

North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests of Science Grades 5 and 8

What is end-of-grade testing and what is its purpose? The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests of Science–Grade 5 and Grade 8 are required to meet the federal *No Child Left Behind Act* of 2001. As a component of the North Carolina Annual Testing Program these tests fall subject to General Statute 115C-174.10 which states the purposes of North Carolina state-mandated tests are “(i) to assure that all high school graduates possess those minimum skills and that knowledge thought necessary to function as a member of society; (ii) to provide a means of identifying strengths and weaknesses in the education process in order to improve instructional delivery; and (iii) to establish additional means for making the education system at the State, local, and school levels accountable to the public for results.”

What is measured by the tests? The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests of Science–Grade 5 and Grade 8 will assess **only** the fifth grade 2004 North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* for science for elementary students and **only** the eighth grade 2004 North Carolina *Standard Course of Study* for science for middle school students. These tests will require students to demonstrate knowledge of important principles and concepts, understand and interpret laboratory activities, and relate scientific information to everyday situations. In order to align with this curriculum’s focus on inquiry and higher order thinking, these tests have an increased focus on processing information and higher-order thinking. Information about the content of these objectives can be obtained from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Web site at <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/science/scos/2004/>.

How will the new tests be administered? The North Carolina End-of-Grade Tests–Grade 5 Science and Grade 8 Science will be in multiple-choice format and will be administered during the last three weeks of school. The tests will be scanned and scored by the local education agency with software provided by the NCDPI. Reports of student performance will be produced locally. In addition, test scores will be aggregated at the state level to fulfill the state and federal reporting requirements for the accountability programs.

How will the new tests be developed? Trained North Carolina teachers and educators will be involved in the development of the grades 5 and 8 science items during 2003–05. They will assist with the writing of the items and will review all of the items during the development phase. Common curriculum items for grades 5 and 8 will be field tested during the 2004–05 school year. Items measuring the newly adopted 2004 *Standard Course of Study* will be field tested during the 2005–06 school year. During the final three weeks of the 2006–07 school year a pilot test administration will be implemented.

When will the tests be administered? The first statewide operational tests will be administered in the spring of 2008. The End-of-Grade Tests of Science–Grades 5 and 8 will not be administered at the end of a “semester.”

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