Framework for Change Update

In January 2008, the Blue Ribbon Commission on Testing and Accountability presented a report to the State that recommended improvements in the current system of testing and accountability and steps toward a next generation of standards, assessments, and accountability for North Carolina's schools. The Commission's findings and recommendations helped to isolate the major next steps needed to transform the Department of Public Instruction's approach to standards, assessments, and accountability in North Carolina.

The information within this document provides an update on the progress made in implementing the action steps for immediate improvement and development of the next generation of standards, assessments, and accountability that the State Board of Education (SBE) approved June 5, 2008, and is directing the Department of Public Instruction to implement. (See the *Framework for Change: The Next Generation of Assessments and Accountability* (June 5, 2008) for more information and a complete list of the actions the SBE is directing the NCDPI to implement.)

IMMEDIATE IMPROVEMENTS
The SBE directs the NCDPI to take the following actions to modify and improve assessments and accountability:

1. **Release one form of each test on an annual basis.** *At the conclusion of the 2008–2009 testing year, one form of the 2008–09 tests for each grade level and subject tested will be released to the school districts and the public to provide transparency of the state's testing program.*

2. **Enact a moratorium on the content standards revision/test development cycle.** *The NCDPI content standards revision cycles are on hold. The NCDPI is developing a plan to identify essential standards in each content area. Once the essential standards are identified and approved, test development will begin work on new test editions.*

3. **Make results from new tests comparable to prior tests.** *The NCDPI will begin this action step in fall 2008 with the release of spring 2008 reading assessment results for grades 3–8. Scale scores and proficiency in both the old standard and the new standard are scheduled to be released in November/December 2008.*

4. **Move to a five-year graduation rate for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) purposes.** *The U. S. Department of Education (USED) did not grant permission to the NCDPI for a five-year cohort graduation rate. Therefore, the NCDPI will continue to use the four-year cohort graduation rate for AYP. However, the NCDPI is looking at how to implement the five-year graduation rate for use in the ABCs.*

5. **Count retest scores in performance composites.** *The NCDPI is having discussions with the USED to determine if retest scores can be used at all grade levels or just in those grades that are part of the student accountability standards and high school exit*

standards (i.e., grades 3, 5, and 8; English I, Algebra I, Biology, Civics and Economics, and U.S. History).

6. **Eliminate the redundancy in end-of-course (EOC) and end-of-grade (EOG) testing by allowing EOC scores to count as EOG scores in middle grades.** *The NCDPI is having discussions with the USED to determine feasibility with respect to* No Child Left Behind (NCLB) *requirements and regulations.*

7. **Change the current approach to writing assessment.** *During its August 2008 meeting, the SBE approved the NCDPI's proposed 2008–2009 Writing Assessment System Pilot. All students at grades 4 and 7 will participate in the Writing Assessment System Pilot. During the 2008–09 school year, all students at grades 4 and 7 will complete two content specific writing tasks/assignments and two on-demand writing tasks/assignments.*

   Grade 4 students will complete their writing tasks/assignments using paper and pencil with the use of word processing tools as a local or an accessibility option. Schools will store their work in local portfolios.

   Grade 7 students will participate in the Writing Assessment System Pilot using word processing tools in order to complete their writing tasks/assignments. Schools will store their work in local portfolios. In addition, grade 7 students from ten selected LEAs will participate in an Electronic Pilot. These students will store their work in an electronic portfolio centrally hosted by the NCDPI.

   To assist educators in understanding and implementing the new Writing Assessment System Pilot at Grades 4 and 7, visit www.ncpublicschool.org/sbe_meeting/revisions/2008/pdfs/gcs2rev.pdf.

8. **Replace the current English I EOC with a high school English assessment given at grade 10.** *The NCDPI is in the process of determining which essential standards in English will be measured at grade 10. As soon as the essential standards are identified, a test development plan will be established. The test development plan will include an item format tryout during the 2008–09 school year. Schools will have an opportunity to volunteer to participate.*

9. **Revamp the current computer skills test to ensure it measures 21st century Information Communication Technology (ICT) literacy.** *The current test has been reviewed and measures the strands set forth and specifically defined in the North Carolina Computer/Technology Skills* Standard Course of Study *adopted by the SBE in February 2004. To ensure the test measures 21st century Information Communication Technology (ICT) literacy, the SBE will need to adopt a new curriculum.*

   Students are required to meet computer skills proficiency requirements in order to receive a North Carolina high school diploma. The year of the Standard Course of Study *the student was required to be instructed on determines the test edition the student must take in order to meet the requirement for graduation. Students who entered grade 8 for*

the first time in the 2005–06 school year and beyond, take the Online Test of Computer Skills (test edition 3).

Effective for the 2008–09 school year select students are allowed to take the online computer skills test as early as the fall of the sixth-grade year. Allowing this option to sixth- and seventh-graders is solely at the discretion of the LEA. If allowed, prior to registering any students (i.e., students at grades six and seven) to take the online test of computer skills, students and their parents/guardians must be made aware and understand that the North Carolina Online Test of Computer Skills is a test designed to measure the competencies of the K–8 Computer Skills Curriculum adopted by the State Board of Education in 2004 and is intended for grade-eight students.

10. **Eliminate the misalignment of assessment for the integrated math courses.** *The NCDPI is in the process of determining which essential standards in the Integrated Mathematics courses will be measured. As soon as the essential standards are identified, a test development plan will be established. The test development plan will include an item format tryout during the 2008–09 school year. Schools will have an opportunity to volunteer to participate.*

11. **Shorten the timeframe for reporting results after new tests are administered.** *The NCDPI is currently exploring options to shorten the timeframe for reporting results after new tests are administered.*