

New Testing for High School Students Begins This Year

November 14, 2011 - As the state shifts from the NC Standard Course of Study to the new Common Core Standards and a new accountability model, North Carolina high schools will begin administering new required testing for students.

Starting this school year, students in grades 10, 11, and 12 will participate in assessments developed and provided by ACT, Inc. The assessments are the PLAN, WorkKeys, and the ACT Plus Writing. There will be no cost to students or to the school system for the administration of these assessments.

The PLAN is a curriculum-based achievement test in English, Math, Reading and Science that measures college and career readiness, serves as a midpoint assessment and a predictor for the ACT. High schools will administer The PLAN to all students in Grade 10 between Dec. 5 and 16.

High schools will administer WorkKeys to students in Grade 12 who are Career Technical Education concentrators with at least one Level II credit in February.

High schools will administer The ACT Plus Writing assessment to all students in Grade 11 on March 6 with a makeup day on March 20. The ACT includes the same elements as the PLAN, plus a writing component.

The NC Department of Public Instruction approved the implementation of the ACT in preparation for the state's new accountability model and to provide additional diagnostic tools for students and their teachers. This year, the ACT will not count for accountability purposes although the test results can be used by students for college admissions purposes. Next year the ACT will count as part of ABCs and as part of the 95 percent requirement for testing.

The PLAN is only used for diagnostics. It is not considered as part of accountability calculations at this time.

Parents of students who received accommodations for End-of-Grade and End-of-Course testing should talk to high school test coordinators now to arrange for accommodations on these new tests. Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), as well as those who have an up-to-date Independent Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan should receive a separate letter from the school regarding the accommodation request process for the ACT Plus Writing. This letter must be signed and returned to the school for appropriate submission to the ACT.

For additional information regarding the ACT assessments, please visit <http://www.act.org/>.