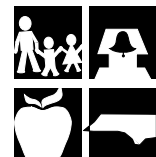


Assessment Brief



Public Schools of North Carolina

State Board of Education • Phillip J. Kirk, Jr., Chairman • North Carolina Department of Public Instruction • Michael E. Ward, Superintendent

January 23, 2001
Vol. 7, No. 6

North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills and Proficiency Graduation Requirements

This publication replaces the “North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills and Proficiency Graduation Requirements” Assessment Brief (Vol. 6, No. 10). This brief is available on the Testing Section web site at www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing.

This publication and the information contained within must not be used for personal or financial gain. North Carolina school system/school officials and teachers, parents, and students may download and duplicate this publication for instructional and educational purposes only. Others may not duplicate this publication without prior written permission from the NCDPI Division of Accountability Services/Testing Section.

Proficiency Graduation Requirements

In accordance with legal opinions rendered, 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 initially 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.

Effective with the 2000-2001 school year, the revised North Carolina Tests of Computer Skills measure the new computer skills curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education in 1998. Students who entered eighth grade in the 2000–2001 school year 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 the 1996–1997 school year through the 1999–2000 school year must meet the computer skills graduation requirement based on the 1992 computer skills curriculum (1997 or old tests). Beginning with the 2000–2001 school year, the year a student entered grade eight will determine which forms of the tests the student must be administered in order to meet the computer proficiency graduation requirement.

Table I below depicts the major differences between the two curricula and tests. Table 2 compares percentage of items by strand from the old computer skills multiple-choice tests (measure the 1992 computer skills curriculum) with the new computer skills tests (measure the 1998 computer skills curriculum). Table 3 compares the old computer skills performance tests with the new performance tests.

During the administration of the new computer skills performance test that measures the 1998 curriculum, student work from the Desktop Publishing, Database Use, and Spreadsheet Use parts of the test must be printed for scoring purposes.

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

Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996–1997 Through 1999–2000 School Year	Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000–2001 School Year and Beyond
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tests measure 1992 Computer Skills Curriculum• Multiple-Choice Test Passing Score: 47 or above• Performance Test Passing Score: 49 or above	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tests measure 1998 Computer Skills Curriculum• Multiple-Choice Test Passing Score: 47 or above• Performance Test Passing Score: 49 or above

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

Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996–1997 Through 1999–2000 School Year	Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000–2001 School Year and Beyond
1. Societal Issues 20% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society 5% • Ethics 8% • Care/Operations 7% 	1. Societal Issues 20% <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society 9% • Ethics 7% • Care/Operations 4%
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
6. Curriculum Use 6%	Desktop Publishing
7. Telecommunications 14%	5. Telecommunications 20%
6. Multimedia Presentation 16%	6. Multimedia Presentation 16%
Total Number of Test Items = 70	Total Number of Test Items = 70
NOTE: No Multimedia Presentation Strand	NOTE: No Curriculum Use Strand

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

Student Begins Grade Eight from 1996–1997 Through 1999–2000 School Year	Student Begins Grade Eight in 2000–2001 School Year and Beyond
Part 1: Keyboarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types in title and paragraphs using a word processing program • Typing accuracy, spacing, and overall length 	Part 1: Desktop Publishing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines Keyboarding and Word Processing/Editing • Manipulates word processing document • <i>Similarities:</i> Spelling, centering, moving text (i.e., cut and paste), inserting text, typing skills, line spacing, deleting text • <i>Additional tasks:</i> Manipulates font size and type (i.e., bold, italicize)
Part 2: Word Processing/Editing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edits word processing document • Editing tasks such as: centering, deleting, capitalizing, changing case, indenting, inserting, moving 	
Part 3: Database Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an existing database to answer questions • Tests knowledge of various database functions (e.g., sorting, performing a search) 	Part 2: Database Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Similarities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses an existing database to answer questions • Tests knowledge of various database functions (e.g., sorting, performing a search) • <i>Additional tasks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addition of a field and appropriate records to a secondary database
Part 4: Spreadsheet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses existing spreadsheet to answer questions 	Part 3: Spreadsheet Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Similarities:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses existing spreadsheet to answer questions • <i>Additional tasks:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification of spreadsheet by labeling a new column and adding records • Creation of a chart (graph)