

**Commission on Access to Sound Basic Education
Assessment and Accountability Work Group
Draft Priorities**

The state's assessment and accountability system plays a critical role in monitoring whether students are receiving a sound, basic education. The assessment and accountability system provides information on whether students are at or above grade level in the knowledge and skills outlined in the state's Standard Course of Study (i.e. proficiency, which is the metric identified by the court as sufficient for having received a sound, basic education). Just as important, the state's system also provides information on how much a student has learned in a given school year compared to their knowledge and skills at the end of the previous school year (i.e. student growth). Both of these accountability measures are important for helping schools, districts, and policymakers better understand which schools are providing a sound, basic education and which schools need additional supports and resources.

However, public education is about more than just student performance on standardized assessments. A strong public education system is also important for ensuring a well-informed and engaged citizenry, a prosperous and prepared workforce, and a robust and vibrant democracy. To that end, the state should consider making the following adjustments to its assessment and accountability system.

1. Take advantage of the flexibility granted under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* to include multiple measures of school performance in the state's accountability system to help provide a more balanced, data-informed, and student-focused look at how schools are performing. These measures could be focused on
 - Chronic absenteeism
 - School climate
 - Student discipline (i.e. suspensions and other discipline actions disaggregated by various demographics and offenses not as a punitive measure but as a way to identify successes and areas for improvement)
 - Extended-year graduation rates (i.e. 6- and 7-year graduation rates)
 - College- and career-readiness
2. Create a plan for a more balanced statewide assessment system that can provide standards-aligned assessments to inform classroom learning and assist teachers in differentiating instruction, like NC Check-Ins and/or other formative assessments, as well as summative assessments for accountability. Assessments should be data-informed and student-focused.
3. Discontinue the School Performance Grades and create a new set of school and district accountability metrics that provide understandable and publicly available information on student performance and that includes information separately on the percent of students proficient and student growth on state assessments.

4. Ensure that the Department of Public Instruction has sufficient staff and resources to provide multi-year, data-driven supports for turning around low-performing schools and districts that includes
 - A comprehensive needs assessment
 - School improvement planning with focus on continuous improvement
 - School leader and teacher professional development
 - School leader and teacher in-school coaching
 - Engagement of the school community, including families
5. Endorse the state's focus on improving 3rd grade reading proficiency and the NC Early Childhood Foundation's Pathways to Grade Level Reading measures of success and action plan for ensuring that all 3rd graders are proficient in reading. To achieve those goals, the state must ensure that the state-supported K-2 literacy assessments currently being used in districts across the state remain formative assessments and are not used for accountability purposes.
6. The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety, should create a statewide definition of the roles and responsibilities for School Resource Officers (SROs) and implement statewide training to support SROs in carrying out those roles and responsibilities. The statewide definition and training should draw upon national and state-level models for effectively incorporating SROs in school environments.