

Questions & Answers: Elimination of the Gateways

(Revised December 21, 2010)

At its October 7, 2010 meeting, the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) approved the elimination of the Gateways at grades 3, 5, 8 and high school. The State no longer requires schools to use the end-of-grade scores as a factor for determining promotion decisions at grades 3, 5, and 8. Students must continue to meet all local promotion requirements. The State no longer requires high school students to score Achievement Level III or above on the end-of-course assessments of Algebra I, English I, biology, civics and economics, and U.S. history before receiving a high school diploma. Students must continue to meet all other state and local graduation requirements.

1) Can an LEA continue to use the Gateways (i.e., student accountability standards at grades 3, 5, and 8 for promotion, exit standards for graduation)?

Yes. An LEA's policy may continue to use the Gateways at grades 3, 5, and 8 and high school. State Board of Education Policy GCS-L-001 allows local boards of education to exceed the minimum requirements established by the State Board of Education.

2) If a student was enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement; can the school withdraw the student from the course without receiving a penalty for violating the 10/20 day rule?

- It is a local decision whether or not to withdraw currently enrolled students who were enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement from 2010 fall semester/block schedule courses or 2010-11 yearlong/traditional courses. If a school withdraws students from courses after the 10/20 days based on the October 2010 SBE action, sufficient documentation should be kept that explains why the student was withdrawn. If a school encounters any problem meeting the ABCs testing requirements as a result of removing students after the 10/20 days, then the Testing/Accountability Coordinator/Director should furnish a summary of justifications in response to the annual ABCs notification from the NCDPI identifying which schools appear to have violated testing requirements. The school can withdraw the student from the course without receiving a penalty with appropriate documentation.
- The NCDPI Division of Accountability recommends that schools move students that are currently enrolled in 2010-11 yearlong/traditional courses into the appropriate courses as soon as possible.
- Students should be enrolled properly in appropriate courses for the 2011 spring semester/spring block schedule.

3) If a student was enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement; must the student be administered the EOC test at the completion of the course?

- It is a local decision whether or not to require students enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement that are enrolled in 2010 fall semester/block courses to participate in the EOC test at the completion of the course. If the LEA decides not to administer the EOC test to those students and the LEA wishes to have an answer sheet for every student, the test administrator can bubble a Special Code on the answer sheet that will indicate the reason why a student will not receive a test score. Additional information is provided in the *End-of-Course Test Administrator's Manual*.

If the LEA decides not to administer the EOC test to a student enrolled in a 2010 fall semester/block course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement, the student is also waived from the 25% rule. Therefore, the school is not required to include the student's previous end-of-course test score as at least 25% of the student's final grade.

- Students who are enrolled in a 2010-11 traditional/yearlong course for credit must take the EOC test unless the student has previously obtained a test score of Achievement Level III or above on the EOC test **and a test score must be used as at least 25% of the student's final grade**. The NCDPI Division of Accountability recommends that schools move students who are currently enrolled in yearlong/traditional courses into the appropriate courses as soon as possible.
- Students who are enrolled in a course for credit during the 2011 spring semester/block schedule must take the EOC test unless the student has previously obtained a test score of Achievement Level III or above on the EOC test **and a test score must be used as at least 25% of the student's final grade**.

4) Are students who were enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement held to seat time requirements?

No. Due to this rare special circumstance, students who were enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement will not be held to seat time requirements. However, schools are responsible for ensuring that supports are in place for those students that are moving to new courses in November 2010.

5) Are students enrolled in Algebra I, Algebra II, English I, biology, civics and economics, physical science, and U.S. history still required to be administered the EOC test at the completion of the course?

Yes with the following exceptions:

- It is a local decision whether or not to require students enrolled in a course for credit for the sole purpose of satisfying the recently eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement that are enrolled in 2010 fall semester/block courses to participate in the EOC test at the completion of the course.
- If a student has previously obtained a test score of Achievement Level III or above on the EOC test to be administered, the student is not required to take the EOC test again.

6) If a student was enrolled in 2010 fall semester/block for the sole purpose of satisfying the eliminated State-mandated exit standard requirement and the student is administered the EOC test, will the EOC test score be used in accountability?

Yes. If a student takes the end-of-course test, the score will be used for accountability.

7) If a student did not receive a diploma due to a failing EOC test score for Algebra I, biology, civics and economics, English I, or US history, can the student be awarded a diploma now?

Recently eliminated SBE policy GCS-N-003 16 NCAC 6D .0502 *Student Accountability Standards* advised, “Promotion or retention decisions shall be made by the principal according to the state and local policy discretion. Promotion and retention decisions must take into account test score and other information which may indicate a student’s level of proficiency.” Therefore, a principal would not have withheld a diploma solely based on an EOC test score. Students were offered retesting opportunities outlined in SBE policy GCS-C-031 as well as any local review procedures such as remediation, review committee, and appeals procedures. According to North Carolina General Statutes G.S. §115C-288, the principal has the authority to grade and classify students and to make final decisions whether or not to promote or retain students. The principal’s decision to offer a diploma should not be based on the recent SBE action to eliminate the Gateways.

8) If a student was not promoted at grades 3, 5, or 8 due to a failing end-of-grade (EOG) test score, can the student be promoted now?

Recently eliminated SBE policy GCS-N-003 16 NCAC 6D .0502 *Student Accountability Standards* advised, “Promotion or retention decisions shall be made by the principal according to the state and local policy discretion. Promotion and retention decisions must take into account test score and other information which may indicate a student’s level of proficiency.” Therefore, a student would not have been retained in a grade level solely based on an EOG test score. Students were offered retesting opportunities outlined in SBE policy GCS-C-031 as well as any local review procedures such as remediation, review committee, and appeals procedures. According to North Carolina General Statutes G.S. §115C-288, the principal has the authority to grade and classify students and to make final decisions whether or not to promote or retain students. The principal’s decision to promote a student should not be based on the recent SBE action to eliminate the Gateways.