

Program Accountability Field Test for the North Carolina Agricultural Education Program

History

In 2002, the North Carolina Agriculture Teachers' Association (NCATA) began discussions regarding the need for a broad, comprehensive assessment tool for program improvement and accountability in agricultural education. The NCATA asked the state agricultural education leadership team at NC State University to provide leadership for the development of a program accountability model that could be used in agricultural education. Over the next 18 months, the initial development on this model was in process. A national review of similar models in other states was conducted and expertise was provided by Oklahoma, Ohio, Missouri, California and Arizona.

An instrument was designed in collaboration with agriculture teachers, university teacher educators, industry representatives, and local school administrators. This tool was shared with teachers for further refinement in the summer of 2003 and a trial run of the instrument was conducted in the spring of 2004. This initial trial instrument was utilized by 76 agricultural education programs from across the state of North Carolina to collect data pertinent to agricultural education programs and to refine the instrument. This initial trial run provided quantitative and qualitative feedback for further improvements and enhancements to the instrument.

Legislative Action

During the 2004 session of the North Carolina General Assembly, House Bill 1414 was enacted. The bill called for a two-year field test of the Agricultural Education Program Accountability Model to be conducted. The legislation is as follows:

ACCOUNTABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION

SECTION 7.20A. *During the 2005-2006 school year, the State Board of Education shall submit an amended State Career-Technical Education Plan to the United States Department of Education to:*

- (1) Permit the State Board to field test the North Carolina Agricultural Education Program Standards and collect data on these Standards for two years;*
- (2) Permit the use of the data collected under the field test as an alternative to the end-of-course tests in the Vocational Education Competency Achievement Tracking System (VoCATS) and authorize the use of that data to satisfy the technical attainment requirement for continued Carl D. Perkins funding;*
- (3) Require the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Agricultural Education at North Carolina State University to monitor the program to ensure compliance with all Standards; and*
- (4) Authorize the State Board of Education to determine whether to use the North Carolina Agricultural Education Program Standards on a statewide basis if the two years of field testing are successful.*
- (5) The Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Agricultural Education at North Carolina State University shall report on the field test to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by October 15, 2006.*

Throughout the fall and winter of 2004, several meetings focused on the implementation of House Bill 1414 have been conducted between Department of Public Instruction Career and Technical Education Leaders, NCATA representatives and the State Agricultural Education Leadership Team. These discussions have been beneficial in working out many of the implementation details for this legislation. The results of these on-going discussions have resulted in a timeline for implementation.

Future Timeline

The timeline for implementation of House Bill 1414 is as follows:

(1) 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 School Years

The program accountability instrument will be completed by all agricultural education programs in North Carolina in the spring of 2005 and 2006. Results of these two years will help to further refine the instrument and establish baseline data for determining a quality scale for agricultural education programs. The VoCATS accountability system will continue as usual with data being collected and reported during these years. This data will be used for comparison purposes during the actual field test.

(2) Summer 2006

Validation of scales will be conducted by faculty at NC State University and a quality scale will be established.

(3) Summer/Fall 2006

The agricultural education program accountability model will be prepared for submission to the United States Department of Education for inclusion in North Carolina's State Plan for Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act documentation required to meet the accountability requirements of the Act (Note: this assumes re-authorization of this federal legislation; if the re-authorization does not occur, an alternative plan would be developed to address whatever federal legislation may be in place for the next five years). The Department of Public Instruction will submit a formal request to the State Board of Education and to the United States Department of Education for the Agricultural Education Program Accountability model to be included in the plan for Career and Technical education for North Carolina.

(4) Fall 2006

In compliance with HB 1414, a progress report will be provided to the North Carolina General Assembly Education Oversight Committee.

(5) 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 School Years

The alternative agricultural education program accountability model will be field tested by all agricultural education programs in North Carolina in lieu of the end-of-course tests in the VoCATS accountability model.

(6) 2008-2009 School Year

Combined data from the Career and Technical education model (VoCATS) and the Agricultural Education Program Accountability Model will be collected.

(7) Summer/Fall 2009

A comparative analysis will be conducted on the two results of the field test and VoCATS system.

(8) Fall/Winter 2009

After collected data has been analyzed, recommendations will be made to the State Board of Education.