



SENATE BILL 621: Testing Reduction Act of 2019.

2019-2020 General Assembly

Committee:	Senate Rules and Operations of the Senate	Date:	April 18, 2019
Introduced by:	Sens. Tillman, Ballard, Sawyer	Prepared by:	Susan Sitze*
Analysis of:	Second Edition		Staff Attorney

OVERVIEW: *Senate Bill 621 would reduce the number of tests administered to students in public schools. The bill would eliminate the North Carolina Final Exams (NCFEs), require reporting on and reductions in local testing, and require a review of the third grade reading end-of-grade test to ensure alignment with the Read to Achieve alternative assessment.*

CURRENT LAW: Under the terms of the now-expired federal Race to the Top grant and No Child Left Behind waiver, North Carolina had to provide a growth measure for every teacher in the State. Since growth measures require some type of standardized measure of student achievement, NCFEs were created to meet that requirement for courses that did not have an end-of-grade test (EOG) or end-of-course test (EOC). Under State Board of Education (State Board) Policy TEST-016, NCFEs are used to provide growth data for teachers of these courses. NCFEs are not currently required by State or federal law.

Under G.S. 115C-174.11(d), the State Board cannot require public schools to administer any standardized tests except those otherwise required by State or federal law. However, local boards of education may require additional standardized assessments.

G.S. 115C-174.12 requires local boards of education to annually notify the State Board of any local standardized testing requirements. Additionally, the State Board must submit an annual report on both statewide testing and local testing.

BILL ANALYSIS: Senate Bill 621 would require the State Board to eliminate the use of NCFEs for any purpose. By March 15, 2020, the State Board and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) would be required to submit a plan to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee (Education Oversight) on how to use other means to accomplish the purposes for which NCFEs are used.

The bill would also require the State Board to provide in its annual testing summary the average over the prior two-year period of (i) the number of tests administered and (ii) the number of hours required for students to complete the tests. The summary would be based on data reported by local boards of education under existing law.

Every two years, each local board of education would be required to review its local standardized testing requirements. If either the number of tests administered or the number of hours required for students to complete the tests is higher than the State average, the local board would be required to submit to the State Board and DPI a plan to put local testing in line with the State average. The State Board must waive this requirement if the local board has made significant progress toward reducing local testing. As part of its annual reporting to Education Oversight, the State Board would be required to provide a summary of these local plans.

Additionally, DPI would be required to study the third grade reading EOG to check for alignment with the Read to Achieve alternative assessment. Based on its examination, DPI would be required to modify

Karen Cochrane-Brown
Director



Legislative Analysis
Division
919-733-2578

Senate Bill 621

Page 2

the third grade reading assessment and report on those modifications by March 15, 2020, to Education Oversight.

EFFECTIVE DATE: The bill would be effective when it becomes law. The local testing reporting requirements would apply beginning with reports issued in 2020 based on data from the 2019-2020 school year.

**Brian Gwyn, Staff Attorney, substantially contributed to this summary.*