

2015 assessment results and graduation rates analysis¹

The 2014-2015 school year marked the third year of Common Core State Standards implementation in North Carolina, and the third year of Common Core-aligned English language arts and math assessments. This is also the second year that assessments are tracking both grade level proficiency (readiness to move on to the next grade) and college and career readiness. Here are the big takeaways from this year's test score results and graduation rates.

Some progress in math, little in reading

- All subgroups of elementary and middle school students made gains in math from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. College and career readiness grew by one percentage point overall.
- College and career readiness in high school math grew by 1.6 percentage points, but grade level proficiency remained essentially flat.
- Reading scores remained essentially flat for elementary and middle school students, although there was a slight uptick in college and career readiness.
- There was significant regression in high school English, both in grade level proficiency and college and career readiness. This decrease was seen in almost all subgroups.

Little progress in closing proficiency gaps and college and career readiness gaps

- There is currently a 31.9 percentage point gap in college and career readiness between black and white students in elementary and middle school math. This gap is the exact same size—down to the decimal point—that it was in 2013-2014.
- In elementary and middle school reading, the college and career readiness gap between black and white students grew slightly from 31.5 percentage points in 2013-2014 to 31.7 percentage points in 2014-2015.

Graduation rates increase, but many graduates are not prepared for college and careers

- On-time graduation rates increased for all subgroups. Students with limited English proficiency and students with disabilities made especially large gains. Overall graduation rates now eclipse 85 percent.
- However, despite graduating more than 8 in 10 students on time last year, only about half of high school students scored at college- and career-ready levels on their end-of-course math and English assessments. While graduating is

¹ Data files are located on the NCDPI "Accountability and Testing Results" page: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/reporting/>.

important, North Carolina must do more to ensure all students graduate ready for success in the workforce or in postsecondary education.

North Carolinians are now getting an accurate picture of students’ progress toward college and career readiness

The Common Core standards and North Carolina’s aligned assessments are more rigorous than the standards and assessments in place prior to 2012-2013. As a result, administrators, teachers, parents, citizens and, most importantly, students are now receiving a more accurate and truthful picture of students’ progress toward achieving college and career readiness. North Carolina must stay the course and continue implementing strong standards and assessments that prepare all children for success after high school.²

Data tables

NOTE: In the tables below, green shading indicates gains of one percentage point or more between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. Red shading indicates decreases of one percentage point or more between 2013-2014 and 2014-2015.

Math end-of-grade assessment (grades 3-8):

Percentage of students achieving grade level proficiency (level 3, 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	51.0	52.2
American Indian	34.5	36.0
Asian	78.0	78.9
Black	30.5	32.1
Hispanic	42.2	43.5
Two or more races	50.7	50.8
White	62.9	64.2
Economically Disadvantaged Students	36.4	37.5
Limited English Proficient	25.6	27.0
Students With Disabilities	17.8	18.7

Math end-of-grade assessment (grades 3-8):

Percentage of students on track for college and career readiness (level 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	43.1	44.1
American Indian	27.0	27.3
Asian	72.4	73.3
Black	22.9	24.2
Hispanic	33.5	34.5

² An Academic Standards Review Commission, created by the General Assembly in 2014 (SB812), has been meeting monthly since September 2014 to review the Common Core standards. It must submit to the State Board of Education its findings and recommendations for modification of the standards no later than December 31, 2015.

Two or more races	42.4	42.6
White	54.8	56.1
Economically Disadvantaged Students	28.2	29.1
Limited English Proficient	17.9	18.8
Students With Disabilities	12.5	13.0

Math I end-of-course assessment (grade 9):

Percentage of students achieving grade level proficiency (level 3, 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	60.0	59.8
American Indian	44.8	42.6
Asian	82.6	84.2
Black	38.5	38.1
Hispanic	50.5	49.7
Two or more races	58.9	59.1
White	71.0	71.0
Economically Disadvantaged Students	43.5	42.6
Limited English Proficient	22.0	17.8
Students With Disabilities	19.3	17.6

Math I end-of-course assessment (grade 9):

Percentage of students on track for college and career readiness (level 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	46.9	48.5
American Indian	31.6	30.1
Asian	74.7	78.1
Black	24.8	26.2
Hispanic	35.9	37.1
Two or more races	44.4	46.3
White	58.3	60.2
Economically Disadvantaged Students	29.5	30.5
Limited English Proficient	12.3	10.5
Students With Disabilities	10.5	10.8

Reading end-of-grade assessment (grades 3-8):

Percentage of students achieving grade level proficiency (level 3, 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	56.3	56.3

American Indian	40.5	40.2
Asian	72.5	73.6
Black	37.9	37.9
Hispanic	41.4	42.0
Two or more races	58.4	57.8
White	69.3	69.4
Economically Disadvantaged Students	41.4	41.2
Limited English Proficient	17.6	17.8
Students With Disabilities	19.7	19.7

*Reading end-of-grade assessment (grades 3-8):
Percentage of students on track for college and career readiness (level 4 or 5)*

	2014	2015
All students	44.7	45.1
American Indian	28.8	28.6
Asian	63.0	64.5
Black	26.3	26.7
Hispanic	29.2	30.0
Two or more races	46.1	45.9
White	57.8	58.4
Economically Disadvantaged Students	29.3	29.7
Limited English Proficient	10.3	10.5
Students With Disabilities	13.2	13.5

*English II end-of-course assessment (grade 10):
Percentage of students achieving grade level proficiency (level 3, 4 or 5)*

	2014	2015
All students	61.2	59.6
American Indian	43.7	44.2
Asian	71.1	70.7
Black	44.2	41.7
Hispanic	50.6	48.9
Two or more races	63.5	61.4
White	72.0	71.0
Economically Disadvantaged Students	45.8	44.0
Limited English Proficient	8.9	7.4
Students With Disabilities	20.2	18.2

English II end-of-course assessment (grade 10):

Percentage of students on track for college and career readiness (level 4 or 5)

	2014	2015
All students	51.7	50.0
American Indian	33.3	33.9
Asian	63.8	64.1
Black	33.4	31.3
Hispanic	40.0	38.8
Two or more races	52.7	52.2
White	63.4	61.9
Economically Disadvantaged Students	35.3	33.8
Limited English Proficient	5.1	<5
Students With Disabilities	14.1	12.5

Statewide graduation rates

4-year cohort graduation rates (percentage of students graduating on time)

	2014	2015
All students	83.9	85.4
American Indian	79.4	81.9
Asian	91.3	92.0
Black	79.9	82.0
Hispanic	77.4	79.9
Two or more races	82.7	84.4
White	87.1	88.2
Economically Disadvantaged Students	78.0	79.4
Limited English Proficient	51.7	57.5
Students With Disabilities	64.4	67.1