

A Profile of State Assessment Programs 2009

Since 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has supported research that compares the proficiency standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) with those of individual states. State assessments are placed onto a common scale defined by NAEP, which allows states' proficiency standards to be compared not only to NAEP, but also to each other.¹ While the mapped NAEP equivalent scores of state standards are useful in determining the relative rigor of states' proficiency standards, the results of the studies should be interpreted with caution. Variations among states can be due to many factors, including differences in assessment frameworks, test specifications, the psychometric properties of the tests, the definition of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards, and the standard-setting process.

In 2007, in collaboration with the Education Information Management Advisory Consortium (EIMAC)—Task Force on Assessment of the Council of Chief State School Officers—NCES conducted a survey of state assessment programs to gain contextual information about the states' assessment programs in 2006–07 and to note changes in their assessments between the 2004–05 and 2006–07 school years that could affect the interpretation of the mapping results. The NAEP State Coordinator in every state was asked to provide information about the state's testing program through an online survey. After this information was verified and confirmed by the NAEP State Coordinator of each state, it was summarized in individual state profiles.² These profiles were designed in collaboration with a panel of NAEP State Coordinators.

In support of the 2009 Mapping Study, NAEP State Coordinators were asked by NCES to update the information collected on their state assessment program in 2007. Following similar verification steps, the information was summarized into profiles to provide a concise snapshot of all state assessment programs in the 2008–09 school year. Each profile presents information on the grades and subjects tested during the 2008–09 year, state performance levels and performance level descriptors, the composition of main state assessments, and changes to the state assessments between 2006–07 and 2008–09.

A sample profile is shown below. Information on the state assessment programs is presented in nine blocks. The first block combines all subjects. The remaining blocks (2–9) are presented twice, once for Reading/Language Arts and then for Mathematics. The example that follows is for Reading/Language Arts only. Some answers may have been edited for consistency or for space limitations; however, the substance of all answers is unchanged from what states provided to the NAEP State Coordinators. All web addresses in these profiles were verified on May 15, 2011. In any block, the symbol “—” indicates that a state's information was either not provided (for example, if there is no information on performance level descriptors of an alternate assessment for meeting AYP) or not applicable (for example, if the information relates to the proportion of the test score from short constructed response items, but the test does not use short constructed response items).

¹ Documents that discuss the research on NAEP and state proficiency standards are available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/>.

² The 2007 State Profiles are available at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/profile_standards_2007.asp.

Block 1 summarizes information about each state’s testing program: the name of the program, the different tests, the type and format of each test, the grades and subjects tested, and the tests’ purpose. States were asked to enter up to four tests in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Reading, and Science. Response options for test type were: regular, alternate, modified, and portfolio assessments.³ Response options for test format were: criterion-referenced (CRT), norm-referenced (NRT), combination CRT/NRT, and other formats. Response options for test purpose were: instructional, student accountability, school accountability, staff accountability, and other. Additional information provided by NAEP State Coordinators summarizing their states’ tests and test purposes is included at the end of the block. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block1.asp>.

Block 1		Example State																			
		State Assessment and Accountability Program (SAAP)																			
Component		Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
		Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Language Arts																					
Comprehensive Assessments of State Students (CASS)		Regular	CRT		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√		√		
CASS - Alternate (CASS-Alt)		Alternate	CRT	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√		√		
Mathematics																					
CASS		Regular	CRT		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√		√		
CASS-Alt		Alternate	CRT	√			√	√	√	√	√	√	√				√		√		
Science																					
CASS		Regular	CRT						√		√				√		√		√		
CASS-Alt		Alternate	CRT						√		√				√		√		√		

¹ Example purposes: Instructional: student diagnosis, student placement, instructional planning, program evaluation, improvement of instruction for groups of students, etc.
Student Accountability: student awards/recognition, honors diploma, student promotion/retention, required remediation, exit requirement, etc.
School Accountability: monetary awards/penalties, school accreditation, school performance reporting, high school skills guarantee, school improvement plans, etc.
Staff Accountability: staff awards/recognition, salary increases, staff dismissal, staff evaluation or certification, staff monetary penalties, etc.

³ For reference, definitions of different types of assessments are available at the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) website, at: <http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/TopicAreas/AlternateAssessments/altAssessTopic.htm>.

Block 2 summarizes information about the composition of the main state assessments in 2008–09 for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. It shows the number of items for each type of question and each type’s respective weight in the final score. If the state indicated that an item type was not used, the type’s weight is indicated by “—.” An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block2.asp> .

Block 3 includes additional information about the timing of the assessments and whether assessments measured skills acquired only in prior grades. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block3.asp>.

Block 4 summarizes information about the assessments and performance levels used by the state in 2008–09 for state accountability for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as the assessments and performance levels used to determine AYP. The symbol “—” indicates that the information was not provided (e.g., if the state did not provide additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year). An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block4.asp>.

Example State		Reading/Language Arts									
Block 2	Composition of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09										
	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other		
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	
Grade 4	24	50%	0	—	3	50%	0	—	0	—	
Grade 8	24	50%	0	—	3	50%	0	—	0	—	
Block 3	Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09										
	Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall 2008?						No.				
Block 4	Performance Levels and AYP										
	Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year						Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced				
	Test used for AYP determination						Comprehensive Assessments of State Students (CASS)				
	Performance level used for AYP						Proficient				
	Other tests used for AYP determination						CASS-Alt assessments are used in AYP determination.				
	Test used for state accountability						CASS				
	Performance level used for state accountability						Proficient				
	First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments						2005–06 school year				
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year						—					

Block 5 provides the performance level descriptors used for meeting AYP in 2008–09 assessments for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The descriptors correspond to the proficient performance level as it is defined by each state. A web address is included if the state provided a link. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block5.asp>.

Block 6 lists the performance level descriptors used for meeting AYP in 2008–09 alternate assessments for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The descriptors correspond to the proficient performance level as it is defined by each state. A “—” indicates that the state did not provide performance level descriptors. A web address is included if the state provided a link. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block6.asp>.

	Example State	Reading/Language Arts
Block 5	<p>Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress</p> <p>Grade 4: Students performing at the Proficient level demonstrate a fundamental understanding of what they read by applying various strategies when reading textual/informational, functional, and literary/recreational materials. To some degree these students use various skills and strategies, including demonstrating a knowledge of sentence structure, making inferences, and distinguishing fiction from nonfiction. They recognize some literary elements and devices including characters, similes, and important details as they read literary/recreational text. As a part of understanding informational/textual and functional materials, students at this level are beginning to locate information, identify important details, use sentence structure, and distinguish fact from fiction. Their vocabulary knowledge includes recognition of some antonyms, synonyms, and some use of structural analysis skills.</p> <p>Performance level descriptors are available online at http://www.STDOE.st.gov/pdf/AchievementLevelsGrade4.pdf</p>	<p>Grade 8: Students performing at the Proficient level utilize strategies to make inferences to determine bias or theme and use specific context clues to determine some word meanings. They can distinguish among characteristics of some types of poetry such as ballads, epics, haikus, limericks, and lyrics. They often identify literary elements and can describe their impact on setting, mood, characterization, or theme. These students also are able to identify the elements of plot.</p>
Block 6	<p>Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress</p> <p>Grade 4: A fourth-grade student performing at the Proficient level on the Example State Extended Standards in Reading demonstrates fundamental knowledge that meets the extended standards in multiple phoneme words, reading simple sentences, synonyms, literary elements (main characters and details), and letter blends. This knowledge might be demonstrated at different complexity levels and with varying degrees of assistance.</p> <p>Performance level descriptors are available online at: http://www.STDOE.st.gov/pdf/AchievementLevels.pdf</p>	<p>Grade 8: —</p>

Block 7 presents changes to the main state assessment in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics between the 2006–07 and 2008–09 school years. Each state self-reported whether the changes to its assessment were significant or not. For many states, additional information about the changes is included in a note below the block. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block7.asp>.

Block 8 provides information about the comparability of the state assessments between 2006–07 and 2008–09. Specifically, it is the answer given to the survey question “Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 Reading or Mathematics directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?” Each state self-reported whether its 2006–07 and 2008–09 assessments were comparable or not. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block8.asp>.

Block 9 provides additional information about changes to the state assessment, inclusion policies, or administration of the state assessment between 2006–07 and 2008–09 that would have an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block9.asp>.

Example State		Reading/Language Arts										
Block 7	Changes to State Assessments Between 2006–07 and 2008–09											
		No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Scores	Changed The Period of Administration	Changed Assessment Items	Used Entirely Different Assessment	Realigned To New Content Standards	Changed Proficiency Standards	Changed Accommodation Policy	Changed Re-Test Policy	Changed Test Contractors	Other Changes
	Grade 4	√									•	
	Grade 8	√									•	
Block 8	Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?											
	Yes, they can be compared. The testing contractors changed but the test and scales did not change.											
Block 9	Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?											
	None.											

Source

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 Survey of State Assessment Program Characteristics.

Glossary

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Test
ECA	End-of-Course Assessments
ELA	English Language Arts
ELP	English Language Proficiency
EOC	End-of-Course Exams
EOG	End-of-Grade Exams
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LEA	Local Education Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NRT	Norm-Referenced Test
PLD	Performance Level Descriptor
SAT/10	Stanford Achievement Test – Tenth Edition
SEA	State Education Agency

North Carolina

North Carolina Testing Program

Component	Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
	Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Language Arts [2]																				
End-of-Course English I [3]	Regular	CRT							√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		
North Carolina EXTEND2 for Occupational English 1 [4]	Alternate	CRT										√	√	√	√			√		
Grade 10 Writing	Regular	CRT											√					√		
North Carolina EXTEND1 Grade 10	Alternate	CRT											√					√		
Reading																				
End-of-Grade Test of Reading Comprehension	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		
North Carolina EXTEND2 EOG Test of Reading [5]	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		
North Carolina EXTEND1 [6]	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√							√		
Mathematics [7]																				
End-of-Grade Test of Mathematics	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		
End-of-Course Algebra I [8]	Regular	CRT							√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√		
End-of-Course Geometry, Algebra II	Regular	CRT							√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√		
North Carolina EXTEND2 EOG Test of Mathematics [5]	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		

(continued)

North Carolina

North Carolina Testing Program

Component	Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
	Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Science [9]																				
End-of-Grade Test of Science	Regular	CRT						√				√						√		
North Carolina EXTEND2 EOG Test of Science [5]	Alternate	CRT						√				√						√		
End-of-Course Biology [10]	Regular	CRT										√	√	√	√		√	√		
Physical Science	Regular	CRT										√	√	√	√			√		

¹ Example purposes: Instructional: student diagnosis, student placement, instructional planning, program evaluation, improvement of instruction for groups of students, etc.
 Student Accountability: student awards/recognition, honors diploma, student promotion/retention, required remediation, exit requirement, etc.
 School Accountability: monetary awards/penalties, school accreditation, school performance reporting, high school skills guarantee, school improvement plans, etc.
 Staff Accountability: staff awards/recognition, salary increases, staff dismissal, staff evaluation or certification, staff monetary penalties, etc.

² Additional test:
 Name: Occupational Course of Study Writing; Type: Alternative CRT; Purpose: School Accountability; Grade Tested: 10.

³ The EOC test is administered at the completion of a course for credit which could occur in grades 6–12. The EOC test score must be used as at least 25% of the students' final grade. The English I EOC test serves as an exit standard. The scores from this test are combined with the scores from the grade 10 writing assessment for AYP accountability purposes.

⁴ Administered to high school students following the Occupational Course of Study at the completion of Occupational English I.

⁵ This NCEXTEND2 EOG is a modified (AA-MAS) assessment.

⁶ This NCEXTEND1 is a alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (1%).

⁷ Additional tests:
 Name: NCEXTEND2 for Occupational Mathematics I; Type: Alternative CRT; Purpose: School Accountability; Grades: 9–12; Comments: Administered to high school students with disabilities who are following the Occupational Course of Study at the completion of Occupational Mathematics I. Scores are not used for AYP accountability purposes.
 Name: NCXTEND1 of Mathematics I; Type: Alternative CRT; Purpose: School Accountability, Student Accountability; Grades: 3 - 8, 10; Comments: The NCEXTEND1 test was developed to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities on grade-level, extended content standards.

⁸ The Algebra I EOC test serves as an exit standard.

⁹ Additional tests:
 Name: NCEXTEND1; Type: Alternative CRT; Purpose: School Accountability; Grades: 5, 8, 10
 Name: NCEXTEND2 OCS Life Skills Science; Type: Alternative CRT; Purpose: School Accountability; Grades: 9–12.

¹⁰ The EOC test is administered at the completion of a course for credit which could occur in grades 9–12. The EOC test score must be used as at least 25% of the students' final grade. The Biology EOC test serves as an exit standard.

Composition of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other	
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score
Grade 4	58	100%	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
Grade 8	62	100%	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—

Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall of 2008?	No. The End-of-Grade tests are administered during the last 22 days of the school year, and the End-of-Course tests are administered during the last 12 days (4x4/semester course/summer school) or the last 17 days (traditional year-long schedule).
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Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year	Level I - IV
Test used for AYP determination	Reading End-of-Grade
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient- Level III
Other tests used for AYP determination	NCEXTEND2 Proficient - Level III and NCEXTEND1 Proficient - Level III
Test used for state accountability	Reading End-of-Grade
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient- Level III
First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments	2007–08 School Year
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Level III can apply a combination of enabling strategies and skills to read and comprehend a variety of texts, including fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and drama, as required in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. This includes making generalizations, connections, inferences and relevant predictions; analyzing characters; identifying problems and solutions, main idea, and supporting details; drawing conclusions; summarizing; comparing and contrasting; and determining the meaning of unfamiliar words and author’s purpose. Students are able to use information from multiple sources such as charts, graphs, and maps and can interpret information that is not explicitly stated in the text to determine theme, mood, main idea, and word choice.

Performance level descriptors are available online at:

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-018.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=018&acr=GCS>

Grade 8: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Level III demonstrate mastery of reading comprehension outlined in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Students make inferences and predictions, summarize information, generate questions and ideas, cite sources used, evaluate problems and solutions, and determine importance and accuracy of information. These students evaluate the effect of bias and emotional factors and identify effectiveness of tone, style, and use of language. They accurately evaluate print and nonprint materials. Students interpret literary elements, genres, figurative language, dialogue, flashback, allusion, irony, and symbolism. They use context clues to identify and define unknown words and compare and contrast related concepts.

Performance level descriptors are available online at:

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-018.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=018&acr=GCS>

Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: NCEXTEND1: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Achievement Level III consistently demonstrate reading skills required in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study Extended Content Standards at grade 4. Students identify sight vocabulary, use word identification strategies, make connections with text to world and text to text, comprehend text, and respond to text. They examine and use visual representations to increase understanding of various types of texts.

NCEXTEND2: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. With appropriate modifications, such as fewer questions, only two items presented per page, simplified language in items (grade-level content vocabulary is not simplified), fewer answer choices, and reduction in cognitive complexity, students are able to demonstrate content mastery required to be proficient. Students performing at this level demonstrate basic grade-level knowledge and skills. Students performing at Achievement Level III demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension skills as required in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study at grade 4. Students can comprehend a variety of fourth grade-level texts, such as fiction, literary and informational nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students may examine author’s word choice and identify author’s purpose. They utilize basic skills and strategies such as making straightforward inferences, drawing simple conclusions, comparing and contrasting, and determining main idea. They also use basic text features and text structures to comprehend. Students examine reasons for characters’ actions, and can determine meaning of some unfamiliar vocabulary in context.

Grade 8: NCEXTEND1: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Achievement Level III consistently demonstrate reading skills required in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study Extended Content Standards at Grade 8, such as expressive, informational, and argumentative. Students apply strategies such as identifying sight words, making connections, and responding to text. They examine relationships of characters, ideas, concepts, and/or experiences while using visual representations to increase the understanding of texts.

NCEXTEND2: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. With appropriate modifications, such as fewer questions, only two items presented per page, simplified language in items (grade-level content vocabulary is not simplified), fewer answer choices, and reduction in cognitive complexity, students are able to demonstrate content mastery required to be proficient. Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate basic knowledge of grade-level subject matter and skills and are prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Achievement Level III demonstrate grade-level reading comprehension skills as required in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study at grade 8. Students show evidence of literal comprehension of a variety of eighth grade-level texts, such as fiction, literary and informational nonfiction, poetry, and drama. Students compare and contrast elements within text to make meaning based on evidence. Students may infer, draw conclusions, and determine author’s purpose. They may recognize literary elements and different points of view.

Changes to State Assessments Between 2007 and 2009

	No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Scores	Changed The Period of Administration	Changed Assessment Items	Used Entirely Different Assessment	Realigned To New Content Standards	Changed Proficiency Standards	Changed Accommodation Policy	Changed Re-Test Policy	Changed Test Contractors	Other Changes
Grade 4		√		√	√	√			√		
Grade 8		√		√	√	√	√		√		

Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?

No.

Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?

The Retest Policy affected the administration of Reading and Mathematics assessments or the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09. Please review entire policy at <http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-031.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=031&acr=GCS>.

Composition of the Main Mathematics Test in 2008–09

	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other	
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score
Grade 4	82	100%	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
Grade 8	80	100%	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—

Administration of the Main Mathematics Test in 2008–09

Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall of 2008?	No. The End-of-Grade tests are administered during the last 22 days of the school year, and the End-of-Course tests are administered during the last 12 days (4x4/semester course/summer school) or the last 17 days (traditional yearlong schedule).
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Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year	Level I - IV
Test used for AYP determination	Mathematics End-of-Grade
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient- Level III
Other tests used for AYP determination	NCEXTEND2 Proficient - Level III and NCEXTEND1 Proficient - Level III
Test used for state accountability	Mathematics End-of-Grade
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient- Level III
First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments	2005–06 School Year
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Level III generally show understanding and computational accuracy. The students consistently respond with appropriate answers or procedures. They use a variety of problem-solving strategies. Level III students frequently show number sense by comparing, ordering, estimating, and representing numbers from 0.01 to 99,999. They are usually consistent when multiplying and dividing multi-digit numbers; they use strategies including estimation of products and quotients in appropriate situations. They also add and subtract numbers with like denominators. Students solve problems involving perimeter of plane figures and area of rectangles. Students use coordinate planes to describe the location and relative position of points. They describe lines correctly as parallel or perpendicular. Students collect, organize, analyze, and display data using a variety of graphs. They use range, median, and mode to describe a set of data. Students design and use simple experiments to investigate and describe the probability of events. Students generally can use the order of operations or the identity, commutative, associative, and distributive properties.

Performance level descriptors are available online at:

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-018.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=018&acr=GCS>

Grade 8: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Level III generally show understanding, compute accurately, and respond with appropriate answers or procedures. They use a variety of problem-solving strategies. Level III students consistently show a proficient level of understanding of real numbers including irrational numbers. They generally are correct in use of indirect measurements. Students are usually successful at using the Pythagorean Theorem to solve problems. Level III students are often successful at organizing and interpreting data, using scatterplots and approximating a line of best fit. Students at Level III demonstrate an understanding of functions and can usually convert functions between forms and interpret slope and intercepts. They are generally successful at using linear equations and inequalities to solve problems, translating between words, tables, and graphs.

Performance level descriptors are available online at:

<http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-018.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=018&acr=GCS>

Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: NCEXTEND1: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at this level demonstrate number sense for rational numbers and for part-whole relationships. They can represent rational numbers and compare part-whole relationships in multiple forms. They consistently solve problems using addition or subtraction correctly with or without manipulatives. They can consistently find area and perimeter with or without manipulatives. They consistently place objects on a specific location on a grid. They position lines in parallel and perpendicular placements. They can demonstrate model translations and reflections of figures in a plane. They successfully collect, organize, and display data. They consistently extend patterns. They model simple number sentences.

NCEXTEND2: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of the grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. With appropriate modifications, such as fewer questions, only two items presented per page, simplified language in items (grade-level content vocabulary is not simplified), fewer answer choices, and reduction in cognitive complexity, students are able to demonstrate content mastery required to be proficient. Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate basic knowledge and skills in this subject area. Students performing at Achievement Level III generally show conceptual understanding, compute accurately, and respond with appropriate answers or procedures. They use basic problem-solving strategies. In grade four, students are given the opportunity to develop the following skills. Expectations include number sense for rational numbers 0.01 through 99,999 and fluency with multiplication and division using multi-digit numbers. They add and subtract rational numbers (halves, fourths, eighths, thirds, sixths, twelfths, fifths, tenths, hundredths, and mixed numbers) with like denominators. Students solve problems involving the perimeter of plane figures and the area of rectangles. In fourth grade, students identify, predict, and describe the results of transformations of plane figures. They collect, organize, analyze, and display data using a variety of graphs. Students use range, median, and mode to describe a set of data. Fourth-graders design and use simple experiments to investigate, discuss, and describe the probability of an event. Students use symbols to represent simple proportional relationships and solve problems. They use the order of operations to verify and translate mathematical relationships with symbols, words, numbers, and pictures. Fourth-graders apply these concepts as well as those developed in previous years.

Grade 8: NCEXTEND1: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at this level demonstrate flexibility in solving mathematical problems by selecting strategies and using appropriate technology. They consistently identify and predict dilations (stretching and shrinking). They can collect and display data using scatter plots and other graphs. They consistently demonstrate patterns (emphasizing relation [set of ordered pairs] and function). They consistently solve one-step equations. They can recognize and describe constant and varying rates of change.

NCEXTEND2: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of the grade-level subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade level. With appropriate modifications, such as fewer questions, only two items presented per page, simplified language in items (grade-level content vocabulary is not simplified), fewer answer choices, and reduction in cognitive complexity, students are able to demonstrate content mastery required to be proficient. Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate basic knowledge of grade-level subject matter and skills and are minimally prepared for the next grade level. Students performing at Achievement Level III generally show conceptual understanding, compute accurately, and respond with appropriate answers or procedures. They use a variety of basic problem-solving strategies. In grade eight, students are exposed to and show basic proficiency in the following concepts: develop the concept of and make estimates with irrational numbers. Students use the Pythagorean Theorem and apply concepts of indirect measurement to solve problems. Eighth-graders represent data on graphs and approximate lines of best fit for scatter plots. Students develop an understanding of functions and write equations for linear relationships. They use linear equations and inequalities to solve problems and justify solutions. They apply grade eight concepts as well as those developed in previous years to solve relevant and authentic problems.

Changes to State Assessments Between 2007 and 2009

	No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Scores	Changed The Period of Administration	Changed Assessment Items	Used Entirely Different Assessment	Realigned To New Content Standards	Changed Proficiency Standards	Changed Accommodation Policy	Changed Re-Test Policy	Changed Test Contractors	Other Changes
Grade 4									√		
Grade 8									√		

Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?

Yes. The change in retest policy affected comparability. Results were calculated with and without retest the first year retests were introduced into accountability calculations.

Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?

The Retest Policy affected the administration of Reading and Mathematics assessments or the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09. Please review entire policy at <http://sbepolicy.dpi.state.nc.us/policies/GCS-C-031.asp?pri=01&cat=C&pol=031&acr=GCS>.