



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Special Education Directors
District Test Coordinators
District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment

FROM: Elizabeth Jones, Director
Office of Assessment

RE: National Center State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessments

DATE: December 2, 2015

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) administered the NCSC alternate assessment in English Language Arts and Mathematics to students ages 8–13 and 16 (commensurate with grades 3–8 and 11) for the first time in the spring of 2015. This assessment was developed by a group of states through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education and is linked to South Carolina’s college- and career-ready standards.

District, school, and student results from the assessment were recently provided in electronic format to District Test Coordinators for Alternate Assessment (DTCs-Alt). Additionally, two paper copies of the student reports have been shipped to districts to share with parents and teachers.

Teachers of alternate assessment–eligible students are expected to teach academic content in compliance with the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Districts and schools are encouraged to include these special education teachers in professional learning opportunities regarding instruction related to the state’s academic standards.

Attached to this memorandum is additional information regarding state alternate assessments on Alternate Achievement Standards to be administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities in spring 2016. Please share with the appropriate personnel in your district.

For questions regarding alternate assessments, please contact Jill Christmus by email at mchristmus@ed.sc.gov or Suzanne Swaffield at sswaffie@ed.sc.gov.

Attachment

2015–16 Alternate Assessments on Alternate Achievement Standards

The alternate assessments listed below will be administered during the 2015–16 school year.

Testing Program	Content Areas	Grades	Ages	Testing Dates
SC-Alt	Science	4–8	9–13	March–April
	Biology End-of Course	11	16	
	Social Studies	4–8	9–13	
South Carolina National Center State Collaborative (SCNCSC)	English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics	3–8 and 11	8–13 and 16	March–April
Alternate ACCESS for ELLs	English Language Proficiency	K5–12 or until exit	Ages 5–21	February
Alternate Career Readiness Districts select from approved list of transition assessments . Note: A form will be provided for reporting results.	Career/Community Readiness	11	16	May be administered at any time during the school year. Reporting due no later than June 3, 2016.

Eligibility

As a reminder, students who are determined by the IEP team to be eligible for alternate assessment are assigned to a test form based on their age as of September 1 as it appears in Precode. Many students who participate in alternate assessment are non-graded or have EFA grades that are not commensurate with the grade in which they should be placed. This is a link to the [Age and Birth Date Reference Sheet](#) to assist in determining what test a student will be expected to take. Additionally, there is an [IEP Guidance document](#) on the SCDE website that provides guidance for IEP teams in determining which students should participate in alternate assessment.

Training

The SC-Alt training for DTCs-Alt will be held via webinar December 14 and 16. Two sessions will be held each day. Information on the call-in number and session times will be provided prior to the sessions. Regional training for test administrators new to SC-Alt will be held January 25–29, 2016. Location information will be provided as soon as possible. The DTCs-Alt will receive materials for district-level training to be held in February 2016.

The NCSC training for DTCs-Alt and test administrators will be delivered through online modules beginning in February 2016.

Instructional Resources

There are several resources on the SCDE website to assist teachers with planning academic instruction to support students who participate in alternate assessment. Information was provided on the NCSC “Student Roster Report” describing student performance on the writing field-test item to guide instructional decisions although the writing field-test item results were not included in the student score. [NCSC Writing Information](#) provides grade-level scoring rubrics that teachers may use to inform instruction in writing. Another NCSC resource for teachers, [Grade-level Instructional Expectations and](#)

[Sample Activities](#), includes sample instructional activities for ELA and mathematics. The [NCSC wiki](#) for ELA and mathematics contains a number of additional resources.

Resources for social studies and science instruction include the [Social Studies Support Guide for Instruction and Assessment](#) and the [Science Support Guide for Instruction and Assessment](#).