

**NC DPI**  
**ESSA Webinar 20160720**

**Danks:**        **Amanda Danks**  
**Hobe:**         **Karen Hobe**  
**Sonoman:**   **Curtis Sonoman**  
**M/F:**         **Male/Female Speaker**

Hobe:            Good afternoon. This is Karen Hobe. Welcome to our webinar. If we could just do one more sound check with a show of hands to let us know that you can hear us. Thank you very much. We appreciate that. Let me tell you who I have in the room with me here. I have Dr. Tammy Howard, Curtis Sonoman, Amanda Danks, Faye Brown [ph], and Andrea Faulkner. We're going to talk to you today about the ESSA law section B on standards and assessment. As you know, in the last webinar, we focused on standards, and today we're going to focus on the assessment. So with that, we'll go ahead and get started.

The first thing to go over is just a couple of housekeeping issues. One, we want to remind you the webinar is being recorded, and you'll have access to the recording in one to two days after this webinar today. We will address your questions at the end. Feel free to enter them in the chat box at any time during the presentation, and then at the end, we will go back and address those questions. And we also wanted to let you know that your questions and comments could be used in documentation of our stakeholder input. We do value your feedback and your input, and therefore we are keeping this as documentation as having received that input and feedback.

With the assessment piece of the law, there are quite a few topics to cover. There's the overall requirements; there is an exception for advanced math that we will explain. There's quite a bit on alternate assessments and language assessments, as well as assessment of English language proficiency that Amanda Danks will discuss with you. We will talk about locally selected assessment options, adaptive assessments, parent's rights, in particular with opting out, limit on assessment time, recently arrived English learners, and English learner subgroups. I just wanted to point out that we chose this order of the presentation based on the order that it was presented in the law. We just defaulted to that order in case you follow along in the law. You will find it occurring in this same order that we're presenting. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to Dr. Tammy Howard, who will talk to you on some of the general issues or things that are covered in ESSA on assessments.

Howard: Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us, and thank you for that introduction, Karen. One of the take aways in looking at ESSA is that really much of the law around assessment does stay the same. Now, as you'll see as we go through this afternoon, there are some caveats here and there where the intention, I think, is to give more flexibility to the states with respect to assessments. But the basic—most of the information that I will cover, you will see that it's just as it always has been in the past. The state is required to demonstrate that we have a high quality student academic assessment in mathematics, reading, language arts, and science, and we can implement other assessments at our discretion, but they are not required.

The same academic standards assessments must be used to measure the achievement of all public elementary and secondary schools in the state, and the one exception to this is, of course, those students that are following—or being instructed on the extended contents standards, and we have an alternate assessment for those students, often times referred to as the 1% assessment. Now, of course, you do not see a reference here, although it is in the law, that we are not allowed to have what is sometimes referred to as the 2% assessment, or the modified assessment. You would call the North Carolina—had that for a years and it was discontinued a couple years ago, as required by the US Department of Education, and it is stated in the law that states are not allowed to have that 2% modified assessment.

So the assessments have to be aligned with challenging state academic standards, and so what that really is getting at is that we have to have assessments that show the students are being measured on the attainment of those content standards, and we see again the language around whether or not a student is performing at grade level. And that was one of the major components of No Child Left Behind that we just continued into this law as well, is that the expectation is that we are reporting student's achievement at grade level.

But we in North Carolina need to pause for a moment and think about what that means, because of course we have five achievement levels now, which you're well aware. An achievement level three and above is referred to at grade level, and then level four and above is college and career readiness. And you'll notice in the note here on the slide, it says that each shall demonstrate that the

challenging state academic standards are aligned with entrance requirement for credit bearing coursework in the system of public higher education in this state, and relevant state, career, and technical education standards.

So that is means—what that means is that the academic standards have to be aligned with those same expectations. And so many have said that what this means is that really in the law, it has been codified, this expectation of college and career readiness. So in North Carolina, that would be level four and above, not level three and above that is used on school performance grades. So as you are well aware, we have always used level four and above for all of our federal reports, ever since we introduced level three, and went to the five-level system.

So this is just to share with you the reminder that when we're talking about federal accountability, it is level four and above, and this is just to give evidence of why that is the case. Because it is cited in the law that we are to be measuring against requirements that would make students successful post-graduation, successful in college and career.

So there are several requirements for our assessments, and I'm sure that many of you are familiar with what we refer to as the peer review process. So we're going through that process right now with our assessments, and that means that we have to send evidence, a very detailed documentation on the technical quality of the assessments, everything from the alignment studies to how the content standards were actually adopted, to how the test specifications were developed, that we had input from educators across the state looking at the technical aspects for the assessment. Do the assessments demonstrate the various

proficiency or non-proficiency abilities of students across the state? So it's a very, very detailed review of assessments.

And this continues with this law; this continues with ESSA. And you can see some other things on here as well, in addition to these technical requirements for the assessments. Particularly, I would note that we cannot evaluate or assess personal or family beliefs and attitudes, and you may recall that this state, we did have a student survey many years ago—or not that many, but a few years ago, we did discontinue that survey so we do not assess the personal or family beliefs and attitudes, and we work very, very, very hard to make sure that we do not disclose personally identifiable information. We have whole teams of individuals that focus on that, and doing an excellent job, and I know that you're our partners as well with that, at the local level, to make sure that we are not doing that.

But I think the summation of this slide is that with this new law, we will continue to be expected to demonstrate to the US Department of Education that our assessments are valid, and reliable, and that they meet the technical standard of any assessment. So this is just a recap where the assessments are required; you're very familiar with this. The only change that is on this slide, really, is that for the high school reading or language arts and mathematics, it shifted from being once in grades ten through twelves, to once in grades nine through twelve.

Please note that science remained at ten through twelve; we're not really sure why if that was a particular thought, or if that was just an oversight, but never the less, some of you who've been around for a long time can remember that in the beginning, that's one of the reasons why we have writing at grade ten, with

English I at grade nine, was to be able to get those assessments in that grades ten through twelve span. But now the grade span is nine through twelve.

So the assessments must provide for participation of all students. I think we've already mentioned that, as well on a couple of previous slides, and we also have to have the appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities, and the inclusion of English learners. And Amanda Danks is going to talk in more detail about that, but it is worth mentioning, of course, that going back to the adage that was used so long—so many years in accountability and testing, that all means all, and that all students must participate in the assessments.

Now, at the state's discretion, we can either have a single summative assessment, which is what we have now with our end of grade assessments, and our end of course assessments, where we can have a multiple statewide interim assessment system that is administered throughout the school year, and provides a single summative score. Many of you are familiar with the work that we have been doing with the proof of concept at grades five and grade six, grade five for mathematics, and grade six for English language arts. Part of the thought at the beginning of that work was to have those interim assessments replace the summative assessment.

The status of that work now as we are continuing with it into 2016-'17, but with the same model that it was for 2015-'16, in that the results of those assessments are for teachers who have very timely access to the data, access to the items themselves, and to keep those assessments more of an interim/formative nature that is very useful for the teachers. And if we were to shift to using those

assessments in a summative manner, then that would change the design of the proof of concept. So those are some of the conversations we have here; I think the important part of this slide is to know that it is in the law that a state would have the option, if they wanted to, to have interim assessments throughout the year that yield a single summative score.

Now, that single summative score would have to have achievement levels just like we have now, levels one through five, and we would have all the same requirements on those interim assessments with the US Department of Education and peer review as we do on our EOGs and EOCs now. So you can imagine that that is a very detailed conversation, and we're listening very carefully to all of you across the state, and the teachers that have participated in this, who have said very clearly to us that they appreciate the interim approach, the formative approach, and the accessibility of the test items and the student's performance on those items, and they're not so much inclined to have summative assessments to an interim model throughout the school year.

So we'll continue to have that conversation, I'm sure, but for right now, we will continue with the summative assessment at the end of the school year. And then we of course have to provide reports; we have to provide those individual student reports that you distribute to your students and their families every year. Those are required in the law, and when we go to peer review, we have to provide evidence of having those reports, and those reports are reviewed to make sure that we're giving meaningful information to students and to parents. And of course to those of you at the district school level, as well.

And again in the law, you'll see references to disaggregating the districts by student subgroup. This does continue, of course, and you'll see as well we have gender and migrant status that shows up on the school report cards. The reporting continues to be very important; it kind of closes the loop, if you will, around that you give an assessment and after you give an assessment, what is done with the data, and is the data being provided in a meaningful way to the users so that they can make instructional decisions, or programmatic decisions, that improve student achievement over time. So I will stop there and turn it over to Curtis, who is going to tell you about mathematics.

Sonoman: Thank you. So the section that I'm going to go over now is the exception for advanced mathematics in the middle school. So as a state, we have the option under ESSA to exempt any eighth grade student from the eighth grade end of course—end of grade mathematics assessment if that student is taking the end of course assessment that the state typically administers to meet the requirements in mathematics, and that student's achievement on that end of course assessment is used for the purposes of accountability, in lieu of the student's achievement on the eighth grade assessment.

So in other words, for North Carolina, this would allow students who are taking the Math I assessment in eighth grade to take that assessment as use it at the middle school for accountability purposes, and not have to take the eighth grade end grade mathematics assessments. If that were to occur, then those students in high school would have to take a mathematics assessment that is any end of course assessment or other assessment that is more advanced than the

assessment administered in the eighth grade, and then that would be used as the student's achievement for accountability purposes.

In other words, at some point, those students would take a higher level math assessment, and that in conjunction with the regular high school math, which in our case would be Math I, would be calculated at the high school for the high school accountability. So at this point, I'm going to turn over to Amanda for alternate assessment.

Danks: Great, thanks, Curtis. So as Dr. Howard explained, there is still a provision in the law to provide an alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Of course that assessment would need to be aligned with our standard academics that—which at this point are the North Carolina standard course of study. We must also ensure that for each subject, that the total number of students assessed does exceed 1% of the total number of students who are assessed in each subject. And that is different from the previous law, which stipulated that only 1% could be proficient.

So that is—for some might be a bigger change than others. Just to let everyone know, we have looked at and revised our criteria for eligibility for the alternate assessment. We've collaborated with various state partners and other organizations to be sure that we're defining that eligibility criteria as best we can, so please keep an eye for that in various publications that will be coming your way.

Each state also must ensure that the parents of the students who are assessed using that alternate assessment are clearly informed through the IEP

process how their child's academic achievement will be measured, based on this alternate standard. And then how participation in those alternate assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma. And again, as Dr. Howard said, this law—a lot has stayed the same, but also there's room for improvement. So with this, I feel like in IEP meetings, we may be able to better provide information for families on how these alternate assessments may affect their student.

In addition, each state must promote involvement and progress of students with even the most significant cognitive abilities in the general education curriculum. And here in North Carolina, we do that by instructing them in the extended content standards. We must also provide in our plan a way that we're able to include universal design in our alternate assessments. And we also must describe how general and special education teachers and other appropriate staff know how to administer those alternate assessments, which as many of you are familiar with our assessment guides, we provide a great deal of information on how to provide those alternate assessments, so again, this is something that will remain the same, but certainly something that we're hoping to improve where it's needed.

To continue, a student participating in the alternate assessment does not preclude them from attempting to complete the requirements of a regular high school diploma. That may differ from some of the language that has been used previously in IEP meetings, so we'll need to be sure that we provide some guidance and some training on how to address those issues in those IEP meetings.

And then as always, the IEP team is the determining factor on whether or not a student with a significant cognitive disability will participate in the alternate assessment, which is aligned with those alternate academic achievement standards. And again, thinking about the revised eligibility criteria and future training that will come, our hope is that that will be solved through that.

So we talked before about how it has changed from a 1% proficient cap, with the alternate assessment to a 1% participation cap. Within the law, the state cannot go above that 1% participation cap; however, we cannot impose a cap on any local education agency, so LEAs may go over that cap. However, they shall submit information justifying the need to exceed that 1% cap. And if that is the case, a state—North Carolina will provide appropriate oversight to that LEA once that information is submitted in regards to a 1% participation cap. If the state does go over that 1% participation cap for the alternate assessment, we are able to submit a waiver to the US Department of Ed to exceed that cap, but that waiver will only last for one years.

So looking now at language assessments and English language proficiency—so shifting gears a little bit—each state must identify the languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population. And here is just a breakdown; we've collaborated with the ESL group and other demographic data that we have, and this is the breakdown of the other languages—languages other than English that we have found in North Carolina. And as you heard Dr. Howard explain before, assessments may be administered in the language that's most likely to yield accurate data.

And so at this point, we're working with various partners to determine if assessments in a native language would be valid when we do provide instruction in English. The assessment of English language proficiency, several people have asked already, that is—at this point, we are using the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0. We are a part of the WIDA [ph], and so that is our English language proficiency assessment at this time. We do provide that annually, and those assessments are aligned to the state's English language proficiency standards. And so now I'm going to pass back to Curtis to talk about locally selected assessment.

Sonoman: This is also a new provision like the eighth grade mathematics that is part of ESSA now, where a—the state may approve LEAs to select nationally recognized high school academic assessment to be administered instead of the state-designed high school assessment for reading or language arts, mathematics, or science. So the state will have to develop technical criteria to determine if locally selected assessments meet the following requirements. If it's a nationally recognized high school assessment that's chosen by the state where the state decides to offer it to LEAs, they must complete and conduct a review of the assessment to determine if it meets or exceeds the technical criteria that are established, submit the evidence to the Department of Education that the assessment meets the requirements, and then after fulfilling those requirements, approve that assessment for selection and use by any local education agency that requests to use it.

So in other words, if there is a high school assess—nationally recognized high school assessment that would be approved by the state, it would have to go to the Department of Education for approval, much like peer review. If a LEA

choose to submit a nationally recognized high school assessment to the state, the state would have to then review that assessment through the similar or same approval process and the state may approve that assessment, provided that it meets that technical criteria, and then is submitted to the Department of Education with evidence that they have done that check.

Upon approval of that assessment, the state education agency shall approve the use in any other LEA that requests to use it after another LEA has gone through the process of meeting the standards and having it approved without having to go through that approval process again. Those locally selected assessments shall be aligned to the state's academic and content standards, they have to address the depth and breadth of the entire content standards, they have to be equivalent in the content coverage, difficulty, and quality to the state designed assessment. They may be more rigorous in content coverage and difficulty than the state-designed assessments, but at a minimum must meet the same content coverage, difficulty, and quality as the state-designed assessments.

They also must be provide—provide comparable and valid and reliable data on academic achievement as compared to the state-designed assessments, for all students and for each student subgroup. In other words, we have to break out this information in the same way we do the state designed assessments by subgroup. The results have to be expressed in terms that are consistent with the state's academic achievement standards among all LEAs within the state. In other words, we would have to convert those assessments to something like the levels

one through five that we use on our current end of grade, end of course—on our end of course assessments.

They also have to meet the requirements for assessments, including the technical requirements, and provide unbiased, rational, and consistent differentiation between schools within the state. If a locally selected assessment is approved by the state for a local district to use, then the LEAs must notify the parents of all high school students served by the LEA. This assessment must be administered to every high school student within the LEA. It cannot be selected to be administered to only certain students within a LEA. They have to notify the parents of the request for the state for approval, and once it's approved, and at the beginning of each subsequent school year, the LEA has to notify the parents that they will be administering that different assessment, other than the state-designed assessment.

Let's move into a bit of information on adaptive assessments. In the law, the state retains the right to develop and administer a computer adaptive assessment, provided that the computer adaptive assessment meets certain requirements, except the students taking the computer adaptive assessment are not required to be administered the same assessment items. In other words, the computer adaptive nature may not give the same question to every student that's taking it. The assessment also has to measure at a minimum each student's academic proficiency based on the academic standards for their grade level, and growth toward those standards. It may measure academic proficiency and growth above and below this grade level, and it may be included as part of the

accountability system, but at a—again, at a minimum, it has to measure the grade level standards.

Adaptive assessment may be developed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and also for English learners through the English language proficiency assessment. So it provides us with some opportunities to administer computer-adaptive assessments to different populations, as well.

In talking about parent's rights, just within ESSA, states that it shall not be construed—or it shall—nothing shall be construed as pre-empting a state or local law regarding the decision of a parent not to have a parent's child participate in academic assessment. However, North Carolina state statutes, and state board policy requires that all students participate in assessments. So even though the law does not say parents cannot opt out, we do currently have state law and state board policy that says there is not an opt out policy within the state of North Carolina.

One more note that's also in the law is a section discussing the limitation on assessment time. So subject to the federal and state requirements that are related to assessment evaluation accommodations, a state may, at its discretion, set a target limit on the aggregate amount of time devoted to the administration of assessments for each grade, expressed as a percentage of annual instructional hours. So if the state of North Carolina chose to do this, it would be able to set a percentage of time devoted to assessment and limit that based on the percentage of the annual instructional hours. We're now going to move onto recently arrived English learners, and I'm going to turn this back over to Amanda.

Danks: Thanks. So just to clarify, I believe this was covered in the first webinar, but we used to say LEP: limited English proficient, and that term is now English learner, so EL. So if you see EL or if you see English learner, we didn't forget a word; it has changed, so just to clarify that. So with respect to recently arrived English learners, who have been enrolled in a school for fewer than 12 months, the state may choose to do one of the following, and these are the two options.

So the first is to exclude that English learner from one administration of the reading language arts assessment, and the English learner's results on the math or English language proficiency assessments for the first enrollment, for the purposes of state-determined accountability. So they would be excluded from those assessments. The second option is to assess and report. So first they would—we would assess and report the performance of such students on the reading or language arts, and math assessment in each year of enrollment. And then for accountability purposes, in the first year, exclude the results of the reading, language arts, and mathematics assessments.

In the second year, include a measure of student growth on those assessments, and then in the third year, and each year after that, include proficiency on the assessments. So those are the two options that are laid out in the law, and at this point, we're still in deep discussions with various stakeholders to determine which would be the best for our English learners here in North Carolina.

In addition, the English learner subgroup, which in a previous slide, we did look at the various subgroups, where our data needs to be disaggregated.

With students who were previously identified as an English learner, the option is for not more than four years after the student stops being identified as an English learner—so meaning that the student uses the English language proficiency assessment to place out of English learner status, a state may include the results of that student's assessments in reading, ELA, and math, within that EL subgroup for the purpose of accountability.

And so again, that's an option for up to four years, and then that is still something that's being discussed at this time. And so now we're going to, I believe, answer some questions. Is that right?

Hobe: Let's move onto the next slide and just sort of summarize where we are. Last week, we had the webinar which was the introduction to ESSA, and the section B part of the law on standards. And then today, we've covered the part of the law on assessments that's also found in that section B. We'll have another webinar next week on the sections C and H, for accountability and reports. August 11th, we hope to get some feedback from you, and then August 24th, we will share with you our draft as it is at that stage, which will have many things left to be filled out for where we're going with this, what information we do have.

We do have some questions to answer, so let's go ahead and start with that. I think the first one is for you, Dr. Howard. It says, if I understand correctly, only level four and five will be used for school performance grades. Will that begin in 2016-'17, or with the 2015-'16 accountability data?

Howard: So, thank you for that question, because we do want to make sure we give you the correct information. School performance grades have been and will continue to

be level three and above as is stipulated in state law. The conversation is that for all the federal reporting, and this has been this way ever since we got—ever since the state board adopted the five achievement levels, when we were doing a federal report, we report students that are meeting the level four and above standards. So one of the questions that we have, and I'd like to emphasize that the work at this point is having discussions and lots of questions, and trying to navigate through this.

So we would anticipate that we—for the federal reporting, not school performance grades that are specified in North Carolina state law, but for federal reporting, we would continue to use four and above. So that would be level four and level five, and what we were trying to convey is that it is specified in ESSA, in federal law, that the grade level standard is preparation for college and career after high school. So just to say it one more time, school performance grades have and will continue to be level three and above, but federal reporting is level four and above.

Now, just very quickly, we have had some conversations, and we're not 100% sure if this would even be possible, but it's just to give you an idea of the work that we're trying to navigate through here, is that there is a possibility that we could propose to the US Department of Education, that we give different point values for all of the achievement levels except for level one, is that correct, Curtis? Yeah. So the most points would be available to level five, there would be points available to level four, or level three, or level two—a varying amount of points, so that we're recognizing all of the achievement levels. And it's a little bit

more detailed than that, but that's just to illustrate for you that as we go through this, we are trying to use it as an opportunity to think differently about how we have done things in the past, and so we will continue to have that conversation.

Hobe: Thank you, Dr. Howard. I think this next question might also be a good one for you to address. You talked about how ESSA would allow multiple statewide interim assessments to be combined into one score, to use for federal reporting. And you talked about the proof of concept and how we have those interim assessments. The question—and you explained that those interim assessments are not being used as a combined score for the—in place of the end of grade. The question was, will the proof of concept be extended to include more schools?

Howard: Again, thank you for that question. So yes, for 2016-'17, the board approved at its July meeting, we're expanding the sample from 5% of students to 15%, retaining those schools that were in the sample in 2015-'16, adding some additional schools to that sample, maintaining a sample approach so we can make comparisons across years, and across the different aspects of the study.

But we also are considering having some of our low performing schools be part of participation for '16-'17, as well. We're talking with Dr. Nancy Barber [ph] about that; we have not reached a final decision on that, but we've been encouraged to do that, and then the other bucket, if you will, is we would like to give the opportunity for every district to participate, to have some schools participate if they do not—if they're not already in the sample, and even if they are in the sample, they may want additional schools to participate. So when I say

it that way, it kind of opens it for '16-'17, for schools with grades five and grades six to participate.

And the purpose of that is to get as much—well, to expose the format to as many of our colleagues across the state as possible, so when we are having this conversation at the end of next school year, we'll have a wider group that can get their input and help us kind of work through the advantages and the disadvantages of the state.

Hobe: Okay, thank you, Dr. Howard. The next question I'll let Amanda address. I think she did address this, but I just want to make sure everyone gets clarification. Will the Access test be a type of assessment to determine English proficiency?

Danks: Yes, that's a great question. At this point, that is the assessment that we're using to look at student's English language proficiency. And that's the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, or for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, that's the Access—I'm sorry—the Alternate Access. So North Carolina is in a great position because not all states have that already defined and laid out for them. So as far as the law goes, we have that covered.

Hobe: Okay, thank you, Amanda. We had several questions on the exception for advanced mathematics in middle school. So some of these questions are similar and I just want to make sure that we do address all of them. The first question is what about our middle school students who have the ability to take Math I in grade seven?

Sonoman: At this point in time, the law specifies eighth grade. There are a lot of people that are putting forth comments asking that very same question, but at this time, the

Department of Ed has landed pretty firmly on this is for eighth grade students only, and not for lower grades. We will have to see how that turns out as they finish doing the rule-making, and see if there is any flexibility that is put into the rule-making to allow for lower grade level students to have this same type of exception, should North Carolina identify that they want to use it.

Hobe: Okay, and this next question, I want to emphasize that at this point, we are sharing the law and having many discussions about what we're going to do within the confines of the law. So this question is will North Carolina take the middle school math option, and when would this take place?

Howard: So I think the key thing to remember there is that we need input from all of you, and of course Dr. Atkinson has met with the superintendent a couple of times, maybe three times, or maybe it's twice in the past few months, and there were some meetings that are upcoming in the fall, as well. So at these meetings, and through other avenues that we have with the different \_\_\_\_\_ that several of us meet with across the state, you know, we have that statewide testing coordinators meeting in September. We're going to use all of those opportunities, and many, many more to get your input and your feedback on the advantages and the disadvantages of availing ourselves of that grade eight math option.

So at this point, it's not a simple question of yes or no; it's really more what do you think? Do you think we should? Do you think we shouldn't? And having said that, you know, it is a very complex situation. It's not as simple as we all would like for it to be, just a matter of you don't have to double test anymore.

You know, it's more complicated than that. And so we recognize that we wanted

to make sure we give you the information you need to keep having that conversation, so as we go through this process, we'll get closer to a point to where whatever ends up in the consolidated state plan is a decision that we all feel good about.

Hobe: Okay, thank you, Dr. Howard. The next question, will the math scores continue to be banked and used at the high school level?

Howard: So I don't know if we know 100% sure. We don't necessarily think that would continue or not. So that's not really a very good answer, is it? I think it's—

Sonoman: For federal reporting, they would not—those students would not have their score banked, whether that banking would continue should we have federal reporting and school performance grades separate from one another included in school performance grades, that is a business rule that would need to be considered at that time. But as the law reads, you would not use that high school—that end of course assessment that was taken by an eighth grader in the high school a second time. You would have to replace it with another assessment that is higher than the math taken.

So for example, it would be a Math III assessment that those students would be accounted into accountability for, as one example.

Howard: So that just illustrates, I think, the complexity of these questions. And particularly, you know, one thing that we were always trying to remember and I'm sure you are as well, and that's why I think you asked that question, is because we do have the school performance grades as well. So where does this

align? Where does this cross over? You know, all of that is part of what has to be considered here.

Hobe: Another thing that I'll add just as a reminder is that ESSA is implemented 2017-'18, and that this 2016-'17 year is a transition year, so all of these things that we do make decisions about, we'll begin implementation in 2017-'18. You've answered some of these questions regarding math. A couple of people wanted to know what would be the higher exam that would be used in high school, and Math III was one example that was given, but we don't know. Is there more to add on that?

Howard: I think you said it: we don't really know. The options would be Math III, ATT is mentioned occasionally as a possibility, but at this point, we're not really certain.

Hobe: And again, we're looking for feedback, so if you have thoughts on that, please share with us. I think that we have answered the questions on math. If not, feel free to go ahead and enter again. I'm going to move on to a question about English learners. It says can you repeat the slide around the up to four years EL.

Danks: Certainly, and that is a tricky one; even as we were reading over it, we were putting all of our thoughts together. So the law provides each state the option to include exited—and here we call those monitored former English learners—and again, that used to be monitored former limited English proficient, but we're changing that. So it gives each state the option to include those former ELs in the English learner subgroup for up to four years. So at this point, like Dr. Howard has explained, we're still in the discussion point of this, and certainly looking for your feedback. We're working collaboratively with various stakeholders to be

sure that we're understanding the pros and cons of including, not including; is four a magic number or not? So at this point, that's all up for discussion, but again, the purpose of this is just to outline what it states in the law.

Hobe: Okay, so I think maybe we do need to go back to the advanced math exception again. And maybe we should go back to those slides. Some of the questions that we're getting are sixth and seventh graders taking Math I, II, III will not need to take their math EOG, correct? And that's a question. The slide said eighth graders, so if we could clarify that.

Sonoman: At this point in time, the only guidance we have received so far from the Department of Education is that this only applies to eighth graders. We don't know if they will change that in the rule-making that they will put out for us after—closer into the fall, where they may clarify that lower grade levels would be able to do it, but if it remains as it is in the law, that would mean that if a seventh grader takes Math I, they would still be double tested. For whatever reason, I am not sure how that will work, but it is something that people from other states have sent in information expressing concern about that, and wanting the Department of Education to weigh in on allowing that. But at this time, they still have not done so. Therefore, we have to go based on what is currently in the law, and the negotiated rules that they have proposed, and that would say that it's only—only would apply to eighth grade students.

Howard: And one thing to remember in this conversation is that of course there's the law, and then there's the negotiated rule-making, which is what is happening now, and of course we've had three releases of proposed regulations around the law, and so

think of that in terms of an explanation, more detail of what the law actually means. But they have to propose, they have to be publicly vetted, which is what is happening now, and it gets more detailed than the law does, and then at some point, they will be adopted or not, and once they are adopted, then we're held to those, just like we are to the law, although there is some discussion about that as well, and part of that—all of that may end up depending—much of this may depend on the outcome of the presidential election.

But also, in a consolidated state plan that North Carolina does, it would not be impossible, I don't think, and I'm going to look at my team here—they can disagree if they'd like to—I do not think it would be impossible to propose something for seventh grade, and then the US Department of Education would be in the position to say no. And so that's one thing that we're trying to do as we go through this process, in addition to getting lots of input and feedback from all of you and our other colleagues across the state, and all of our stakeholders, who are also trying to look at this as what is it we possibly would like to propose or suggest, to kind of think outside the box, that would benefit the students of North Carolina?

And then of course if the US Department of Education says no, they say no, but you know, it's that old adage of you—sometimes you've got to be careful; don't ask a question unless you want an answer, first of all. And second of all, if you never ask a question, you might not get an answer, so we're trying to have that approach and we appreciate these questions because it helps us, and what we

really need to know is how you feel about these issues, so that we have some insight on how it would play out locally with you.

Hobe: Okay, this next question, I feel like we've addressed but I do want to go ahead and read and make sure that we do address it very clearly. Did I understand correctly that it is an option for eighth grade students taking Math I to not take the eighth grade math EOG if they take Math I EOC? It is an option, not required, correct? We could choose to still administer both EOG and Math I EOC.

Sonoman: We could, but it would not be used for accountability. The Math I EOC would be like it is now; not used for accountability at the middle school. It would not be able to replace the eighth grade mathematics assessment. This exception is designed to use one test for one student, and this would be where they would take—we would use the end of course result rather than the eighth grade mathematics. We could keep things as they are now and not afford ourselves this exception, but it would not be a—to me, it would not be a pick and choose if you want to let a student do both, or a LEA wants to give both and use one. It would be a statewide decision.

Howard: Right, and I don't know that we've heard that question before, and I don't know that we've asked that question, so that is one that we will ask. So typically, when it comes to federal accountability, the rules have to apply statewide. Now, the one exception to that, of course, now is this local national assessment at the high school level, which could end up being a local decision, so you can see from that that there are—there is additional flexibility in this law that we haven't had previously. So perhaps that is a question that we need to ask.

Hobe: Okay, here's a question: where can we find documentation on the breakdown on what is reported federal and what is reported state?

Howard: I'll have to think about—I mean, I could summarize it sitting here, but think about state as the school performance grade, and then think about federal previously was the annual measurable objectives, and previous to that was AYT, but we'll make a note of that, and that might be a good document that we could generate. We do have one document that we put together, that Dr. Fabrizio uses when he is presenting across the state; it's an overarching view of all of this, and it compares what is in the laws for ESSA versus school performance grades. So we'll put that up on TNN if we have not already done that. I do not think we have. So we'll take care of that. That may help. That may help.

Hobe: Okay, here's a question, and I believe this is referring to the proof of concept. How do we sign up for the assessment study?

Howard: Okay, so the proof of concept, we'll be sending out communication after the August board meeting. We'll be notifying, as we typically do, any districts with schools or charter schools that have been selected to be part of the sample. And in that communication as well, we'll have information on how to notify us if you would like to participate. And you know, that participation is open, so we'll just have a form. We just need to know who so we can make sure we have enough materials, etc. So I would say early August; it'll be after the August board meeting.

Hobe: Okay, thank you, Dr. Howard. With regards to high school math course rigor, will it still be dependent upon a student's passing Math III for school performance grades or will it change to proficiency in a fourth math?

Howard: So the math course rigor, of course, is a school performance grade, and it would remain in school performance grades, unless that law was changed, as it currently is being implemented. So the question becomes for the federal law, for ESSA, if we were to use math course rigor, it would be as a—what we refer to as an other school quality or student's success indicator. And please just know—and we'll get to those probably next week. Next week—that'll be next week's conversation—just know that those indicators have to be valid and they have to be meaningful, meaning they have to show a spread across the population. So the US Department of Education would not likely approve a measure that has a very high percentage of schools meeting that measure. They want to see some differentiation across the schools so we can identify those schools that need assistance.

Hobe: Okay, thank you, Dr. Howard. If we administered something like the ACT to our eleventh graders each year, could that be our locally determined test, meaning we wouldn't give EOCs?

Howard: So that is correct. The point of the locally—or the local nationally recognized assessment did—is in places, the state requires assessments. Now, one thing to remember about the ACT is for school performance grades, the standard or the measure that we use is the composite score of 17, which is the UNC system admission requirement. Now, we have to go back to the information we've

already talked about a couple of times with the expectation of this law that we're measuring students to be ready for college and career after high school.

So the question is—and it is a question—would that UNC system minimum 17 be approved? Or—and let me back up. Actually, if we were using the ACT, we would use the subtest, and the subtest, of course, for math or reading, for English, and for science, they have benchmarks that are aligned to students having a 75% chance of earning a C, or a 50% chance of a student earning a D in a credit bearing entry level college course. So what would be replaced would not be the composite score, it would be the subtest score for that particular assessment that would be taken in lieu of the state exam.

So the question becomes would we have to use that established ACT benchmark? Or would we have another benchmark? And if we did have another benchmark, or even with the ACT benchmark, we have to have evidence that that benchmark is valid with what are reporting it to measure, which is that students are prepared to continue on after high school. Do you have anything to add, Curtis?

Sonoman: It would also have to be aligned and reported like the end of course assessment. So you may have to—we would likely have to assign achievement levels at a—and identify what those achievement levels are, meaning that whatever college and career readiness standard is, say for example, the benchmark is—say for example it's identified that the benchmark is the minimum for college and career readiness, that would be considered—that benchmark would be considered the lowest level four in our model, and we would have to identify what would be

considered a level five above that, and then what would be considered levels one through three, below that benchmark.

Howard: That's an excellent point. I'm glad you brought that up.

Hobe: Based on some of the discussion that we've already had here, I'm going to rephrase one of these questions, and hopefully not offend the person asking the question, because I think we've answered her first part, but what it comes down to that we have not answered is might something like AP calculus or AP stat tests be used to account for the high school math component, if we took that advanced math exception?

Howard: So part of that feeds into the local nationally recognized high school assessment option. And at one time, I thought that I did see a reference to AP, but I've only seen it like once, and I haven't seen it again, and so I'm not 100% sure about that.

Sonoman: It's not out of the realm of possibility. It's something that if we—if we were to allow, we've received feedback and the state said, please allow us to submit locally selected assessments, I don't think it's out of possibility that that could be submitted, but then it would have to go through the process of being vetted and approved through all of the technical merits; they would have to measure the depth and breadth of the content standards so that then it could be aligned and reported accordingly. So there's lots of parts and pieces to this flexibility that we're being given that make things very messy, but it's not—you know, I don't think it's out of the scope of possibility to submit it and say we'd like to do this, and see if it can pass it, if North Carolina decides that we want to go down the road of offering a locally selected assessment.

Howard: I would just like to add that there's two different pieces at play here: one is the double testing at grade eight in taking a higher math; the other kind of separate from that is the nationally recognized high school assessment that could replace the state-required assessment. And I think we have to remember those are two different things that—and one thing about that nationally recognized—and I apologize if Curtis has already said this, because he probably did, but the decision in that LEA, in that district to use that local nationally recognized assessment, if it were approved by the state, it would have to be applied to the entire district. They would not be just for some students in the district; it would be for all of them. That would be with that local national recognized assessment.

Hobe: Okay, so if we were to use one of the higher level math assessments, would we then need to assign achievement levels to those?

Howard: Yes, yes, and I think Curtis touched on that, that the requirement is that the reporting has to be the same reporting that we have with the state assessment, so in North Carolina, we have five achievement levels, and so we would have to still have five achievement levels, and we would have to work with that nationally recognized assessment on determining what those achievement levels would be.

Sonoman: And if you are referring to the eighth grade option, yes, the test would have to be developed at the high school that would have achievement levels assigned to it, so in other words, if we were to choose a current assessment that we have that is higher, we would then have to increase the number of test items and turn it into an end of course assessment that would be able to be assigned achievement levels.

Howard: The same achievement levels.

Sonoman: Right.

Hobe: Okay, so changing gears here a bit. Will state tests be available in Spanish now?

Danks: So we can actually go back to this slide—nope—that explains the actual wording for it. Sorry, here we go. So if you look here on that bottom bullet: to the extent practicable, which is not a friendly word to say, assessments may be administered in a language and form most likely to yield accurate data. So you'll hear in a lot of conversations about any law—you'll hear a lot of the shorthand language that sometimes misses the real point of what the actual law is saying.

So several people have asked about the translated assessments, but it's important to note that we are undergoing quite a bit of research with various stakeholders to be sure that whatever assessment we choose, that that would yield accurate data on what the student knows and can do in the academic content area that they are being assessed. So we are working with, like I said, various people, we're getting a lot of research done to see—because in North Carolina, we do instruction in English, and so if we're providing instruction in English but assessing in a different language, we just need to be able to understand if that would be a valid and accurate measure of the student's performance.

Howard: Amanda, could I sum up what you just said, and say that the decision has not been made. At this point, you are researching that and gathering information but a decision has not been made.

Danks: Yeah, thank you.

Howard: Thank you.

Hobe: Okay, thank you. We're going to switch gears again and go back to alternate assessments and the 1% rule. Can we return to that slide and review that regarding participation and proficiency?

Danks: So I'll just go ahead and explain. The way things have been is that the 1% cap has been on students that can be students taking the alternate assessment. 1% of those students can be proficient. However, ESSA has changed that to now the 1% cap is on participation in that alternate assessment, meaning that across the state, we are held to a 1% participation cap for students taking the alternate assessment. I hope that that answers my question.

Hobe: I believe it does. The next question is back to locally selected exams. If districts are given the option of doing locally selected data proved alternate assessments from EOCs, how will districts be compared to each other? It seems that the state would be creating a situation where we would be comparing different, not necessarily equivalent assessment results.

Howard: So I think that's an interesting observation and that's evidence of why this is a very complicated conversation. So if you think about our measures, we have percent [ph] proficient, so for the proficiency calculation, it would just be adding up the students that met the proficiency standard on the state assessment, plus the students that met the proficiency standard on the nationally recognized assessment that a local may be given permission to use. Growth is a little bit more complicated, and of course, EVAAS [ph] growth in the state, so those would be conversations that we would have to have with staff who is the proprietor of EVAAS to see if they could generate growth as well from those assessments.

The assessments that are available, you know, nationally recognized, are assessments that typically there is a great deal of data for, and that is one of the criteria that we have to have in order to generate that growth analysis. I'm not aware at this point that we've delved real deeply into that, and the team is agreeing with me that we haven't, but you're making an excellent point in that. That is one of the details that we have to be aware of. And also remember, you know, the requirements are there for the school performance grades, and if those requirements, you know, remained as they are now today, then there are certain aspects that would have to continue regardless of what was in ESSA.

Hobe: Okay, next we have a couple of comments to share. One person says, I like the idea of not having to take two tests, so we're referring back to math; however, it would cause the eighth school results to appear skewed because the higher level math students would be excluded from results that might be publicly distributed. These students seem to proper up eighth grade results.

Howard: So I think we would add them together for the grade level proficiency, but now, you know, so we would report them out together, I think, but now of course, if you broke them out, then you might see some difference in performance between your eighth grade and your Math I. But from our accountability reports, we would be combining them together.

Hobe: Okay, another comment was that the comparison would be very helpful, and I'm thinking this is the comparison between state requirements and federal requirements. The next question: is there a possibility that work keys assessment,

if it continues to be a requirement, would be given to all twelfth graders instead of just concentrators?

Howard: Okay, so we've really had that question over the years, as I'm sure that you're aware. It has come up again recently in conversations, and we intend to take that to some of our colleagues here in the department and have that conversation again. There are some strong reasons for why that decision has not been made to offer that to all students, but we appreciate you sharing that, and we will continue to have that conversation. And this is an appropriate time to have it, as we consider ESSA and how those assessments fit into ESSA. It's on our white board here in our room.

Hobe: On the next question, where does North Carolina final exams fall under this since standard six has been eliminated?

Howard: Now, North Carolina final exams are not part of ESSA. It is part of the state requirement for growth. There are references in the state statute that requires growth and that is how we accomplish having that information, through the NC final exams. So unless something dramatically changed, there would be no reference to NC final exams, as far as the accountability part of ESSA.

Hobe: Would the tenth grade pre-ACT follow the same guidelines that were stated for the ACT?

Howard: So I'm a little bit uncertain what we mean by guidelines, so maybe if you could qualify that, but if it's asking is the pre-ACT giving an indication of how students will perform on ACT, then yes, that's correct. It will.

Hobe: Okay. If a nationally recognized test was used at the high school level, would that then take the place of English II, Math I, and biology for accountability purposes?

Howard: That—more than likely, yes. Yes, because the nationally recognized test—well, it depends, because ACT has the four subject test, which includes science, but SAT does not include science, and SAT would be one that would be a possibility. So in that case, it would not replace science. But remember, you have to look at those tests, not as a composite score or the overall score, but as the score on those individual assessments.

Hobe: Okay, then. Oh, another—a couple questions are coming in as we speak. Who would pay for the nationally recognized test?

Howard: Now, that's an excellent question. We always want to know who's going to pick up the tab. I don't know that we've had that conversation either. I think it came up early on; I'm definitely not going to commit the state's money, which I don't have authority, so I don't know that I can answer that at this time, but we will put that on the list.

Hobe: So the clarification given for the pre-ACT and whether that would follow the same guidelines is referring to what Curtis was stating, if it would replace EOCs, as well.

Howard: So pre-ACT would not have anything to do with replacing EOC.

Hobe: Okay, well, that is all the questions that we have now. I do want to thank everyone for listening and participating and asking great questions that help us to think about this and providing your feedback. We look forward to sharing with you next week on sessions C and H, accountability and reporting. And then the—

in two weeks after that, hearing more of your feedback. So do continue to think about this and process it, and send us questions and comments as we have these webinars, and we look forward to talking to you again next week.

[END RECORDING]