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ACADEMY

## **North Carolina State Testing Program (Including EOG and EOC)**

### **Understanding the North Carolina State Testing Program**

In North Carolina, the state assessment program is undergoing some changes. New tests are being added while others are being eliminated. In 2011-2012, North Carolina will be assessing high school students using three new assessments – the ACT®, PLAN® and WorkKeys®. The ACT® College Admissions Assessment will be given freely to all 11<sup>th</sup> graders and can be used during the college application process. The PLAN assessment is a diagnostic test for 10<sup>th</sup> graders which shows a student's areas of strengths and weaknesses. The WorkKeys® Assessment is given to 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the Career and Technical Education concentration to help determine career readiness.

North Carolina has eliminated the Grade 10 Writing Assessment for the year 2011-2012 by permission of the US Department of Education; the Grade 10 Assessment in Reading/Language Arts was determined to be sufficient for required assessments of students. Additionally, the Competency Tests in Reading and Mathematics and the Computer Skills Tests are no longer being given.

In addition to these assessments, there are also the North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests for students in Grades 3-8 and again in high school. These tests cover the content learned in Reading, Mathematics and Science. The tests are designed in alignment with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study which lays out what a student is expected to know and be able to do during their education. The Standards provide objectives for learning and the assessments determine whether students have met those goals.

These assessments also fulfill requirements under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act which mandate testing in these subjects. All public and charter school students in the state of North Carolina are required to take these assessments; for students with disabilities accommodations and alternate assessments are in place to support their test taking needs. The information from these tests are used for a variety of purposes: to determine areas of increased instructional support for individual students, as a measure of teacher effectiveness in teaching to the standards and to see if schools are making adequate yearly progress in teaching all students to a level of proficiency in the content areas.

### **Format of the North Carolina State Testing Program**

For students in Grades 3-8 there are required End-of-Grade tests in reading comprehension and mathematics. For students in grades 5 and 8 there is also an End-of-Grade test in Science. These tests are carefully designed based on the learning objectives in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. The material covered on the tests mirrors the learning expectations of each subject area.

In Mathematics, during grades 3-8, students are expected to become grade-level proficient with the following areas: numbers and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and algebra. For the reading comprehension assessments at these grade levels, students are expected to gain proficiency in the following areas: skills and strategies for reading and writing, skills and strategies to comprehend a variety of text, and the ability to make connections through a variety of literacy means.

For students in grades 5 and 8 taking the Science End-of-Grade Assessment, they are expected to gain proficiency in four standards: investigating and understanding plants and animals, investigating and understanding landforms, investigating and understanding weather and climate, investigating and understanding forces and motion in technological designs.

The grade 3 End-of-Grade Test in Reading Comprehension has 58 questions, 50 operational and 8 pilot questions. The pilot questions do not count towards the test score, the questions are being tested for future use. There are about eight reading selections and 6-9 multiple-choice questions for each reading passage. On the Mathematics End-of-Grade Test there are 82 multiple-choice questions given in two parts. On one part students may use calculators, on the second they may not. The Science End-of-Grade Tests consists of 80 multiple-choice questions.

For students in high school, there are End-of-Course Tests in three subject areas: Reading/Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. The End-of-Course Test in Mathematics is given in Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II. All the tests are multiple-choice, ranging from 68 to 80 questions per test. In Algebra I students are expected to gain mastery in numerical operations, geometric figures and coordinate plane algebra and the use of matrices and models to solve problems. In Geometry, students are expected to perform operations with real numbers, use geometric and algebraic properties to solve problems and be able to transform geometric figures in the coordinate plane algebraically. In Algebra II, students are expected to perform operations with complex numbers, matrices and polynomials and to be able to use relations and functions to solve problems.

For students taking the English I End-of-Course Test, students are expected to reflect on text, explain meaning, examine argumentation and develop informed opinions, create and use communication techniques, demonstrate an understanding of various literary terms and apply the conventions of grammar and language usage. For students taking the End-of-Course Test in Biology, an understanding of scientific inquiry, physical life, continuity and change, unity and diversity, and ecological relationships is assessed.

## **Taking the North Carolina State Testing Program**

For students in grades 3, 5 and 8, the End-of-Grade assessments are required to pass to the next grade. Students are required to meet the standards and demonstrate grade-level proficiency. For students who are unable to meet these requirements there are both retesting options and a formal review process of instructional needs and other potential learning issues.

Students will receive scores on the End-of-Grade Tests in multiple formats. They receive scale scores, percentile ranks and achievement levels. The scale scores show how a student did on the questions of the test, the percentile score is the scale scored translated into the ranking of test-taker against the other test-takers. The scale score also represent the different Achievement levels a student may attain, and students will receive an Achievement level score as well. In North Carolina, the Achievement Levels are I-IV with IV being the highest level of Achievement.

The ACT® Assessment will be given in March to students in grade 11. The timing of the assessment may be different for different students; however a four hour window is given for students to take this test. This test is given free of charge to all public and charter school students in North Carolina. For students who require timing accommodations per an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), those plans will be made at the school.

For students in grade 10 who are taking the PLAN Assessment, that is given in December. It takes about 3 hours, with an hour of the time devoted to non-test sections. The WorkKeys® Assessment that is given to 12<sup>th</sup> graders in the Career and Technical Education concentration takes approximately 3 hours. This assessment is given in February, some schools may administer a paper-and-pencil version others may use the online version of the assessment.

The End-of-Course Tests in high school are a mandatory requirement for graduation. Students are expected to meet Achievement Level III (of four possible levels) on all five assessments: English I, Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and Biology. These tests are all given toward the end of the school year.

### **Get Your Child Ready for the NC State Testing**

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