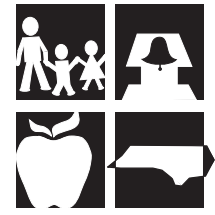


# Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina • State Board of Education • Howard Lee, Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • June St. Clair Atkinson, Ed.D., Superintendent

## North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment

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### **History of the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment**

In the fall of 2004, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) conducted a feasibility study in which there was an attempt to administer an edition of the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills in every school that had grade eight students enrolled. In cases where technological and other challenges prevented completed administrations of the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills, data were collected to assist in determining the extent to which online testing at this level was feasible or accessible by students in schools that were technologically challenged.

After careful analyses of the data from the feasibility study conducted in the fall of 2004, a decision was made that an alternate assessment was necessary to ensure that students in schools that were technologically challenged and students with special needs (such as some students with disabilities that could not access the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills with available accommodations) would have an opportunity to demonstrate computer proficiency by accessing the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment.

The North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment was field tested in the spring and fall

of 2005 to a randomly selected sample of students. Results provided item statistics and other information that yielded important data used to assist further research and development of the assessment for the purpose of introducing the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment as a technically-sound operational assessment in spring 2006.

### **Computer Skills Graduation Requirement**

Per State Board of Education policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D .0503), beginning at grade eight, all students must demonstrate computer proficiency requirements in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma. The North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment may be used to fulfill the computer skills proficiency graduation requirement for eligible students who entered grade 8 for the first time in the 2005–2006 school year and beyond.

The proficiency standard for the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment (2004 curriculum) requires that a student achieve a scale score of 146 or above. The standard was adopted by the State Board of Education in March 2006.

### **Eligible Students**

There are two distinct populations of students who are eligible to take the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment: (1) students who

cannot access the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills as a result of technical/technology limitations at the building level and (2) students with disabilities who, due to the nature of their disabilities, are not able to access the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills even with the available approved accommodations.

### **Test Format**

The North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment measures the strands set forth and specifically defined in the North Carolina Computer/Technology Skills *Standard Course of Study* adopted by the State Board of Education in February 2004. The assessment consists of a multiple choice section, a performance section, and an overall student evaluation.

The multiple-choice section consists of 35 multiple-choice items, and the performance section consists of 25 computer-related tasks. Both the multiple-choice items and the performance tasks focus on the strands from the North Carolina Computer/Technology Skills *Standard Course of Study*, February 2004. These strands include societal/ethical issues, database, spreadsheet, keyboard utilization/word processing/desktop publishing, multimedia/presentation, and telecommunications/Internet.

Students independently respond to each of the 35 multiple-choice items by selecting and coding the appropriate response in the "Multiple-Choice" section of their answer sheet. The performance section requires individualized administrations for each student. The test administrator must observe the student as he or she performs each required task. The test administrator rates the student's performance for each task by coding on the student's answer sheet YES or NO based on whether or not the student is able to perform the task successfully without teacher intervention. If the student performs the task correctly (correctness is defined by a specific rubric for each task), the test administrator will code YES on the student's answer sheet. If the student does not

perform the task correctly, or makes no attempt to perform the task, the test administrator codes NO.

The overall student evaluation requires the test administrator to rate the student's overall proficiency in the area of computer skills as demonstrated by the student's work samples and his or her use of a computer when performing activities in the classroom or computer lab over the current academic year. The test administrator marks the appropriate bubble (i.e., YES or NO) on the student's answer sheet. In cases where the test administrator is unfamiliar with the student's use of a computer over the course of the current academic year, he or she defers the overall evaluation to a teacher or administrator who is familiar with the student's use of a computer.

### **Estimate Test Administration Time**

Suggested scheduled testing time for the North Carolina Computer Skills Alternate Assessment is approximately 60 minutes for the administration of the multiple-choice section. Students who are not finished at the end of the estimated time must be given sufficient time to complete the assessment. However, no multiple-choice test administration (except for students with documented special needs requiring accommodations such as *Scheduled Extended Time* or *Multiple Testing Sessions*) may exceed 2½ hours. The estimated testing time for the administration of the performance section is 100 minutes. The performance section is teacher-administered, and the actual test administration time may vary.

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