

# Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina  
State Board of Education  
Department of Public Instruction

Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman

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## Understanding the Raw Score Ranges by Achievement Level Report

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*This brief is available on the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Testing Program Web site, <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/technicalnotes>. This brief may also be found at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/policies/briefs>.*

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This document provides information complementary to the Raw Score Ranges by Achievement Level. The Division of Accountability Services is providing these data for informational purposes only. North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests are designed and scored in a different manner than tests given by a classroom teacher. Therefore, the information concerning number and percent correct for the lowest scale score within an achievement level should be read and interpreted with caution. The “Number Correct Range Across Forms” and the “Percent Correct Range Across Forms” columns should not be read in isolation or interpreted as if the End-of-Grade or End-of-Course tests are typical school tests. It should also be noted that the percentage of questions answered correctly is not used as a decision-making tool during the standard setting process.

Most tests given by classroom teachers measure student learning on a limited number of goals and objectives from the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCS). These tests are usually graded using a 100-point scale with the score reflecting the percent of items out of

the total that the student answered correctly. Thus one can assume with some confidence that a student that makes an 80 on a given test has learned 80% of the material that was tested. Because error exists at any measurement occasion, one can never say with 100% certainty that a single test score represents a student’s true level of knowledge of the material tested.

The purpose of the North Carolina Statewide Testing program is state and school system accountability. As such, the Division of Accountability Services utilizes multiple test forms in order to more broadly cover the content of the NCSCS. North Carolina End-of-Grade and End-of-course tests are designed to measure what students have learned over an entire academic year. Each form contains a sample of items measuring different aspects of the objectives of the NCSCS. While the different test forms are built to the same blueprints, each contains different items representing a different random domain sample of the curriculum. Although forms are possibly made up of a different representation of objective-level content, the overall goal content

is the same and the forms are statistically equated to be equivalent in difficulty. The use of scale scores allows for comparison of scores across the various forms. This is why the percent correct is presented as a range. Because each student receives slightly different forms, in terms of the content coverage, it is inappropriate to compare percent correct scores

across students in order to draw inferences about the learning that has occurred during the year.

If you have questions, please contact the psychometric staff in the Division of Accountability Services at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.

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