



February 2000  
Vol. 6, No. 10

## North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills and Proficiency Graduation Requirements

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### Proficiency Graduation Requirements

In accordance with standards that several courts have established, the State Board of Education has long held that once a student enters high school, that student is subject to the graduation requirements that were in effect at the time the student entered the ninth grade. Since the North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills (multiple-choice and performance) are administered in the eighth grade, this requirement is applicable only to those students who entered eighth grade during or after the 1996-97 school year. Therefore, a student who entered eighth grade before the 1996-97 school year and was subsequently retained in a grade one or more times is not subject to the computer proficiency graduation requirement.

**Beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, the revised North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills will measure the revised computer skills curriculum implemented in 1998-99.** (For the 2000-2001 school year, the computer skills

testing window will begin October 1, 2000.) Students who enter eighth grade in 2000-2001 and beyond must meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the revised curriculum (revised 2001 or new tests). Students who entered eighth grade from 1996 to 1999 must meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the 1992 computer skills curriculum (1997 or old tests). As a result, beginning with the 2000-2001 school year, the year a student entered grade eight will determine which forms of the tests and standard students must pass in order to meet the requirements for graduation.

Table I below depicts the major differences between the two curricula and tests. Table 2 compares percentage of items by strand from the 1997 computer skills multiple-choice tests with the proposed 2001 tests. Table 3 compares the 1997 computer skills performance tests with the proposed 2001 performance tests.

*It is imperative to note that computer skills field tests will be administered during Spring 2000; therefore, the information in Tables 2 and 3 are subject to revision. Data from the field tests will be analyzed to determine the test administration time for the revised 2001 computer skills tests. In addition, during the administration of the proposed 2001 computer skills performance test, student work from the Desktop Publishing, Database Use, and Spreadsheet Use parts of the test will need to be printed for scoring purposes.*

**Table I. Comparison of the Two Standards for the North Carolina Computer Skills Tests**

| Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996 to 1999  | Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000-2001 and Beyond  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tests measure 1992 Computer Skills Curriculum</li> <li>• <u>Multiple-Choice Test</u><br/>Passing Score: 47 or above</li> <li>• <u>Performance Test</u><br/>Passing Score: 49 or above</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tests measure 1998 Computer Skills Curriculum</li> <li>• Passing scores will be determined following the analysis of the Spring 2000 field test data.</li> <li>• Passing scores will be determined following the analysis of the Spring 2000 field test data.</li> </ul> |

**Table 2. Percentage of Items by Strand in the Old and New Computer Skills Multiple-Choice Tests**

| Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996 to 1999   | Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000-2001 and Beyond   |
|--|--|
| 1. Societal Issues 20% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society 5%</li> <li>• Ethics 8%</li> <li>• Care/Operations 7%</li> </ul> | 1. Societal Issues 20% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society 9%</li> <li>• Ethics 7%</li> <li>• Care/Operations 4%</li> </ul> |
| 2. Databases 20%   | 2. Databases 14%   |
| 3. Spreadsheet 15%   | 3. Spreadsheet 16%   |
| 4. Keyboard Utilization 5%   | 4. Keyboard Utilization 14%  |
| 5. Word Processing 20%   | Word Processing<br>Desktop Publishing  |
| 6. Curriculum Use 6%   | 5. Telecommunications 20%  |
| 7. Telecommunications 14%  | 6. Multimedia Presentation 16%   |
| <b>Total Number of Test Items = 70</b>   | <b>Total Number of Test Items = 70</b>   |
| <b>NOTE:</b> No <u>Multimedia Presentation</u> Strand  | <b>NOTE:</b> No <u>Curriculum Use</u> Strand   |

**Table 3. Comparison of the Old and Revised Computer Skills Performance Tests**

| Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996 to 1999   | Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000-2001 and Beyond   |
|--|--|
| <u>Part 1: Keyboarding</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types in title and paragraphs using a word processing program</li> <li>• Typing accuracy, spacing, and overall length</li> </ul>                                       | <u>Part 1: Desktop Publishing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Combines Keyboarding and Word Processing/Editing</li> <li>• Manipulates word processing document</li> <li>• <i>Similarities:</i><br/>Spelling, centering, moving text (i.e., cut and paste), inserting text, typing skills, line spacing, deleting text</li> <li>• <i>Additional tasks:</i><br/>Manipulates font size and type (i.e., bold, italicize)</li> </ul>                       |
| <u>Part 2: Word Processing/Editing</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Edits word processing document</li> <li>• Editing tasks such as: centering, deleting, capitalizing, changing case, indenting, inserting, moving</li> </ul> |  |
| <u>Part 3: Database Use</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses an existing database to answer questions</li> <li>• Tests knowledge of various database functions (e.g., sorting, performing a search)</li> </ul>                | <u>Part 2: Database Use</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Similarities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses an existing database to answer questions</li> <li>• Tests knowledge of various database functions (e.g., sorting, performing a search)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Additional tasks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of a field and appropriate records to a secondary database</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <u>Part 4: Spreadsheet</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses existing spreadsheet to answer questions</li> </ul>   | <u>Part 3: Spreadsheet Use</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Similarities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses existing spreadsheet to answer questions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>Additional tasks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modification of spreadsheet by labeling a new column and adding records</li> <li>• Creation of a chart (graph)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |