

Technical Note

Micron® ECC Module for NAND Flash via Xilinx® Spartan™-3 FPGA

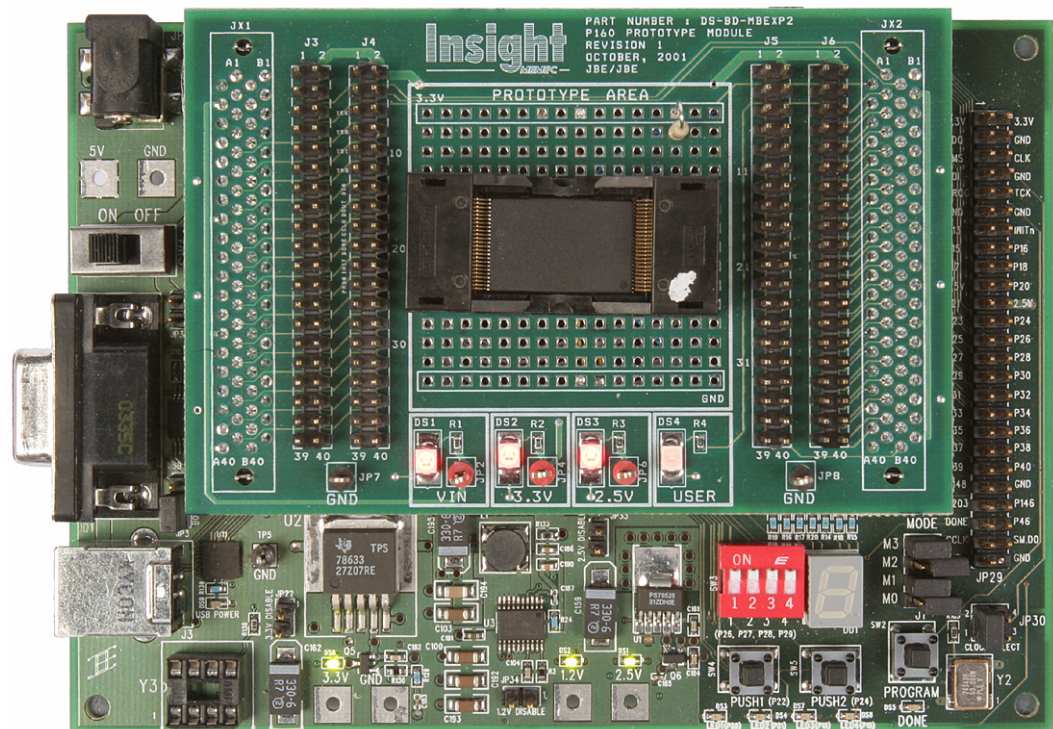
For detailed NAND Flash product information, see the 2Gb NAND Flash data sheet at www.micron.com/products/nand/partlist.aspx.

Overview

NAND Flash devices have quickly become the preferred solution for high-density static memory storage, particularly in mobile product applications. As systems become capable of accessing more and more memory space, larger amounts of data are stored and transferred both within systems and across networks. When storing and transferring large volumes of data, it is essential to detect and correct errors that may occur. Error correction code (ECC) fulfills this critical requirement.

The Micron® ECC module was developed and tested using Xilinx® Spartan™-3 and can be ported to certain other platforms of the user's choosing.

Figure 1: Spartan-3 Board



ECC corrects single data bits that have changed from their original values. The Micron NAND Flash ECC module detects the error, maintains ECC information, and corrects one single-bit error for each 512 bytes of data. All ECC activity is controlled by this ECC module.

In situations where the processor lacks a native NAND Flash controller, it is possible to design a simple memory-mapped interface. Where the memory-mapped design provides a hardware interface to NAND, ECC is typically part of the application software and is not provided.

The ECC circuit described in this technical note is quite modest and in many cases could fit in a complex programmable logic device (CPLD) or in spare gates of a larger field-programmable gate array (FPGA) already integral to the design.

The Micron ECC module supports all standard NAND Flash commands and will interrupt the host device communicating with the NAND Flash device upon error detection or correction. Utilizing the ECC module has no adverse impact on NAND Flash device performance. The ECC module can be altered by changing its model to support different ECC and data segment configurations.

This technical note describes the features of the Micron NAND Flash ECC module and how it calculates and implements ECC.

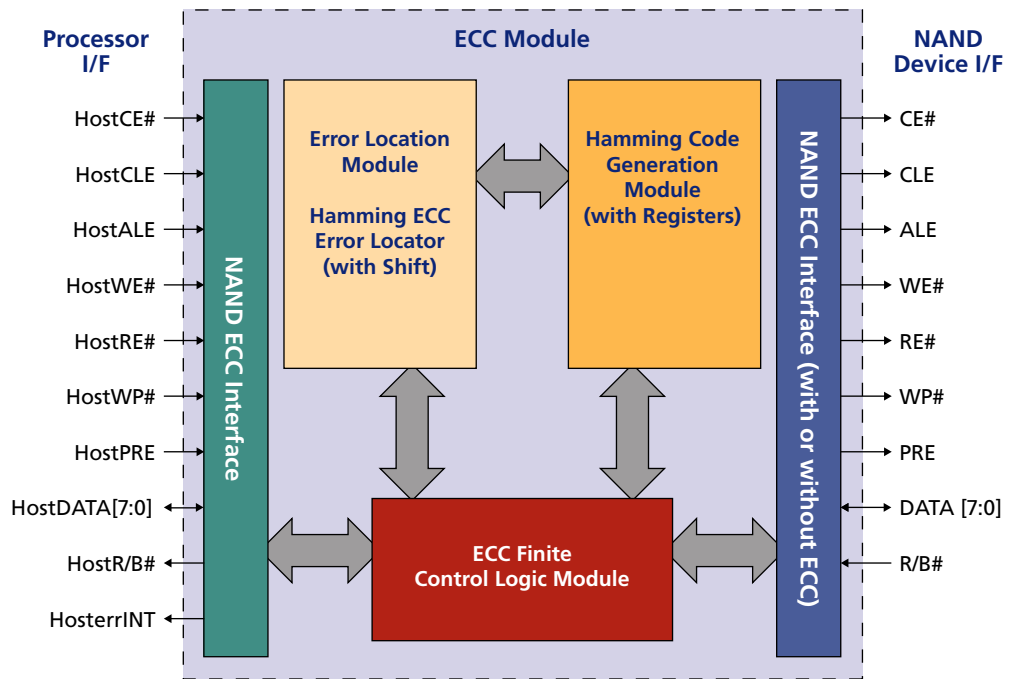
Micron ECC Module Configuration

The ECC module is designed to be placed between the NAND Flash device and the processor interface, as shown in Figure 2 on page 3. This processor interface can be a simple memory-mapped interface or a more complex controller requiring external or software ECC. The ECC module works in conjunction with the Micron NAND Flash controller to provide a glueless memory-mapped interface for nearly any host processor. The controller presents the NAND Flash device to the host processor as an SRAM interface. This supports a straightforward interface to the processor and minimizes the complexity of the NAND Flash interface.

Micron NAND Flash Controller

The NAND Flash controller is rated for a maximum clock speed of 100 MHz, with an asynchronous 10ns access delay. For more information on the Micron NAND Flash controller, see technical note TN-29-06 at www.micron.com/products/nand/technotes.

Figure 2: ECC Module Block Diagram



Note: I/F = interface.

Table 1: Pin Descriptions—Host Side

Symbol	Type	Pin Function
ALE	Input	These are standard NAND Flash interface pins. For detailed information, refer to the Micron NAND Flash data sheet.
CE#	Input	
CLE	Input	
PRE	Input	
RE#	Input	
WE#	Input	
WP#	Input	
DATA [7:0]	Bidirectional	
R/B#	Output	The ready/busy# line is defined as busy when the NAND Flash part is busy or an ECC WRITE is in progress. Timing constraints for the R/B# pin are described in "READ Operation" and "WRITE Operation" on page 5 and "Write States" on page 12.
errINT	Output	This is the interrupt line. After a READ, if the ECC module finds an error, it takes the interrupt line HIGH for one clock cycle, signaling the controller that an error has been detected.

System Overview

The Micron ECC module is designed and implemented using the following hardware and software:

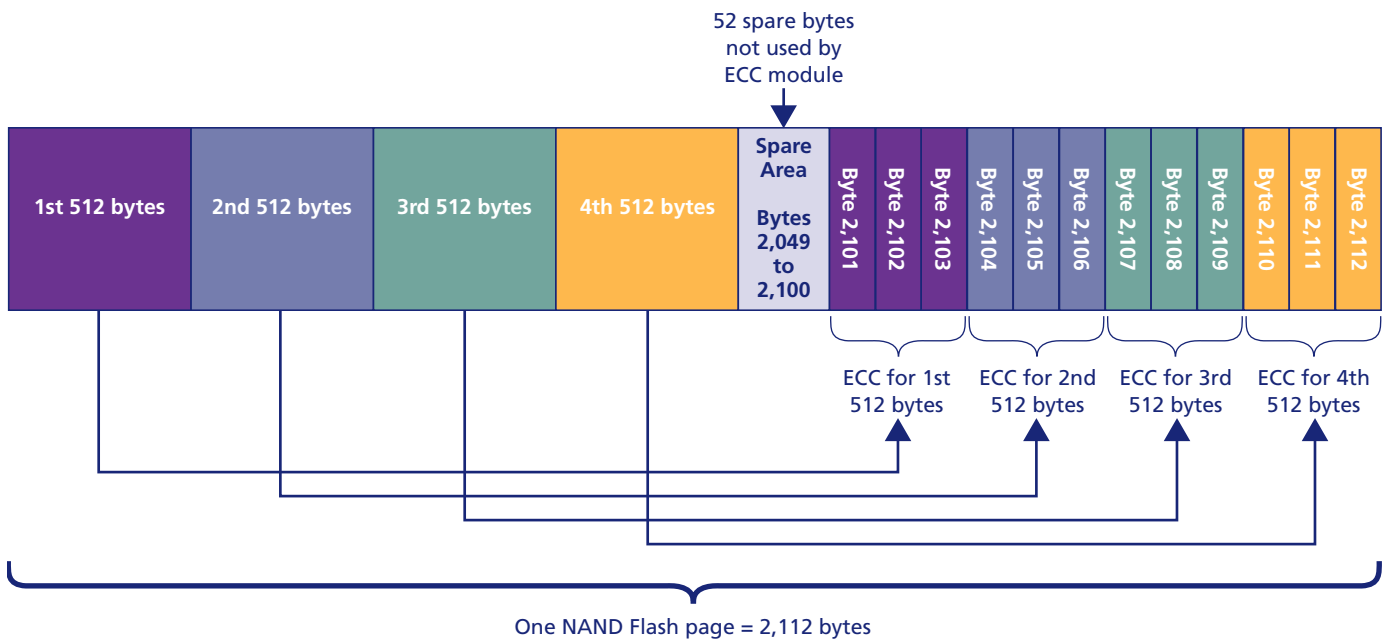
- Xilinx[®] Spartan[™]-3 board
- Memec Insight Prototype P160 board with 48-pin TSOP socket
- Xilinx ISE[™] 6.2i
- Xilinx Platform Studio
- Xilinx Impact
- Xilinx XMD
- ModelSim[®]
- Micron 2Gb NAND Flash device

ECC Scheme

The NAND Flash ECC module implements a Hamming ECC scheme that can correct 1-bit errors and detect 2-bit errors in each 512-byte sector of the 2K NAND Flash page. The Hamming code uses 24 bits (3 bytes) of ECC information for each 512-byte sector, so 12 bytes of ECC encoding information is required per 2KB page. This ECC data is stored at the end of the 2,112-byte page (bytes 2,101–2,112); the controller can use the previous 52 bytes of extra space on each NAND Flash page. The ECC module does not calculate the ECC for the “spare” 52 bytes of information at the end of each page of the NAND blocks.

Together, the NAND Flash controller and the NAND ECC module provide a complete NAND Flash error management solution. This solution enables customers to easily incorporate NAND Flash devices without additional ECC considerations. Figure 3 depicts the ECC scheme.

Figure 3: Data/ECC Organization



Working Description

READ Operation

A READ operation with the ECC module needs to be initiated as a full-page READ for the ECC to be accurate. A full-page READ is necessary because the ECC is written to bytes 2,101–2,112. If the full-page READ is not executed, the controller cannot calculate the ECC for all four 512-byte sectors.

If a READ is initiated and the host tries to read byte 2,048, the ECC module pulls the R/B# line LOW, starts a READ in the ECC, and loads the ECC data into a shift register to calculate error locations when detectable errors are present. After this process is complete for the full-page READ, the R/B# line is pulled HIGH, and the host continues reading the remaining 52 data bytes by toggling the RE# line.

WRITE Operation

WRITES initiated using the ECC module must be full-page WRITES (2,112 bytes). This gives the ECC module time to calculate the ECC values for the whole page and write them to the correct locations. Similar to READs, after the host writes the 2,048th byte, the ECC module pulls the R/B# line LOW and starts writing the ECC into bytes 2,101 through 2,112. After this is complete and the R/B# line is HIGH again, the host continues to write the last 52 bytes.

NAND Flash Command Routing

All NAND Flash commands, such as READ ID, READ STATUS, RESET, and BLOCK ERASE, are piped directly to the NAND Flash device.

Micron ECC Module Features and Characteristics

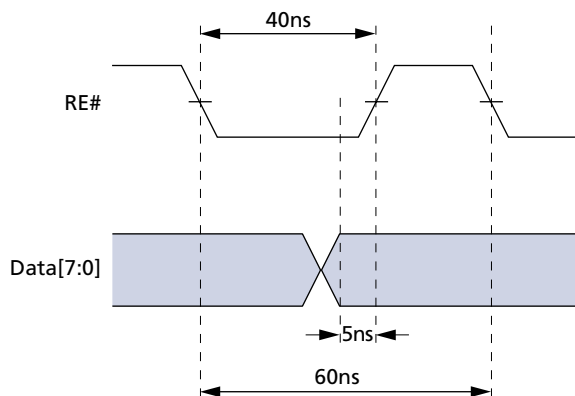
Interface and Timing Specifications

The NAND Flash ECC module assumes that inputs are asynchronous, and, therefore, double registers are used to synchronize the inputs. If the inputs are synchronous, they can be passed through only one stage of latches. However, a single stage of latches is necessary because the control logic must evaluate the inputs before it can select the next state logic.

As inputs are passed through two register stages, outputs are delayed two clock cycles. This delay is inconsequential if clocking specifications are followed.

Micron recommends that the controller be clocked at 100 MHz. The fastest the controller can cycle the NAND Flash is 20 MHz. Data is valid for 35ns after the falling edge of RE# and 10ns after the rising edge of RE#. Thus, a clock of 50 MHz with a 40 percent duty cycle would result in a LOW strobe of 30ns. In this situation, data would need to be sampled at 35ns from the falling edge of RE#, which would be marginal because the data may have just become valid. To provide ample margin, a 60ns clock cycle with a 33.33 percent duty cycle was chosen.

Figure 4: Timing Margin



ECC Generation Module Architecture

The ECC module is divided into three major components:

- Hamming code generation module
- Error location module
- Finite control logic

Hamming Code Generation Module

The Hamming code generation module has a 96-bit (12-byte) register, divided into a 4-element array of 24-bit (3-byte) registers. These registers hold the parity values and are updated when the data is transferred. When the data is valid, the enable signal must be activated for 1 clock cycle while the data updates the Hamming parity. The parity values are based on data address and the data byte values. Both are passed through a network of XOR gates to generate Hamming code parity. The Hamming code algorithm is used to design this network of XOR gates. Figure 5 on page 7 shows the Hamming code generation module pinout.

Figure 5: Hamming ECC Generation Module Pinout

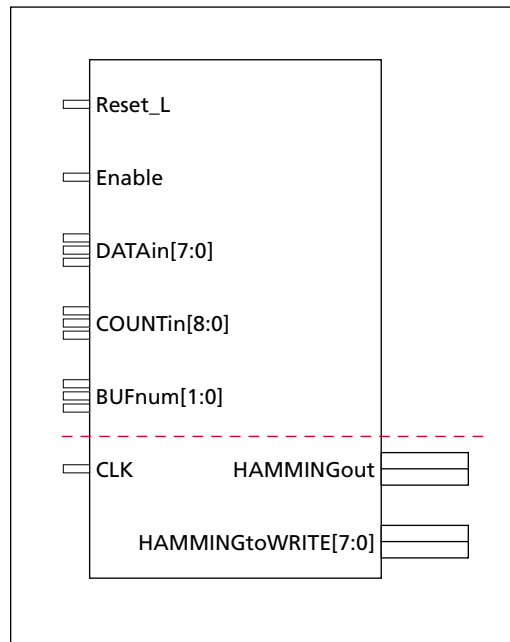


Table 2: Hamming Code Generation Module Signals

Signal	Description
BUFnum[1:0]	Two bits that indicate which of the four ECC strings to output on the HAMMINGout[23:0] signal
CLK	Clock
COUNTin[8:0]	Nine bits needed to address the four 512-byte sectors of each NAND Flash page
DATAin[7:0]	Data bus from the NAND Flash device
Enable	Enables ECC generation
HAMMINGout	The 3 bytes of ECC information for the 512-byte sector last calculated
HAMMINGtoWRITE[7:0]	A selected 8 bits of the HAMMINGout[23:0] signal, based on the 2 bits from the BUFnum[1:0] signal
Reset_L	Reset

The Hamming code generation module COUNTin[8:0] is a 9-bit quantity. Only 9 bits are needed to address 512-byte sectors. The data bus is 8 bits wide because the NAND data bus is 8 bits wide. The BUFnum signal tells the Hamming code module which of the four ECC strings to output on the HAMMINGout[23:0] signal. The HAMMINGtoWRITE signal is a select 8 bits of the HAMMINGout[23:0] based on the lower 2 bits of the counter. This signal is used to write the Hamming code to the NAND Flash at the end of the page.

To execute a page read, the host writes the block and page addresses to registers 0xFF4, 0xFF5, and 0xFF6. The part descriptions for these registers are listed in Table 8 on page 19. After loading the address, the host must write 0x00 to register 0xFFA to execute the READ command. The WRITE to the register causes the control logic to read the page specified by the address in the registers and put it in the buffer. The control logic issues the interrupt and switches processor control to the other buffer.

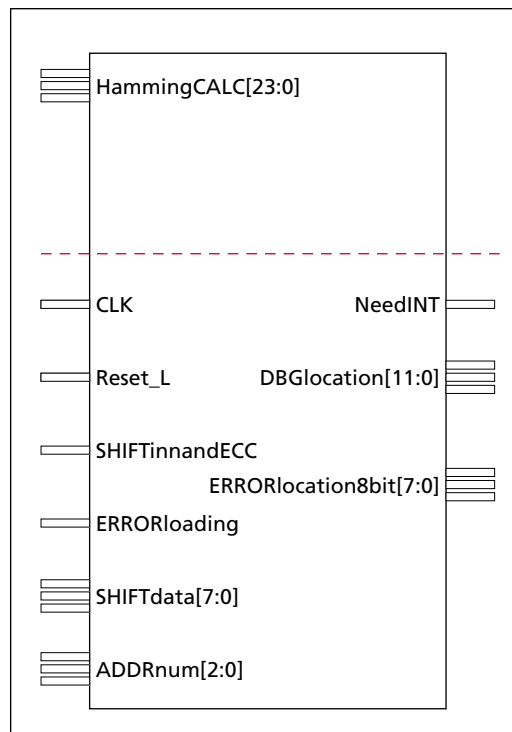
Error Location Module

During a READ, the data being read is used to calculate the Hamming code for the data. At the end of the page, the programmed Hamming code is read and compared to the calculated Hamming code. The error location module is used when the Hamming code calculation module has calculated the Hamming code. When the host finishes reading 2,100 bytes, the ECC module takes over the NAND bus and begins reading the previously written Hamming code. This Hamming code is shifted byte-wise into a shift register. After 3 bytes are shifted into the shift register, the error calculation module calculates and detects the error and loads the error data into the 14-bit error register.

The first 12 bits of the error register store the error location, as the 512 bytes in a Hamming code sector require 12 bits of addressing to ensure that each bit is addressed.

The last 2 bits are the error status bits. Error status reports “00” if there is no error, “01” if the error is a 1-bit correctable error, and “10” if the error is uncorrectable. Error status never reports “11.” There are four error location registers, one for each 512-byte data sector of the 2,112-byte page. Figure 6 shows the error locator module pinout.

Figure 6: Hamming ECC Error Locator Module Pinout



Note: Error locator module signals are described in Table 3 on page 9.

Table 3: Error Locator Module Signals

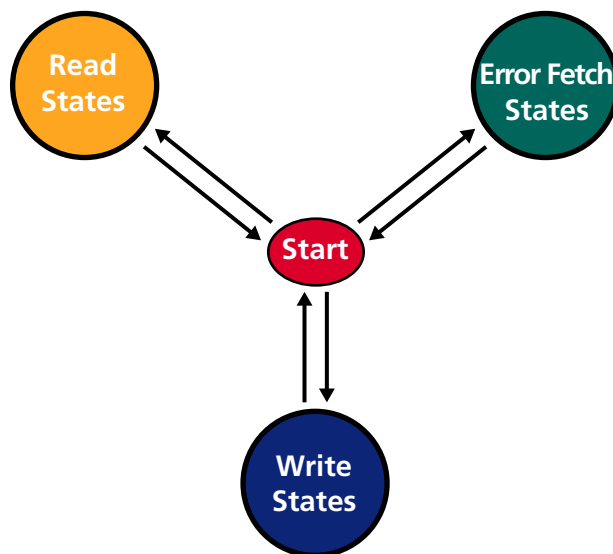
Signal	Description
ADDRnum[2:0]	Signal that addresses the 56-bit register containing the error and address of each error per 512-byte sector of the NAND Flash. To simplify error fetching, errors can be fetched as 2 bytes per 512-byte sector. To make the 14 bits of error and address information (per 512-byte sector) 2 bytes long, two "0s" are placed in the beginning of the register, in addition to the error and address information.
CLK	Clock
DBGlocation[11:0]	Block location of error information
ERRORloading	The enable signal for error data being loaded
ERRORlocation8bit[7:0]	Bus used to move the 56-bit error information to the control logic
HammingCALC[23:0]	Calculated Hamming input from the Hamming generation module
NeedINT	Signal telling the control logic if there are any errors to fetch
Reset_L	Reset
SHIFTdata[7:0]	Data from the NAND Flash I/O lines to shift in the Hamming code from NAND Flash to the ECC module
SHIFInnandECC	Enable signal to the 24-bit shift register

ECC Finite Control Logic Module

The finite control logic synchronizes inputs through a two-stage registration process. All input signals from the host are prepended with the word “host” at the beginning of the signal name. In addition to the “host” prefix, the suffix “_tmp” is appended to the signal name at the end of the first stage registration.

The control logic structure is divided into two processes. The first is a clocked process that changes the state of the process on every rising clock edge. The second process outputs combined signals based on the state vector of the finite state. Figure 7 shows the finite state process.

Figure 7: ECC Finite State Process



Start State

The start state passes the inputs to the outputs after being registered twice. The start state reads the signals after the first registration stage; when it finds a READ, WRITE, or ERROR FETCH command, it moves that specific sequence of states.

Read States Sequence

The READ STATES command sequence allows the inputs to pass through until the controller starts reading. After the controller starts reading, the READ STATES sequence enables the ECC module when RE# goes HIGH. Figure 6 on page 8 shows the pinout for the error locator module. Figure 8 on page 11 provides a graphic representation of the READ STATES command sequence.

Figure 8: READ STATES Command Sequence

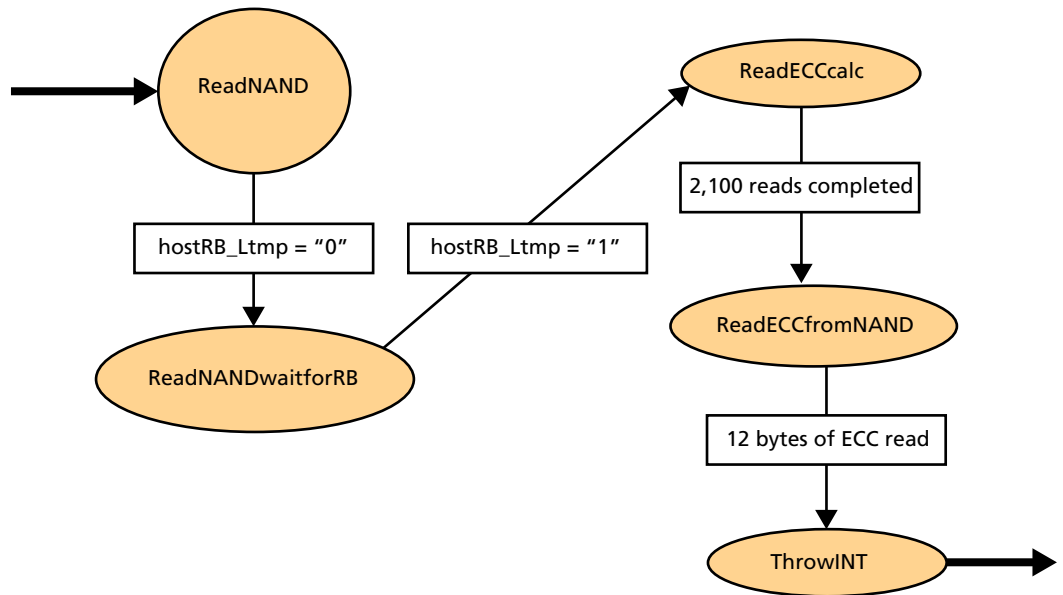
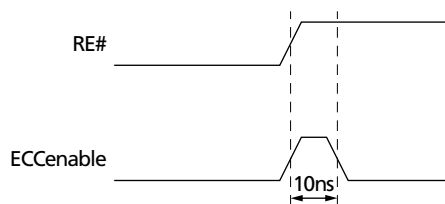


Table 4: READ STATES Command Definitions

State	Definition
ReadNAND	Initiates reading bytes in the NAND Flash page.
ReadNANDwaitforRB	Holds READ operation in the non-spare area until R/B# is HIGH and RE# is LOW.
ReadECCcalc	Initiates reading the calculated ECC after the non-spare area has been read.
ReadECCfromNAND	Reads the 12 bytes of ECC data stored in bytes 2,101–2,112 of the NAND Flash page.
ThrowINT	When the calculated ECC does not match the ECC read from bytes 2,101–2,112, initiates an interrupt. Otherwise, the system returns to the starting state.

The RE# signal is asynchronous. However, after registering the input signals, the RE# signal transitions to a synchronous signal sampled at 100 MHz. The ECC ENABLE signal is activated on the rising edge of RE#. Because of the way the ECC enable is activated, it is necessary for the controller to assert RE# for at least 35ns to verify that the data is valid on the rising edge of RE#. Figure 9 depicts this concept.

Figure 9: RE# Signal on Rising Edge

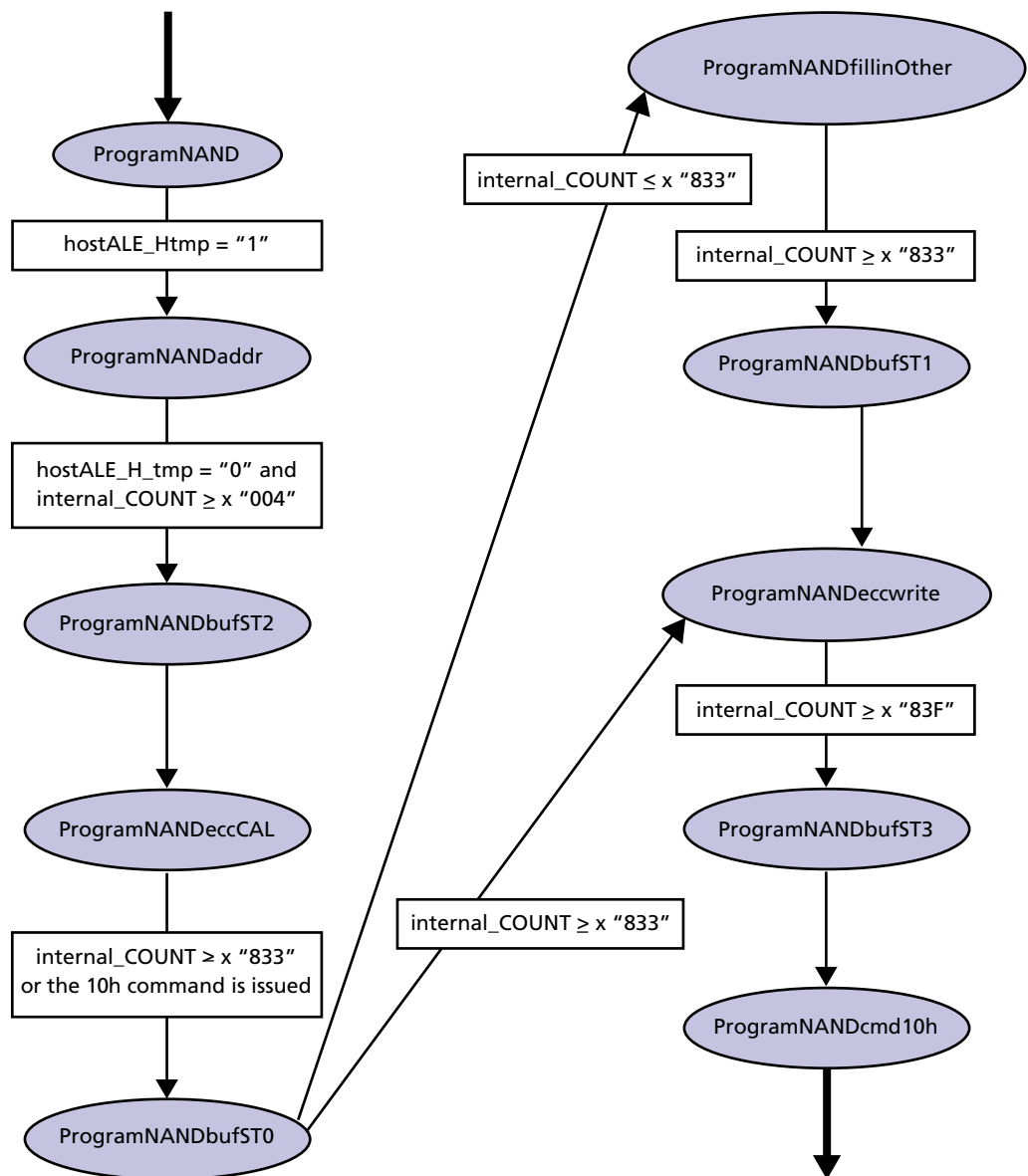


The ThrowINT state fires a 10ns signal alerting the host that an error has occurred and requires correction. The 10ns signal is fired based on the arrival of a NeedINT signal from the error locator module.

Write States

Write states comprise a linear set of states. It is important to note that the ECC module only supports full-page WRITES. The state transition conditions are based on the number of cycles for which the control logic will remain in a given state. During a READ operation, after the address and command are issued, R/B# goes LOW before data can be output. This READ sequence differs from the WRITE sequence in that the READ sequence outputs data following a CONFIRM (10h) command for R/B# to go LOW.

Figure 10: Write States Flow



Note: Write-state definitions are provided in Table 5 on page 13.

Table 5: Write State Definitions

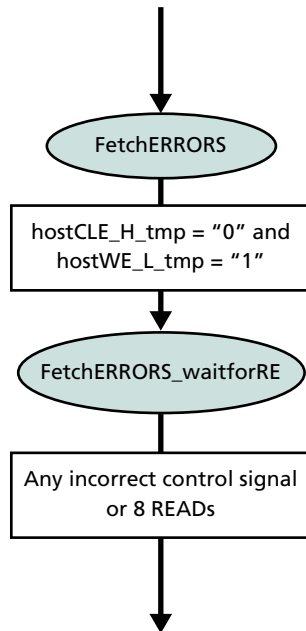
State	Definition
ProgramNANDaddr	Control logic stays in this state for 4 WRITE strobes.
ProgramNANDbufST2	Resets the counter so the ECC calculation state can calculate the ECC and count the number of bytes it has calculated. The counter must start from address 0 for the ECC generation module to function properly.
ProgramNANDeccCAL	Control logic stays in this state until the host writes 2,100 bytes (834h bytes). Control logic can remain in this state if the 10h command is issued (i.e., the controller has issued less than 2,100 bytes). This will cause the control logic to fill in 0xFF in the space between the last data byte written by the controller and the start of the ECC area.
ProgramNANDbufST0	Determines whether to fill data in or immediately write the ECC to the NAND, as 2,100 bytes have already been written. From this state forward, the ECC module controls the NAND Flash bus.
ProgramNANDfillinOther	Fills in 0xFF in the time elapsed between the host releasing the bus and beginning to write the ECC.
ProgramNANDbufST1	Selects the refCNT to be added to the counter output so the ECC from the ECC generation module can be transferred to the NAND Flash data bus. The refCNT counts from 0 to 2.
ProgramNANDeccwrite	Writes the ECC to the NAND Flash.
ProgramNANDbufST3	Puts 0x10 on the NAND Flash bus for the 10h command to be issued.
ProgramNANDcmd10h	Writes the 10h command to the NAND Flash bus.

Note: Figure 10 on page 12 provides a visual representation of the states listed.

Fetch Error States

Fetch error states enable the host to fetch the 8 bytes of errors. The host must issue a 23h command (this is not a normal NAND Flash command; it is used by the ECC module to retrieve error information from the ECC module), followed by 8 RE# strobes to obtain the error data. Figure 11 shows the fetch error states.

Figure 11: Fetch Error States Flow



The 8 bytes of ECC data consist of 2 bytes of error information (14 bits rounded to 16 bits) for each of the four 512-byte sectors. If, during an error fetch, any unrecognized command or line is toggled, the control logic reverts to the default state. This is to protect the control logic from going into an undefined state if an illegal command is issued. This mechanism ensures that such commands are piped to the NAND Flash device and that the control logic in the NAND Flash device executes the commands properly.

ECC Hamming Code Algorithm

The ECC algorithm used by the NAND Flash ECC module is based on block parity. The Hamming code for a 512-byte block uses 24 bits of coding information. Figure 12 shows that p1 is the parity of every 7, 5, 3, and 1 bit of each byte of the 512 bytes in the sector. It also shows that p1' is the parity of every 6, 4, 2, and 0 bit of every byte in the 512-byte sector. Figure 13 on page 16 shows the encoded string.

Figure 12: Bit Parity for p1 and p1'

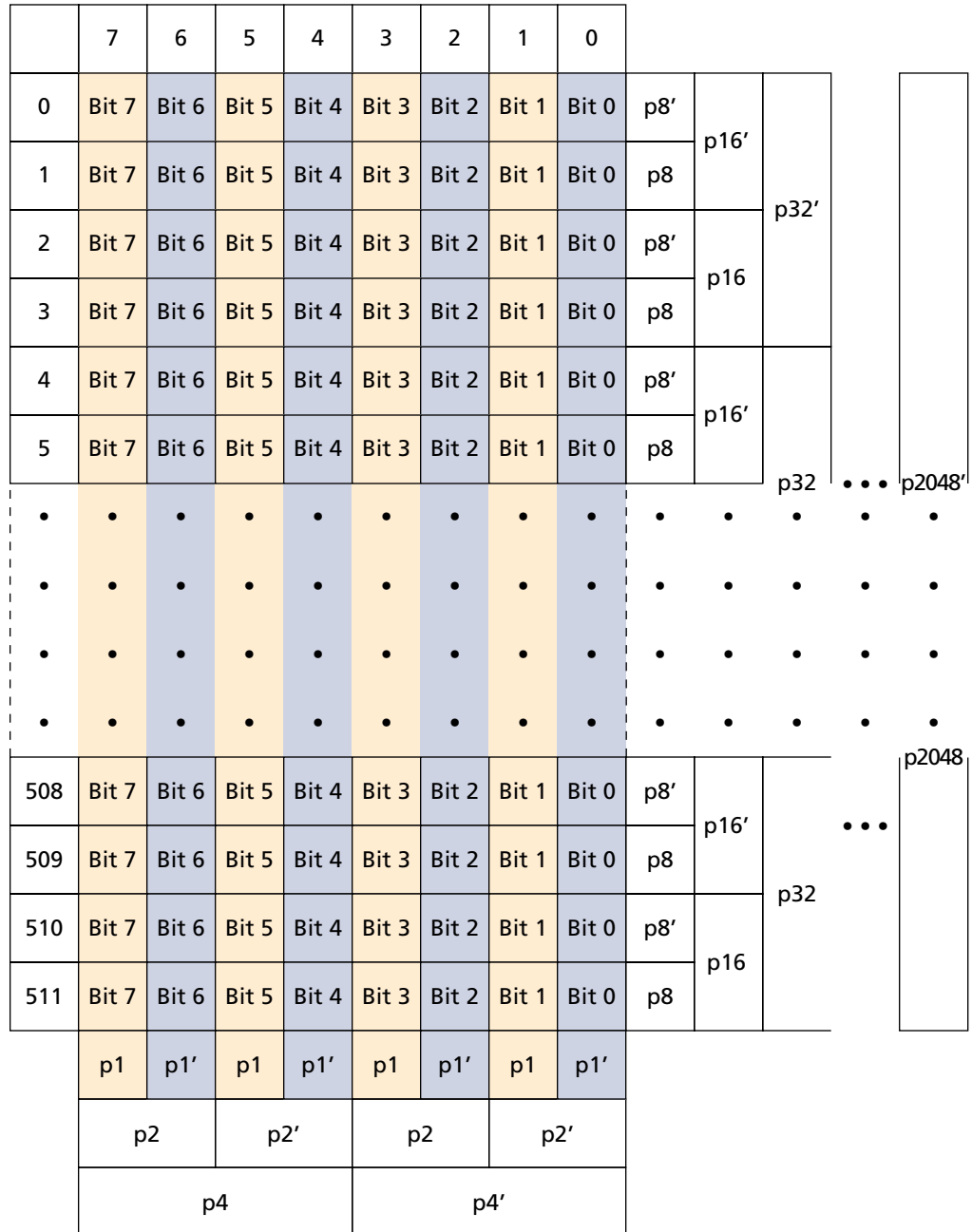


Figure 13: Encoded String Representation

P2048	P2048'	P1024	P1024'	P512	P512'	P256	P256'	P128	P128'	P64	P64'	P32	P32'	P16	P16'	P08	P08'	P04	P04'	P02	P02'	P01	P01'
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Table 7 on page 18 shows the bits used to calculate the parity for each encoding bit. This algorithm was selected over a look-up table algorithm, as implementing a look-up table in hardware would use more gates.

XOR Schemes p1 to p4

The following schemes are designated for every byte in the 512 bytes:

```

p1' = bit6 XOR bit4 XOR bit2 XOR bit0
p1 = bit7 XOR bit5 XOR bit3 XOR bit1
p2' = bit5 XOR bit4 XOR bit1 XOR bit0
p2 = bit7 XOR bit6 XOR bit3 XOR bit2
p4' = bit3 XOR bit2 XOR bit1 XOR bit0
p4 = bit7 XOR bit6 XOR bit5 XOR bit4

```

XOR Schemes p8 Onward

Row parity is defined as follows:

```

Rowparity = bit7 XOR bit6 XOR bit5 XOR bit4 XOR bit3 XOR bit2 XOR bit1
           XOR bit0

```

Thus, it is possible to define p8' as the XOR of the row parities of every even-numbered (0, 2, 4, 6, 8, ...) row in the 512-byte matrix (shown in Figure 12 on page 15). Similarly, it is possible to define p8 as the XOR of the row parities of every odd-numbered row (1, 3, 5, 7, ...) in the matrix.

Therefore, if each parity bit is updated and serially calculated as every byte is read from the NAND Flash, the results are as follows:

```

p8' = p8' XOR (rowparity AND not(rownumber(0)))

```

Note: The row number is the number of the row (i.e., the leftmost column in Figure 12 on page 15).

Error Detection and Correction

To detect and correct errors, the two sets of 24-bit Hamming codes are XOR'ed to find the result. The two sets are, respectively:

- the set read from the NAND Flash device, and
- the set calculated with the data being streamed into the Hamming code block.

Table 6: Error Detection Responses

Response	Description
No error	If XOR of the two sets of 24-bit Hamming code strings is 0x00000000, then both the strings are the same; there is no error.
1 bit error	If the XOR of the two sets of strings gives sets of 0s and 1s, for example: $p_n = \text{not}(p_{n'}) \text{ for all values of } n$ an error exists. ¹
Two or more bit errors	These errors can be referred to as “uncorrectable errors.” When the result of the XOR yields a random pattern of 0s and 1s, an error exists, and it is not a 1-bit error.
ECC error	The error is in the ECC but not the actual set of data. The ECC module does not deal with this error as a separate case. The ECC module treats this the same as a no-error response because the error is not an error in the data set and can be ignored.

Notes: 1. This approach is effective for two reasons. First, the bits used to calculate the parity for p_n and $p_{n'}$ are disjointed sets, i.e., a bit used to calculate the parity for p_n cannot be used to calculate the parity for $p_{n'}$. Assuming that only 1 bit is flipped, the bit can be in the set of bits that calculate the parity for p_n or those that calculate parity for $p_{n'}$. Thus only one of p_n or $p_{n'}$ can be in error; the other one will be correct. Second, in every pair of p_n and $p_{n'}$ there must be a “1” and a “0” because of the bits used for calculating the parity. If a bit is flipped, it was used to calculate the parity of either p_n or $p_{n'}$. Thus, one of the two pairs has to be erroneous.

XOR Byte Numbers

The byte numbers included in the XOR are calculated as follows:

$$p_{n'} = \sum_{k=0}^{2^{(n/8-1)}-1} \left(\frac{n}{4} \bullet x + k + 2^{(n/8-1)} \right) : x \in \left[0, \frac{512}{n} \right], x \in \text{Integer}$$

$$p_n = \sum_{k=0}^{2^{(n/8-1)}-1} \left(\frac{n}{4} \bullet x + k \right) : x \in \left[0, \frac{512}{n} \right], x \in \text{Integer}$$

In this equation, sigma designates logical XOR of the bits contained in the value given by the expression.

Table 7: Encoding Bit Details: Parity Bits Included

Encoding Bit	Bits Included	Bytes Included
p1'	6, 4, 2, 0	all
p1	7, 5, 3, 1	all
p2'	5, 4, 1, 0	all
p2	7, 6, 3, 2	all
p4'	3, 2, 1, 0	all
p4	7, 6, 5, 4	all
p8'	all	even
p8	all	odd
p16'	all	0, 1, and 4, 5, and 8, 9, and ...
p16	all	2, 3, and 6, 7, and 10, 11, and ...
p32'	all	0-3, and 8-11, and 16-19, and ...
p32	all	4-7, and 12-15, and ...
p64'	all	0-7, and 16-23, and ...
p64	all	8-15, and 24-31, and ...
p128'	all	0-15, and 32-47, and ...
p128	all	16-31, and 48-63, and ...
p256'	all	0-31, and 64-95, and ...
p256	all	32-63, and 96-127, and ...
p512'	all	0-63, and 128-191, and ...
p512	all	64-127, and 192-255, and ...
p1024'	all	0-127, and 256-383
p1024	all	128-255, and 384-511
p2048'	all	0-255
p2048	all	256-511

Read Error Locations

To read the error locations, the host must issue command AAh to the ECC module exactly the same way a NAND Flash command is issued. The host then strobes RE# eight times to retrieve the 8 bytes of error information. The format of the error information is described in Table 8.

Table 8: Error Location Byte Descriptions

Byte Read		Byte Description							
		Bit 7	Bit 6	Bit 5	Bit 4	Bit 3	Bit 2	Bit 1	Bit 0
Byte 0	First 512-byte sector	Error location bit 7	Error location bit 6	Error location bit 5	Error location bit 4	Error location bit 3	Error location bit 2	Error location bit 1	Error location bit 0
Byte 1		0	0	Error status bit 0	Error status bit 0	Error location bit 11	Error location bit 10	Error location bit 9	Error location bit 8
Byte 2	Second 512-byte sector	Error location bit 7	Error location bit 6	Error location bit 5	Error location bit 4	Error location bit 3	Error location bit 2	Error location bit 1	Error location bit 0
Byte 3		0	0	Error status bit 0	Error status bit 0	Error location bit 11	Error location bit 10	Error location bit 9	Error location bit 8
Byte 4	3rd 512-byte sector	Error location bit 7	Error location bit 6	Error location bit 5	Error location bit 4	Error location bit 3	Error location bit 2	Error location bit 1	Error location bit 0
Byte 5		0	0	Error status bit 0	Error status bit 0	Error location bit 11	Error location bit 10	Error location bit 9	Error location bit 8
Byte 6	4th 512-byte sector	Error location bit 7	Error location bit 6	Error location bit 5	Error location bit 4	Error location bit 3	Error location bit 2	Error location bit 1	Error location bit 0
Byte 7		0	0	Error status bit 0	Error status bit 0	Error location bit 11	Error location bit 10	Error location bit 9	Error location bit 8

Note: Only 12 bits of information are required to locate an error in a 512-byte sector, as the 512-byte sector has $2^{12} = 4,096$ bits.

Table 9: Error Status Bit Descriptions

Error Status Bit Value	Implication
00	No error
01	Fixable 1-bit error
10	Unfixable 2-bit error
11	Not used



**8000 S. Federal Way, P.O. Box 6, Boise, ID 83707-0006, Tel: 208-368-3900
prodmktg@micron.com www.micron.com Customer Comment Line: 800-932-4992**

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Revision History

Rev. B	5/07
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updated Web links.• “Overview” on page 1: Revised description.• “Micron ECC Module Configuration” on page 2: Revised description.• “Interface and Timing Specifications” on page 6: Revised description.• “ECC Finite Control Logic Module” on page 10: Revised description.• “Write States” on page 12: Revised description.• Table 5 on page 13: Changed “state machine” to “control logic.”• Table 6 on page 17: Revised ECC error description, consolidated notes 1 and 2.	
Rev. A	4/05
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initial release.	