

FROM
THE OFFICE
OF THE
SUPERINTENDENT



December 7, 2020

Dear Parents,

Each year, all North Carolina public school students take standardized tests that are required by the federal government for accountability purposes. Last spring, the federal government waived this requirement due to the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on schools nationwide. As of December 2020, the U.S. Department of Education has not waived the test requirement for this school year.

In addition, the [North Carolina State Board of Education](#) decided in November that schools must administer these assessments in person. Their decision was made to protect the reliability and validity of test data and to ensure equitable access to the test, given statewide concerns about internet connectivity and the lack of technology.

As a result of these decisions at the state and federal level, all North Carolina students will take all End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) tests in person this school year. You will be contacted by your child's school with the specific test dates and times.

Please be assured that we will follow all health and safety protocols during testing sessions. These [protocols](#) include requiring face coverings, limiting group sizes and socially distancing in testing areas, frequent cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces, and frequent handwashing/hand-sanitizing. Parents/guardians of students who have documented medical conditions that may prevent them from testing in-person due to COVID-19 may work with their children's schools to apply for a waiver.

We understand that last spring and this school year have presented challenges unlike any others. If there are any changes in state and federal testing policies, we will let you know. Please know we are all advocating for waivers from these testing requirements, which are designed to evaluate student performance for accountability purposes.

We do plan to move forward with a few, non-standardized assessments in key grades and subjects, however, so your child's teachers can pinpoint where your child may need more help. This will also help teachers know how their students are doing overall. The information will be helpful for parents. It will show where your child is in comparison to other students, both in GCS and nationally, as well as what skills your child knows and doesn't know based on his/her grade level.

Please contact your child's principal should you have additional questions/concerns. We deeply appreciate all you are doing to help support your children's learning during the pandemic.

For all children,

Sharon L. Contreras, PhD
Superintendent