What’s new about North Carolina’s K-12 assessment system beginning with the 2012-13 school year?

The tests will be more rigorous – rigorous enough to reflect what it’ll take for students to be ready for the future. What students must learn starting this school year will be more challenging. The new North Carolina Standard Course of Study requires all students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers. Among other things, all students will be challenged to read and comprehend complex texts, write compellingly using evidence and make sense of real-world math problems and persevere in solving them.

The new tests will reflect these more rigorous expectations. In the past, results were used in determining “grade-level proficiency.” Now we will measure whether students are actually on-track to be prepared for the real world - for a career or for college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The old assessments determined:</th>
<th>The new assessments will determine:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Career and College Readiness</td>
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<td>meaning we assessed whether students met an expectation for the grade-level</td>
<td>meaning we will assess whether students are on-track to succeed in a career and in college</td>
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So how does the ACT fit into the new assessment system?

The ACT is a key to measuring our raised expectations. Every 11th grader will take the ACT college entrance exam and every school will be accountable for advancing all of its students toward readiness for college and career.

Does giving the ACT mean that every student needs to go to college?

No, but every student should have the option. Students should have a range of choices upon graduating from high school, among which should be attending a two- or four-year institution or entering into a meaningful career with the skills needed to succeed upon graduating high school.

The ACT is a college entrance exam - what about career readiness?

Career and technical education (CTE) concentrators will be given the WorkKeys assessment. The WorkKeys assessment is a job skills assessment that allows students to demonstrate readiness for many careers and is used by many employers in hiring and training. Additionally, the skills assessed on the ACT are not just about college – most jobs in the future will require post-secondary education or training.

How well do we expect students to score on the ACT Readiness Benchmarks?


To start, we will have a lot of room for growth – and that is to be expected. We should expect state ACT scores to be lower than the national average because

1. We are giving the test to every junior (instead of a self-selecting group applying to 4-year college) and;
2. We are adopting the ACT subtest benchmark scores – these subtest benchmarks are significantly higher than the minimums typically used in college admissions. Instead, our benchmarks will be set at the level students need to achieve to do well in college.

Be prepared for initially low scores as we raise our expectations and shift to new assessments to ensure every North Carolina student will graduate Career and College READY.