Report to the North Carolina General Assembly

Nationally Norm-Referenced College Admissions Test

SL 2017-57, (SB 257), SECTION 7.26C.(c)

Date Due: May 15, 2019 – UPDATE SUBMITTED July 15, 2019
Report # 104A
DPI Chronological Schedule, 2018-2019
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

SBE VISION: Every public school student will graduate ready for post-secondary education and work, prepared to be a globally engaged and productive citizen through access to needed resources and rigor.

SBE MISSION: The State Board of Education will use its constitutional authority to lead and uphold the system of public education in North Carolina that guarantees every student in this state an opportunity to receive a sound basic education.

ERIC DAVIS
Chair: Charlotte – At-Large

ALAN DUNCAN
Vice Chair: Greensboro – Piedmont-Triad Region

DAN FOREST
Lieutenant Governor: Raleigh – Ex Officio

DALE FOLWELL
State Treasurer: Raleigh – Ex Officio

MARK JOHNSON
Secretary to the Board: Raleigh

JILL CAMNITZ
Greenville – Northeast Region

REGINALD KENAN
Rose Hill – Southeast Region

AMY WHITE
Garner – North Central Region

OLIVIA OXENDINE
Lumberton – Sandhills Region

JAMES FORD
Charlotte – Southwest Region

J.B. BUXTON
Raleigh – At-Large

NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Mark Johnson, State Superintendent :: 301 N. Wilmington Street :: Raleigh, North Carolina 27601-2825

In compliance with federal law, the NC Department of Public Instruction administers all state-operated educational programs, employment activities and admissions without discrimination because of race, religion, national or ethnic origin, color, age, military service, disability, or gender, except where exemption is appropriate and allowed by law.

Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination issues should be directed to:
David Stegall, Ed.D, Deputy Superintendent of Innovation
6307 Mall Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-6307 / Phone: (919) 807-3970 / Email: david.stegall@dpi.nc.gov

Visit us on the Web: www.ncpublicschools.org
Introduction

Session Law 2017-257, the Current Operations Appropriations Act of 2017, became law on June 28, 2017. Among its many provisions, the Session Law made certain changes to General Statute 115C-174.11 and state law concerning nationally normed-reference college admissions tests.

In particular, Section 7.26C.(a) of the Session Law modified G.S. 115C-174.11(c)(4) such that the law now states that “to the extent funds are made available, the State Board of Education shall use a competitive bid process to adopt one nationally norm-referenced college admissions test to make available to local school administrative units, regional schools, and charter schools to administer to all students in the eleventh grade unless the student has already taken a comparable test and scored at or above a level set by the State Board.” Additionally, the G.S. 115C-174.11(c)(4) was revised to state that “to the extent funds are made available for this purpose, and except as otherwise provided in G.S. 115C-174.22, “…the State Board shall plan for and require the administration of diagnostic tests in the eighth and tenth grades that align to the nationally norm-referenced college admissions test adopted by the State Board through the competitive bid process pursuant to G.S. 115C-174.11(c)(4). The results of the tests shall be used to help diagnose student learning and provide for students an indication of whether they are on track to be remediation-free at a community college or university.”

Further, Section 7.26C.(c) of Session Law 2017-257 stated that the State Board of Education “shall report on the results of the competitive bid process to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division no later than May 15, 2019.”

In response to these statutory requirements, and consistent with G.S. 115C-11(i) and G.S. 115C-21(a)(9), the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided technical and administrative assistance to facilitate the competitive bid process. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction’s Purchasing and Contract Section first released a Request for Proposals (RFP) on January 8, 2019. The following chart provides the schedule for the RFP facilitated by NCDPI:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Date and Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Issue RFP</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>January 8, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Written Questions</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>January 25, 2019 by 2:00 P.M. EST</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Response to Questions</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>February 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submit Proposals</td>
<td>Vendor</td>
<td>February 12, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Representative of NCDPI’s four-person evaluation panel provides report on RFP to SBE</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>May 1, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBE requests that the review panel provide a recommendation with rationale</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>May 2, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation panel reconvenes and unanimously determines recommendation with rationale</td>
<td>State</td>
<td>May 6, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the above activities, the State submitted questions to the potential vendors for clarification as part of the proposal review process.

The State received three proposals. The evaluation determined each potential vendor’s response to the requirements in the Scope of Work as detailed in the RFP. The outcome of this review was a recommendation for the award of the contract, presented to the State Board of Education on May 13, 2019. After reviewing the information provided by the Department’s internal four-person evaluation panel and the rational for the panel’s recommendation, the Board directed the agency to reissue the RFP and institute a process that includes (1) feedback from local education agencies and postsecondary partners to inform the contract requirements and the evaluation rubric, and (2) a larger, more diverse RFP panel, including assessment experts, representation from LEAs, and postsecondary stakeholders. The Board anticipates that it will be better able to make an informed, responsive award with the additional engagement of educators, practitioners, and other stakeholders. Their insights regarding test administration, customer service concerns, and the preferred features for a nationally norm-referenced college admissions test will help ensure that North Carolina has the correct tool to help diagnose student learning and provide for students an indication of whether they are on track to be remediation-free at a community college or university.

**UPDATED Next Steps:**
The Department of Public Instruction staff will work closely with the State Board of Education, LEAs, and other stakeholders to capture feedback on additional information to include in a new RFP for the state’s nationally norm-referenced college admissions test. It is expected that a new RFP will issue for advertisement in the next 90 days (mid-August 2019).

**UPDATE:** In a subsequent meeting on June 5, the State Board directed the Department of Public Instruction to award the RFP to the current vendor, ACT, for a period of one year with no extensions. The contract was finalized June 28, 2019.