



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Honorable Mark Johnson
Superintendent of Public Instruction
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
6351 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-6351

June 5, 2018

Dear Superintendent Johnson:

Thank you for your participation in the U.S. Department of Education's (the Department) assessment peer review process under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which governed State assessments through the 2016-2017 school year. The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which governs State assessments beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, maintains the essential requirements from NCLB that each State annually administer high-quality assessments in at least reading/language arts, mathematics and science that meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards with a few additional requirements. I appreciate the efforts of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to prepare for the review, which occurred in February 2018 and which was a follow up to a review that occurred in 2016.

State assessment systems provide essential information that States, districts, principals and teachers can use to identify the academic needs of students, target resources and supports toward students who need them most, evaluate school and program effectiveness and close achievement gaps among students. A high-quality assessment system also provides useful information to parents about their children's advancement against and achievement of grade-level standards. The Department's peer review of State assessment systems is designed to provide feedback to States to support the development and administration of high-quality assessments. The Department acknowledges that North Carolina adopted new extended content standards in reading/language arts and mathematics that are to be implemented during the 2018-2019 school year. Furthermore, the State anticipates redesigning the alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards in reading/language arts, mathematics and science in 2018-2019 and plans to resubmit the assessments for peer review in 2019-2020.

External peer reviewers and Department staff carefully evaluated NCDPI's submission and the Department found, based on the evidence received, that the components of your assessment system general assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8, science for grades 5 and 8 (NCREADY) and general assessments in high school (end-of-course in reading/language arts, mathematics and science) (NCREADY) meet all of the statutory and regulatory requirements of section 1111(b)(1) and (3) of the ESEA, as amended by NCLB. Congratulations on meeting these important ESEA requirements; an assessment system that produces valid and reliable results is fundamental to a State's accountability system. Based on the recommendations from this peer review and the Department's analysis of the State's submission, I have determined the following:

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202
<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

- Reading/language arts and mathematics general assessments for grades 3-8 (NCREADY): **Meets requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB and ESSA**
- Science general assessments in grades 5 and 8 (NCREADY): **Meets requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB and ESSA**
- Reading/language arts, mathematics and science general assessments in high school (multi-subject or end-of-course (EOC)) (NCREADY EOC): **Meets requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the NCLB and ESSA**

Please note that the assessment requirements for ESEA, as amended by the NCLB, were in effect through the end of the 2016-2017 school year. The NCDPI peer review was conducted under the requirements of this statute. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the assessment requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, will apply to State assessments. Department staff carefully reviewed the NCDPI evidence and peer review recommendations in light of the updated requirements for State assessments under the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. As a result of this additional review, I have determined that the NCREADY and NCREADY EOC meet the new requirements of the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA.

In addition, the full peer review notes from the review are enclosed. These recommendations to the Department formed the basis of our determination. Please note that the peers' recommendations may differ from the Department's feedback; we encourage you to read the full peer notes for additional suggestions and recommendations for improving your assessment system beyond what is noted in the Department's feedback.

Please be aware that approval of NCDPI's assessments is not a determination that the system complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to improving educational outcomes for all students. I look forward to our continued partnership as we move ahead with this critical work. I appreciate the work you are doing to improve your schools and provide a high-quality education for your students. We have found it a pleasure working with your staff on this review. I wish you well in your continued efforts to improve student achievement in North Carolina.

If you have any questions, please contact Cynthia Wright of my staff at: OSS.NorthCarolina@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jason Botel
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Delegated the Authority to Perform the Functions
and Duties of the Assistant Secretary of
Elementary and Secondary Education

Enclosure

cc: Tammy Howard, PhD, Director of Accountability Services

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General
Assessments

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Peer Review of State Assessment Systems

February 2018 State Assessment Peer Review Notes-Resubmission General Assessments



U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Note: Peer review notes provide the combined recommendations of the individual peers to the U.S. Department of Education (Department), based on the statute and regulations, the Department's peer review guidance, and the peers' professional judgement of the evidence submitted by the State. These assessment peer review notes, however, do not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for assessment peer review. Although the peer notes inform the Secretary's consideration of each State's assessment system, the Department makes the final decision regarding whether the assessment system meets the requirements in the statute and regulations. As a result, these peer notes may not completely align with the final determination made by the Department.

**STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General
Assessments**

Contents

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OPERATIONS 3
 2.1 – Test Design and Development (from 2016 review) 4
 2.2 – Item Development (from 2016 review) 6
 3.1 – Overall Validity, including Validity Based on Content (from 2016 review)
 8
 3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure (from 2016 review)..... 10

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL QUALITY - OTHER 11
 4.1 – Reliability (from 2016 review) 11
 4.2 – Fairness and Accessibility (from 2016 review) 12
 4.6 – Multiple Versions of an Assessment (from 2016 review) 13
 6.1 – State Adoption of Academic Achievement Standards for All Students
 (from 2016 review) 14
 6.2 – Achievement Standards-Setting (from 2016 review) 15
 6.3 – Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards (from 2016
 review) 16

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
------------------	--	--

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p align="center">2.1 – Test Design and Development (from 2016 review)</p> <p><u>For all subjects and components of system:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the alignment evidence, a content-by-cognitive complexity table of specifications for the general assessments (3-8 and high school) and the alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). <p><u>For general assessments in reading/language arts (R/LA), math and science, grades (Gr.) 3-8 and high school (HS):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that describes how cognitive complexity is used for test construction. • Evidence of counts of items on test form summaries to verify that blueprint percentages are being met. <p><u>For AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation that the test design for the AA-AAAS is sufficient to establish the reliability, domain representation, and validity. 	<p>Evidence is provided in Excel spreadsheets from SEC.</p> <p>Alignment information includes cognitive complexity, alignment to standard, and has results for general and alternate assessments.</p> <p>Alignment reporting from the technical report on science (pages 144-157) provide contextual information regarding alignment results.</p> <p>Cognitive complexity is treated as a random variable (NC Response page 2). Will become a form-level test spec in the future.</p> <p>Exhibit 8 includes blueprint summaries for all tests.</p> <p>NC Response indicates that this will happen in the future.</p>	<p>The alignment study is sufficient when combined with the Excel documents. Peers find this information acceptable as evidence of alignment.</p> <p>Currently the state plans to use cognitive complexity as a forms-level variable in the future. We view the inclusion as an improvement in the item development process.</p> <p>Documentation provided by the state did not demonstrate that blueprints percentages are being met. However, the degree of variation is minimal and not sufficient to constitute a threat to the validity and reliability of the assessment or render it unsuitable for its intended purpose.</p> <p>The initial review noted that the alternate assessment’s 15 item length was not sufficient to demonstrate appropriate levels of validity and reliability. The state has acknowledged this issue and is developing new alternate assessments. While</p>

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
		<p>allowing continued administration of a flawed assessment is undesirable, it is a better option than discontinuing use of the current alternate assessment and requiring those students to be tested on the general assessment.</p> <p>The peers suggest that alternate assessment scores should carry meaning and serve their stated purpose. If the state does not produce reliability estimates, they should provide other evidence for the utility of the alternate scores. This should be part of the next submission when the AA is revised.</p>
Section 2.1 Summary Statement		
<p><u> X </u> No additional evidence is required .</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p style="text-align: center;">2.2 – Item Development (from 2016 review)</p> <p><u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of how the pilot survey results of students taking technology-based items were used in item and form development for the general assessment, particularly with respect to aspects of the technology-based test forms that might constitute construct irrelevant variance for the students’ scores. 	<p>NC Response Page 3—indicates the requirements for students taking the survey, including practice tests, help files, released forms, etc.</p>	<p>The response does not indicate how the survey results were used. We assume students answered questions on the survey, but the focus seems to be entirely on compliance, rather than using and interpreting the survey results for the betterment of the system.</p> <p>The state has implemented a number of steps to address student performance issues with technology enhanced items. Optimally the state would conduct another study to determine the extent to which these steps have improved students’ facility with these items. We recommend that when the tests are revised, if additional or more enhanced items are included, that the state conduct a study to ensure that students have sufficient facility with the items that they do not introduce construct irrelevant variance.</p>
<p>Section 2.2 Summary Statement</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required .</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 3: TECHNICAL QUALITY – VALIDITY

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
------------------	--	--

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>3.1 – Overall Validity, including Validity Based on Content (from 2016 review)</p> <p><u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that further elaborates the alignment procedures and formulas as well as evidence to support established alignment thresholds for the general assessments. • Evidence that describes the inferences expected from the assessment scores and evidence to support those inferences for general tests. <p><u>For the AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that describes the inferences that are expected from the AA-AAAS scores and evidence to support those inferences. • Evidence of alignment of reading/language arts tests for writing standards at every grade is needed. 	<p>See 2.1</p> <p>NC Response page 4—indicates that a plan is coming for newly redesigned tests.</p> <p>See above.</p> <p>Language of the law allows for a test of reading.</p>	<p>See 2.1</p> <p>The state’s prior peer review submission did include evidence for this element but failed to reference it. Technical Reports (# 56, 57 & 58) provided information on the purposes for which the assessments were developed as well as validity evidence supporting the use of the assessments for those purposes.</p> <p>Documentation on the intended purposes of the state’s general assessments was provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate the validity of score use for those purposes.</p> <p>The state’s prior peer review submission did include evidence for this element but failed to reference it. Technical Report (# 48) provided information on the purposes for which the alternate assessments were developed as well as validity evidence for the use of the assessments for those purposes. Unfortunately, (as noted in 2.1) the alternate assessment’s 15 item length was not sufficient to demonstrate appropriate levels of validity and reliability to support the assessment’s intended uses identified by the state.</p> <p>Documentation provided by the state does not support the validity of inferences based on alternate assessment scores.</p>

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
		NC does not test writing, speaking, or listening.
Section 3.1 Summary Statement		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required.*</p> <p>(*Going forward, when scores are provided (at any level, e.g., total, domain, subscores, etc.) for a student taking NC state tests (general, AA-AAAS, paper and pencil, computerized, etc.) evidence for scores' validity must be provided (AERA/APA/NCME, 2014). This assertion holds for scores provided only at aggregate level (such as scores for stakeholders only), as well as for student-level scores. We note and acknowledge that score validation is an ongoing process).</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u> • Evidence of common and typical output for principal components analyses on general assessments, and also of the unrotated and rotated factor solutions. These additional data analyses are needed to support the sub-domain score structure.</p> <p><u>For AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u> • Evidence of a factor analysis to support the single score obtained.</p>	<p>Exhibit 9. The report shows Eigen values and supports the use of unidimensional IRT for the assessment.</p> <p>NC claims that no inferences are made at the student level based on subdomain scores. They provide domain level information to stakeholders, but do not include evidence to support those scores.</p> <p>Because the tests are being redesigned, no information for AA is provided.</p>	<p>Student level scores do not contain domain scores.</p> <p>While not required for student reporting, because domain level scores are provided for stakeholders, we recommend that evidence be collected to support their use.</p>
<p>Section 3.3 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required or*</p>		
<p>*Going forward, if domain level scores are provided at any level, student or stakeholder, evidence for the domain scores reliability and validity should be provided.</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>4.6 – Multiple Versions of an Assessment (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u> • A plan and timeline for continued research in this area that specifically examines differences across test delivery modalities.</p>	<p>NC Response page 7. Current documentation includes item-level analyses (DIF) for items not exactly duplicated in both paper and pencil and computer modes. If found this triggers separate calibration and scoring by mode. A comparability study has been commissioned to examine potential score differences by mode.</p>	<p>Requested documentation was provided. Once the study is complete, this should be sufficient evidence for mode comparability.</p>
<p>Section 4.6 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 6: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS AND REPORTING

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.1 – State Adoption of Academic Achievement Standards for All Students (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information regarding the achievement standards for Level 3 (proficient) that supports its alignment to the content standards for the general assessments. 	<p>NC Response page 8 indicates the method for setting Level 3 outside traditional standards setting (subtraction of 1 CSEM from original score).</p> <p>New plan would create 5 levels for all grade subjects as tests are revised.</p>	<p>The state submissions notes that the new assessments (to be implemented in 2018-19 & 2019-20) will have “five academic achievement levels with discrete academic achievement descriptors.”</p> <p>The academic achievement standard identified as college and career ready proficiency for federal reporting purposes has not changed. Instead, that standard is being used as the basis for identifying students whose scores indicate they are approaching proficiency. While unusual, peers do not believe the inclusion of this achievement level conflicts with the guidance requirements.</p> <p>Developing 5 categories through an appropriate method, complete with performance level descriptors, corrects the prior issue.</p>
<p>Section 6.1 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.2 – Achievement Standards-Setting (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u> • Evidence requested for element 6.1 will address this element.</p>	<p>Planning to redo standards setting with testing revisions.</p>	<p>Developing 5 categories through an appropriate method, complete with performance level descriptors, corrects the prior issue.</p>
<p>Section 6.2 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.3 – Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence requested for element 6.1 will address this element. 	<p>Planning to redo standards setting with testing revisions.</p>	<p>No additional evidence is required for this element.</p>
<p>Section 6.3 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

U. S. Department of Education Peer Review of State Assessment Systems

February 2018 State Assessment Peer Review Notes-Resubmission General Assessments



U. S. Department of Education
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

Note: Peer review notes provide the combined recommendations of the individual peers to the U.S. Department of Education (Department), based on the statute and regulations, the Department's peer review guidance, and the peers' professional judgement of the evidence submitted by the State. These assessment peer review notes, however, do not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for assessment peer review. Although the peer notes inform the Secretary's consideration of each State's assessment system, the Department makes the final decision regarding whether the assessment system meets the requirements in the statute and regulations. As a result, these peer notes may not completely align with the final determination made by the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Contents

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OPERATIONS 3

- 2.1 – Test Design and Development (from 2016 review) 3**
- 2.2 – Item Development (from 2016 review) 5**
- 3.1 – Overall Validity, including Validity Based on Content (from 2016 review) 6**
- 3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure (from 2016 review)..... 8**

SECTION 4: TECHNICAL QUALITY - OTHER 9

- 4.1 – Reliability (from 2016 review) 9**
- 4.2 – Fairness and Accessibility (from 2016 review) 10**
- 4.6 – Multiple Versions of an Assessment (from 2016 review) 11**
- 6.1 – State Adoption of Academic Achievement Standards for All Students (from 2016 review) 12**
- 6.2 – Achievement Standards-Setting (from 2016 review) 13**
- 6.3 – Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards (from 2016 review) 14**

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 2: ASSESSMENT SYSTEM OPERATIONS

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>2.1 – Test Design and Development (from 2016 review) <u>For all subjects and components of system:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the alignment evidence, a content-by-cognitive complexity table of specifications for the general assessments (3-8 and high school) and the alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS). <p><u>For general assessments in reading/language arts (R/LA), math and science, grades (Gr.) 3-8 and high school (HS):</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that describes how cognitive complexity is used for test construction. Evidence of counts of items on test form summaries to verify that blueprint percentages are being met. <p><u>For AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation that the test design for the AA-AAAS is sufficient to establish the reliability, domain representation, and validity. 	<p>Evidence is provided in Excel spreadsheets from SEC.</p> <p>Alignment information includes cognitive complexity, alignment to standard, and has results for general and alternate assessments.</p> <p>Alignment reporting from the technical report on science (pages 144-157) provide contextual information regarding alignment results.</p> <p>Cognitive complexity is treated as a random variable (NC Response page 2). Will become a form-level test spec in the future.</p> <p>Exhibit 8 includes blueprint summaries for all tests.</p> <p>NC Response indicates that this will happen in the future.</p>	<p>The alignment study is sufficient when combined with the Excel documents. Peers find this information acceptable as evidence of alignment.</p> <p>Currently the state plans to use cognitive complexity as a forms-level variable in the future. We view the inclusion as an improvement in the item development process.</p> <p>Documentation provided by the state did not demonstrate that blueprints percentages are being met. However, the degree of variation is minimal and not sufficient to constitute a threat to the validity and reliability of the assessment or render it unsuitable for its intended purpose.</p> <p>The initial review noted that the alternate assessment’s 15 item length was not sufficient to demonstrate appropriate levels of validity and</p>

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
		<p>reliability. The state has acknowledged this issue and is developing new alternate assessments. While allowing continued administration of a flawed assessment is undesirable, it is a better option than discontinuing use of the current alternate assessment and requiring those students to be tested on the general assessment.</p> <p>The peers suggest that alternate assessment scores should carry meaning and serve their stated purpose. If the state does not produce reliability estimates, they should provide other evidence for the utility of the alternate scores. This should be part of the next submission when the AA is revised.</p>
Section 2.1 Summary Statement		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required .		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>2.2 – Item Development (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of how the pilot survey results of students taking technology-based items were used in item and form development for the general assessment, particularly with respect to aspects of the technology-based test forms that might constitute construct irrelevant variance for the students’ scores. 	<p>NC Response Page 3—indicates the requirements for students taking the survey, including practice tests, help files, released forms, etc.</p>	<p>The response does not indicate how the survey results were used. We assume students answered questions on the survey, but the focus seems to be entirely on compliance, rather than using and interpreting the survey results for the betterment of the system.</p> <p>The state has implemented a number of steps to address student performance issues with technology enhanced items. Optimally the state would conduct another study to determine the extent to which these steps have improved students’ facility with these items. We recommend that when the tests are revised, if additional or more enhanced items are included, that the state conduct a study to ensure that students have sufficient facility with the items that they do not introduce construct irrelevant variance.</p>
<p>Section 2.2 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required .</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 3: TECHNICAL QUALITY – VALIDITY

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>3.1 – Overall Validity, including Validity Based on Content (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that further elaborates the alignment procedures and formulas as well as evidence to support established alignment thresholds for the general assessments. • Evidence that describes the inferences expected from the assessment scores and evidence to support those inferences for general tests. <p><u>For the AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence that describes the inferences that are expected from the AA-AAAS scores and evidence to support those inferences. • Evidence of alignment of reading/language arts tests for writing standards at every grade is needed. 	<p>See 2.1</p> <p>NC Response page 4—indicates that a plan is coming for newly redesigned tests.</p> <p>See above.</p> <p>Language of the law allows for a test of reading.</p>	<p>See 2.1</p> <p>The state’s prior peer review submission did include evidence for this element but failed to reference it. Technical Reports (# 56, 57 & 58) provided information on the purposes for which the assessments were developed as well as validity evidence supporting the use of the assessments for those purposes.</p> <p>Documentation on the intended purposes of the state’s general assessments was provided with sufficient evidence to demonstrate the validity of score use for those purposes.</p> <p>The state’s prior peer review submission did include evidence for this element but failed to reference it. Technical Report (# 48) provided information on the purposes for which the alternate assessments were developed as well as validity evidence for the use of the assessments for those purposes. Unfortunately, (as noted in 2.1) the alternate assessment’s 15 item length was not sufficient to demonstrate appropriate levels of validity and reliability to support the assessment’s intended uses identified by the state.</p> <p>Documentation provided by the state does not support the validity of inferences based on alternate assessment scores.</p>

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
		NC does not test writing, speaking, or listening.
Section 3.1 Summary Statement		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required.*</p> <p>(*Going forward, when scores are provided (at any level, e.g., total, domain, subscores, etc.) for a student taking NC state tests (general, AA-AAAS, paper and pencil, computerized, etc.) evidence for scores' validity must be provided (AERA/APA/NCME, 2014). This assertion holds for scores provided only at aggregate level (such as scores for stakeholders only), as well as for student-level scores. We note and acknowledge that score validation is an ongoing process).</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>3.3 – Validity Based on Internal Structure (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of common and typical output for principal components analyses on general assessments, and also of the unrotated and rotated factor solutions. These additional data analyses are needed to support the sub-domain score structure. <p><u>For AA-AAAS in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a factor analysis to support the single score obtained. 	<p>Exhibit 9. The report shows Eigen values and supports the use of unidimensional IRT for the assessment.</p> <p>NC claims that no inferences are made at the student level based on subdomain scores. They provide domain level information to stakeholders, but do not include evidence to support those scores.</p> <p>Because the tests are being redesigned, no information for AA is provided.</p>	<p>Student level scores do not contain domain scores.</p> <p>While not required for student reporting, because domain level scores are provided for stakeholders, we recommend that evidence be collected to support their use.</p>
<p>Section 3.3 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required or*</p> <p>*Going forward, if domain level scores are provided at any level, student or stakeholder, evidence for the domain scores reliability and validity should be provided.</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>4.6 – Multiple Versions of an Assessment (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A plan and timeline for continued research in this area that specifically examines differences across test delivery modalities. 	<p>NC Response page 7. Current documentation includes item-level analyses (DIF) for items not exactly duplicated in both paper and pencil and computer modes. If found this triggers separate calibration and scoring by mode.</p> <p>A comparability study has been commissioned to examine potential score differences by mode.</p>	<p>Requested documentation was provided. Once the study is complete, this should be sufficient evidence for mode comparability.</p>
<p>Section 4.6 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><u>__X_</u> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

SECTION 6: ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS AND REPORTING

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.1 – State Adoption of Academic Achievement Standards for All Students (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional information regarding the achievement standards for Level 3 (proficient) that supports its alignment to the content standards for the general assessments. 	<p>NC Response page 8 indicates the method for setting Level 3 outside traditional standards setting (subtraction of 1 CSEM from original score).</p> <p>New plan would create 5 levels for all grade subjects as tests are revised.</p>	<p>The state submissions notes that the new assessments (to be implemented in 2018-19 & 2019-20) will have “five academic achievement levels with discrete academic achievement descriptors.”</p> <p>The academic achievement standard identified as college and career ready proficiency for federal reporting purposes has not changed. Instead, that standard is being used as the basis for identifying students whose scores indicate they are approaching proficiency. While unusual, peers do not believe the inclusion of this achievement level conflicts with the guidance requirements.</p> <p>Developing 5 categories through an appropriate method, complete with performance level descriptors, corrects the prior issue.</p>
<p>Section 6.1 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.2 – Achievement Standards-Setting (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u> • Evidence requested for element 6.1 will address this element.</p>	<p>Planning to redo standards setting with testing revisions.</p>	<p>Developing 5 categories through an appropriate method, complete with performance level descriptors, corrects the prior issue.</p>
<p>Section 6.2 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.

STATE ASSESSMENT PEER REVIEW NOTES FOR North Carolina General Assessments

Critical Element	Evidence (Record document and page # for future reference)	Comments/Notes/Questions/Suggestions Regarding State Documentation or Evidence
<p>6.3 – Challenging and Aligned Academic Achievement Standards (from 2016 review) <u>For general assessments in R/LA, math and science, Gr. 3-8 and HS:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence requested for element 6.1 will address this element. 	<p>Planning to redo standards setting with testing revisions.</p>	<p>No additional evidence is required for this element.</p>
<p>Section 6.3 Summary Statement</p>		
<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No additional evidence is required</p>		

Consistent with the note on page 1, the evidence requested by the peer reviewers does not necessarily reflect the final set of additional evidence, if any, that a State may need to submit to demonstrate that its assessment system meets all of the critical elements for the assessment peer review. As a result, a State should refer to the letter to the State, including the list of additional evidence needed, if any, from the Department.