by test that it takes for parents to receive their student’s score and/or interpretive documentation for local tests. Data collected shows that 44.9% of parents receive results within five days of the generation of the score. However, the data also indicates that some parents (17.4%) do not receive test results until thirty or more days after the generation of the score.

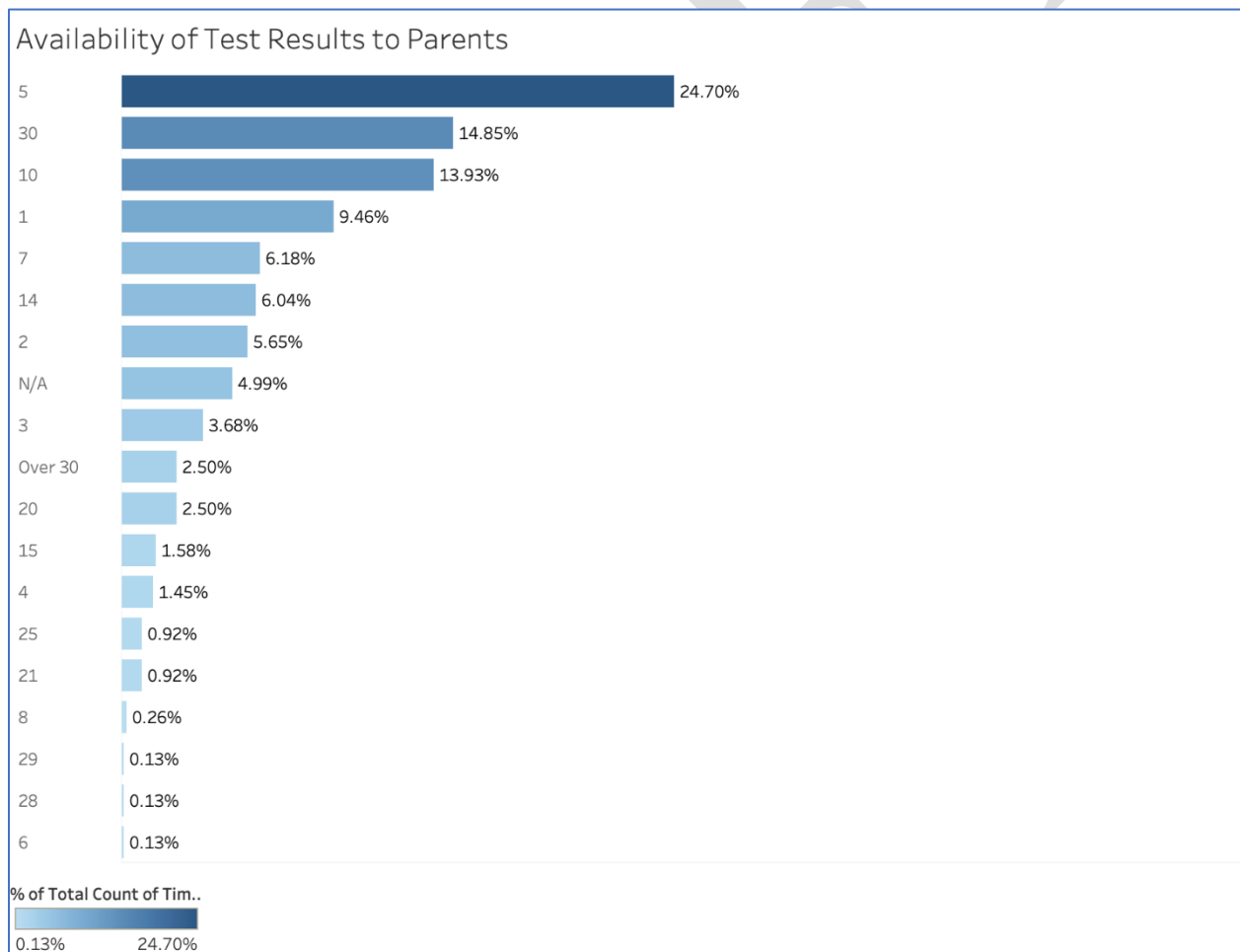


Figure 12. Availability of Test Results in Days for Parents.

Purpose of the Test and Use of the Results

A summary of the data in Figure 13 shows that educators from the 113 LEAs use the results from local tests most often to try to determine if students have mastered the concepts and skills covered by instruction (i.e., mastery). The type of tests teachers typically administered to determine mastery and guide future instruction are interim or benchmark and formative tests (see Figure 1). Interim or benchmark tests are like formative tests in the sense that they help teachers see what students know and understand as well as topics students are having difficulty grasping.

Diagnostic testing is a form of pre-assessment that allows teachers to determine students' individual strengths, weaknesses, knowledge, and skills prior to instruction. Teachers typically administer diagnostics for reading and math skills, using the results to provide remedial instruction or place students within appropriately leveled classes or small groups. Some schools also diagnose concepts as a whole to reveal commonly held misconceptions in specific subjects. Results of these diagnostics inform teachers about the direction of their instruction, meaning how early or advanced in the topic they can begin.

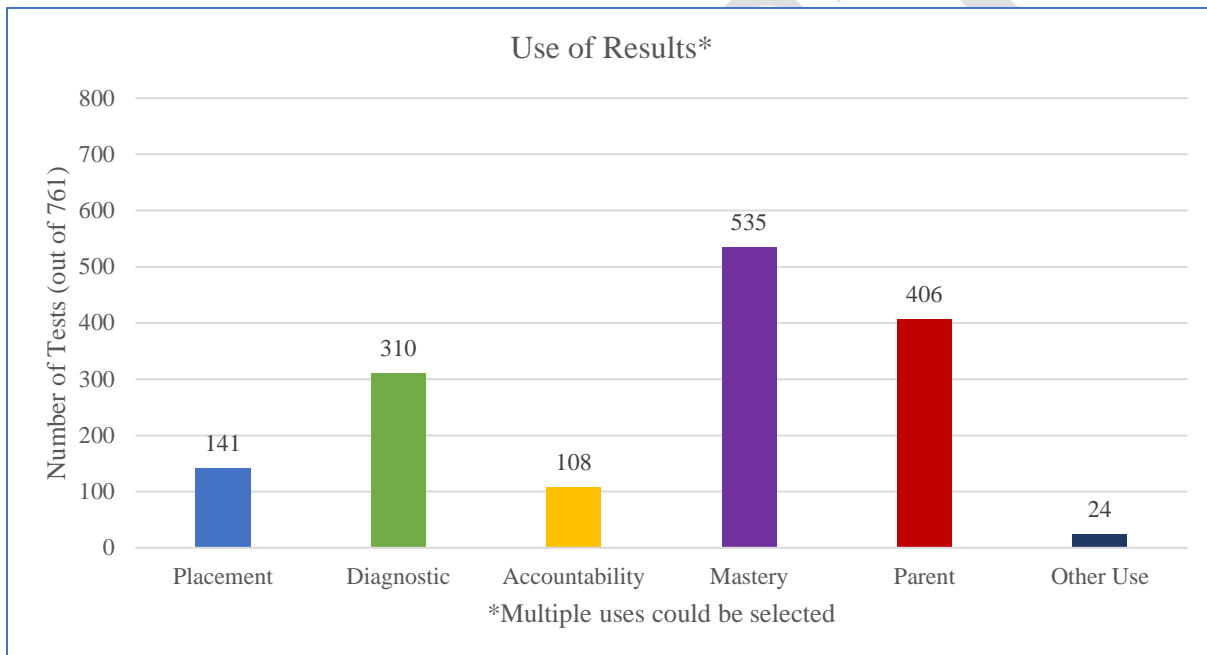


Figure 13. Use of test results.

Test Developers for Local Tests

Local tests are either purchased from a vendor, created by the LEA, or acquired from the State (e.g., NC Check-Ins). As shown in Figure 14, most LEAs purchase local tests from vendors.

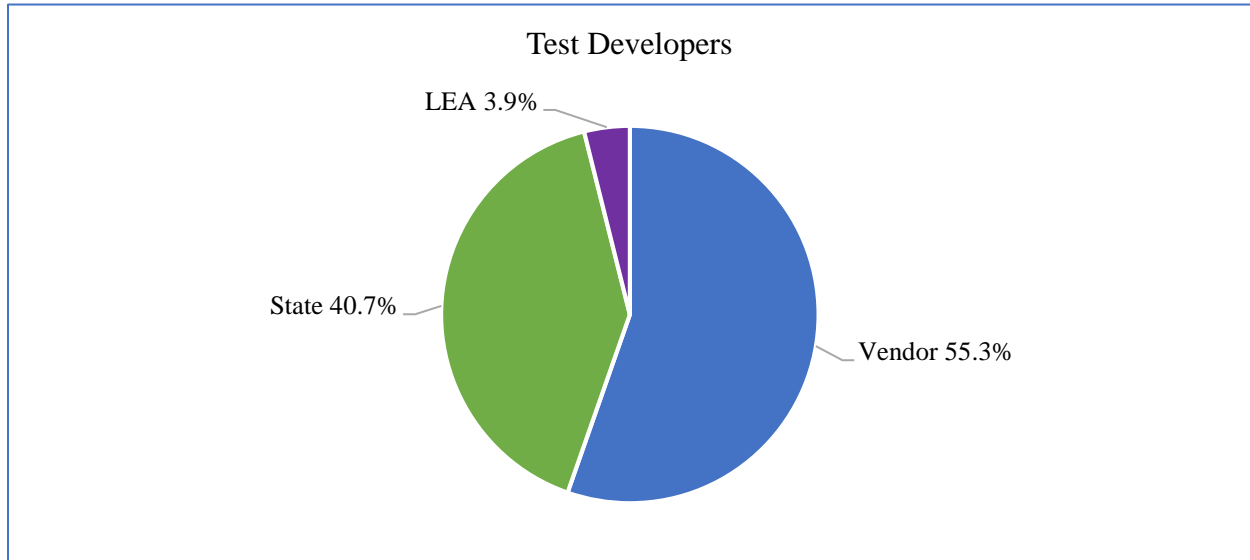


Figure 14. Test developers of local tests.

Additional reports on the test developers for local tests can be found under the *Test Developers* tab of the [Interactive Local Testing Report](#), found on the Accountability Services website. These reports include (1) the number and percentage of LEAs that use each vendor and (2) the count of LEAs using each vendor by test purpose (e.g., screener, benchmark, etc.).

Source of Funds Supporting Local Testing Programs

State funds are the primary source of funding for local testing, followed by district funds. Figure 15 illustrates the breakdown of funds supporting local testing programs.

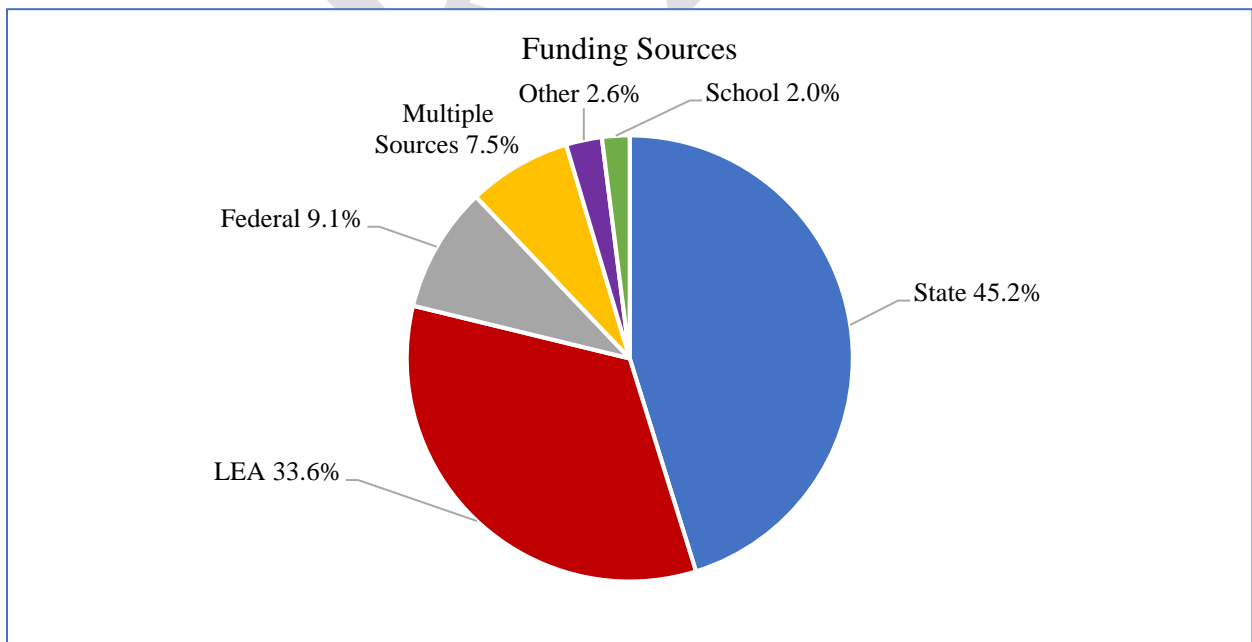


Figure 15. Source of funds supporting local testing.

Section 3: Local Testing Report Two-year Summary Findings

The Local Education Agencies (LEAs) meet the requirements of this statute by submitting an annual survey to the NCDPI. The survey data submitted is used to calculate the two-year averages. The LEA must include the name of the test administered, how often the test is provided throughout the year, what grade levels are required to take the test, what subjects the tests cover, and how much time is allotted to administer each test. This data is used to determine the LEA and state averages for the number of tests administered and the amount of time testing.

State Average of Local Tests Administered

For the 2018–19 and 2019–20 school years, the local testing report survey results indicated an average of 111.7 tests administered across the state. Out of the 115 LEAs surveyed, thirty-nine were identified as being over the state average, which is 34% of LEAs. Across the state, the averages varied with the lowest average being 1 and the highest average being 813 tests administered at the local level. LEAs identified as being over the state average were required to submit a plan to the NCDPI by October 1, 2020. The plan addresses how the LEA will reduce the number of local tests administered.

State Average of Time Administering Local Tests

For the 2018–19 and 2019–20 school years, the local testing report survey results indicated an average of 232.0 hours spent testing across the state. Out of the 115 LEAs surveyed, thirty-nine were identified as being over the state average, which is 34% of LEAs. Across the state, the averages varied with the lowest average being 1.8 hours and the highest average being 1,777.6 hours spent testing at the local level. LEAs identified as being over the state average were required to submit a plan to the NCDPI by October 1, 2020. The plan addresses how the LEA will lower the amount of local testing time.

Local Testing Report Plans Summary

A review of the two-year local testing report plans indicates most LEAs are eliminating local tests that are deemed redundant. The plans submitted to the NCDPI outlined how streamlining available tests and resources will assist in decreasing the number of tests administered, subsequently reducing the amount of time spent testing. The following excerpts from the local testing report plans are representative of the efforts to reduce local testing:

- “We hope to continue eliminating assessments that we deem redundant to help lower both number of assessments given as well as our number of hours.”
- “We discovered multiple assessments were being utilized to acquire similar data in our elementary and middle schools.”
- “We set forth an effort to reduce the number of universal screeners that the district used in the 2020 school year.”
- “We are committed to reducing both the number of tests administered and the number of hours required for students to complete tests by selecting and utilizing a diagnostic tool that can meet both the state and local expectations for assessment and progress monitoring.”
- “While the district has made a conscious effort to streamline benchmark and diagnostic tests for a more concentrated focus on teaching and learning, the district will also review the number of district-level assessments per grade level to determine best practices and most effective sources of data.”

- “The district has been steadily working to streamline the number of assessments given, as well as educate both district and school-based staff about the need for maintaining balance.”
- “The district curriculum team will continue to examine/evaluate each locally determined (required) assessment to see if the data that is collected from other sources would satisfy the need for data to drive instruction rather than having students take another assessment.”

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