The **Student Assessment Section of the Alabama State Department of Education** is responsible for the coordination, development, and implementation of the state testing program. Its goal is to improve academic achievement for all Alabama students, including public charter school students. This goal is accomplished by providing administrators, educators, parents, and the community with the tools and information about student performance in the context of college- and career-readiness.

All public charter schools in the state established under the Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act (Act 2015-3) are public schools and are part of the public education system of the state.

Specific to student assessment in Alabama public charter schools, Act 2015-3 states:

**Performance framework.**

Section 8. (a) (1) a.b.

The performance provisions within the charter contract shall be based on a performance framework that clearly sets forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the authorizer’s evaluations of each public charter school. The performance framework shall include indicators, measures, and metrics for, at a minimum:

- Student academic **proficiency**, which includes, but is not limited to, performance on state standardized assessments.
- Student academic **growth**, which includes, but is not limited to, performance on state standardized assessments.

Section 8. (5)

For each public charter school it oversees, the authorizer shall be responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting all data from state assessments in accordance with the performance framework.

**Applicability of other laws, rules, and regulations.** Section 9(d)(2).

Public charter schools shall be subject to the statewide end-of-year annual standardized assessment as applicable to other public schools in the state, but nothing herein shall preclude a public charter school from establishing additional student assessment measures that go beyond state requirements if the school’s authorizer approves such measures.

In order to maintain test integrity and data validity, state assessments must be administered according to the policies and procedures established by the Student Assessment Section. All personnel involved in the administration of state assessments must be trained on the following procedures:
- Role responsibilities of all personnel associated with the administration of the assessment as described in the *Alabama Student Assessment Program Handbook for Test Administration*
- Standardized testing conditions
- Security of testing materials
- Distribution and collection of testing materials
- Professional ethics

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**Will test scores for public charter schools be included with Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) data?**
Yes. Assessment data for all public schools, including public charter schools, must be included in reports that are publicly released and submitted annually to the United States Department of Education.

**Will test scores for charter schools be included with data for district reports?**
- A *start-up* public charter school shall function as a local educational agency (LEA); therefore, assessment data will not be included in the LEA report for any school district.
- A *conversion* public charter school shall remain a part of the LEA in which the non-charter public school existed prior to its conversion to a public charter school. Assessment data for a conversion school will be included in the LEA report for the school district whose local school board is the charter authorizer.

**How will the ALSDE determine a public charter school’s eligibility for administering state assessments in its building and with its staff?**
All procedures put in place by the ALSDE for any public school must be followed for the administration of standardized tests. Each public charter school must develop a Test Security Plan. This plan must be reviewed and approved by the ALSDE Student Assessment Section annually. The plan must include:
- Description of the school’s secure storage area meeting ALSDE specifications.
- Documentation of training prior to each assessment.
- Proof of certificated personnel.
  - All personnel handling test materials must be certificated. This includes test administrators, room supervisors, and building test coordinators.
  - Failure to follow security procedures promulgated by the Alabama State Board of Education and published in the *Alabama Administrative Code (AAC)*, §290-4-2-.04; the *Alabama Student Assessment Program Handbook for Test Administration*; and the test administrator’s manuals may result in disciplinary action by the local board of education and/or revocation of the teaching certificate by the ALSDE.

**Will a public charter school be subject to monitoring during testing?**
Yes. All public schools are subject to monitoring by the ALSDE and or ACT staff.

**What state assessments are required for 2015-2016?**
Grade 3: *ACT Aspire* Reading and Mathematics OR *Alabama Alternate Assessment (AAA)*
Grade 4: *ACT Aspire* Reading and Mathematics OR AAA
Grade 5: *ACT Aspire* Reading, Mathematics, and Science OR AAA
Grade 6: *ACT Aspire* Reading and Mathematics OR AAA
Grade 7: *ACT Aspire* Reading, Mathematics, and Science OR AAA
Grade 8: *ACT Aspire* Reading and Mathematics OR AAA
Grade 10: *ACT Aspire* Reading, Mathematics, Science, English, and Writing OR AAA
Grade 11: *ACT Plus Writing* OR AAA
Grade 12: *ACT WorkKeys* (Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, and Locating Information) OR AAA

Will students receiving English Learner (EL) services be required to participate in the Student Assessment Program?
Yes. All public charter school students receiving EL services must participate in the Student Assessment Program as outlined in the contents of the *Alabama Student Assessment Program Policies and Procedures for Students of Special Populations* ([http://www.alsde.edu/sec/sa/Special%20Populations/Alabama_Student_Assessment_Program_Policies_and_Procedures_for_Students_of_Special_Populations_2014.pdf](http://www.alsde.edu/sec/sa/Special%20Populations/Alabama_Student_Assessment_Program_Policies_and_Procedures_for_Students_of_Special_Populations_2014.pdf)). In addition to the assessments listed above, English Learners in Grades K-12 must be assessed with *ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 OR Alternate ACCESS for ELLs*.

Will special education students in public charter schools be required to participate in state assessments?
Yes. All students, including students with disabilities, must participate in state assessments in order to be in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Will public charter schools be required to participate in National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)?
If a charter school receives Title I funding, participation in NAEP at Grades 4 and 8 in reading and mathematics will be required.

**NOTE:** This working document “highlights” some key student assessment components in the *Alabama School Choice and Student Opportunity Act* (Act 2015-3). It does not attempt to address all content specific to student assessment laws, rules, and regulations. The preliminary guidance provided in this working document will be updated as the Alabama State Department of Education develops specific guidance regarding Alabama public charter schools. Please send questions to pcs@alsde.edu.