

*Public Schools of North Carolina
Testing for you*

NEWS



Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education | Department of Public Instruction
Division of Communications and Information

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End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) Testing Begins; NCDPI Provides Testing FAQ and Other Online Resources for Students, Parents and Educators

Sharpen the No. 2 pencils and break out the bubble sheets because end-of-grade and end-of-course testing has begun in some schools or will begin in the next few weeks. To help parents and students get ready for these important assessments, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has developed test preparation tips, Frequently Asked Questions and Answers, and many online resources with additional information about the statewide exams.

“End-of-grade and end-of-course tests allow us to keep a finger on the pulse of students’ academic progress and they tell us if students are prepared to succeed in the next grade or in the next course,” said Lou Fabrizio, director of Accountability Policy and Communications. “At the school level, principals and teachers use the results to help identify students who need additional assistance in their academic work and to ensure that the Standard Course of Study is being taught consistently throughout the school.”

Parents play a key role in preparing students for state assessments. During this testing period, parents are encouraged to:

- Make sure students are in school during review and testing sessions. Avoid doctor or dental appointments on review or test dates.
- Stay well-informed about students’ tests. Know their test schedule, results, how results are used, and how the results will affect grade placement or course recommendations.
- If there are major differences between a student’s standardized test scores and overall school grades, find out why.
- Encourage students to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and to ask questions about any directions that are unclear.
- Make sure students are well-rested on test day.
- Make sure students eat breakfast on the day of the test. Hunger can detract from a good test performance.
- Encourage students to do their best.

(Tips provided by the American School Counselor Association)

The NCDPI also offers a wealth of information on the Department's Web site <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/> for parents who have questions about state testing policies and procedures. The following are answers to some common testing questions.

What is the difference between end-of-grade and end-of-course tests and which tests will my student take?

North Carolina's testing program includes end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics for students in grades 3-8. Students in grades 5 and 8 also take science end-of-grade tests.

End-of-course tests are most commonly administered at the high school level and are given for the following courses: English I, Algebra I, Algebra II, Biology, Chemistry, Geometry, Physical Science, Physics, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History. Some students in middle school take some of the EOC tests. A writing assessment is also given in grade 10.

Other tests required by the district or at the national level may also be administered during this time of the school year and can include post-tests, retests and Advanced Placement (AP) tests.

Are students with disabilities required to take state tests?

According to the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, all students with disabilities must be included in all statewide and district-wide assessments. These students can be tested using the standard tests, standard tests with accommodations or state-designed alternate assessments based on grade-level, modified or alternate achievement standards. For more information on state testing options for students with disabilities, visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/parents/tswd>.

What is the test format?

All tests are multiple choice. To see sample questions from some of the state's previous end-of-grade tests, visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eog/> and click on the appropriate test grade and "Sample Test Items."

To view examples of questions from state end-course tests, visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/eoc/> and select "EOC Online Information" then select "EOC Online Test Simulation."

What is the state's testing schedule?

Most state tests are taken during the last three weeks of school or last two weeks of a block scheduled course, or the equivalent for alternative schedules. Local districts set the specific testing dates and times so parents should check with their student's school or district for their district's schedule.

How are students graded and what do the grades mean?

End-of-grade and end-of-course test results are reported in terms of achievement levels: Level IV (advanced), Level III (proficient), Level II (basic) and Level I (below basic.) For more information about understanding a student's end-of-grade report, visit <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/testing/shared/abriefs/eogreadmath>.

Students taking the end-of-grade tests in reading and the English I test in 9th grade will receive a Lexile measure. A Lexile measure can be used to match a student's reading ability to a book's difficulty. The measures range from below 200L for beginning readers to above 1700L for advanced readers. North Carolina was the first state to report student Lexile measures on its standardized testing report for grades

3-8 in 1997. This year is the first time the measure is being reported for English I high school assessments. For more information about Lexile scores, visit <http://www.lexile.com>.

When will parents find out how their students performed?

Most students will receive their score reports on or before the end of the school year. In some cases, reports may be mailed to parents during the summer. Check with your principal to find out when you will receive your student's report.

Other questions?

For additional information about end-of-grade or end-of-course tests in North Carolina, visit www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability or contact the NCDPI's Communications division at 919.807.3450.

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