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Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee on

Releasing Copies of State Tests

April 2002

NC Department of Public Instruction
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Executive Summary
Report to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee
on Releasing State Tests

Senate Bill 1005, the budget appropriations bill, which was ratified on September 21, 2001 and signed into law by Governor Michael Easley on September 26, 2001 contains many implications for the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program in the Fairness in Testing Program component of the legislation. Among them is Section 28.17.(d) which states the following:

"The State Board of Education shall study the benefits of providing students' parents or guardians with copies of tests administered to their children under the Statewide Testing Program. The Board shall also consider the costs of maintaining the integrity and reliability of the test if such a policy is implemented. The Board shall report the results of this study to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight by March 31, 2002." An extension was later authorized to submit the report by April 15, 2002.

The State Board of Education (SBE) directed the department to conduct a study in response to this legislation. As a part of the study, the department carefully analyzed and evaluated the current program requirements and design as well as the resources currently appropriated to the statewide testing program annually. In addition, the department accessed the printed 1999-00 database from the Council of Chief States School Officers (CCSSO Survey Report) which provided information on what other states do related to the release of state tests.

The SBE determined after careful analyses that the current staff capacity in the Testing Section, the resources appropriated to operate the statewide testing program annually, the design of the tests, and timelines necessary to build replacement forms of the tests do not support the release of state tests at this time. In addition, the CCSSO survey data note that only about nine states release greater than 60 percent of the state tests, although it should be noted that of those states, only Texas and New York have comprehensive state testing programs similar to North Carolina. Texas has about three times as many staff members and an annual testing budget of $35 million compared to an $11 million North Carolina annual testing budget. The report offers several long-term and short-term alternatives for addressing this issue.

The SBE is committed to a goal of providing meaningful and parent-friendly information to parents, students, educators, and the general public that will facilitate a better understanding of the purpose of state tests, how the tests are developed, what the tests are like, and the consequences for taking each of the state tests. At this time, as an alternative to releasing the tests, the SBE has instructed the department, as resources allow, to:

1. implement options to help parents acquire a better understanding of the tests included in the statewide testing program which shall include the release of sample test items in each tested content area and grade;

2. place this expectation among the agency's priorities effective with the 2002-2003 school year and that the department evaluate the implications of the ESEA (No Child Left Behind) requirements and how any new assessment funds from ESEA can be used to assist in this area; and

3. devise a long-term plan for releasing an ample supply of sample test items for use by parents, educators, and the North Carolina general public.

We recommend that the General Assembly ensure that there is adequate staffing and funding in the Testing Section to ensure that this mandate is effectively implemented.

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I. Introduction
Senate Bill 1005, the budget appropriations bill, was ratified by the North Carolina General Assembly on September 21, 2001 and signed into law by Governor Michael Easley on September 26, 2001. The bill contains many implications for the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program in the Fairness in Testing Program component of the legislation. Among them is Section 28.17.(d) which states the following:

"The State Board of Education shall study the benefits of providing students' parents or guardians with copies of tests administered to their children under the Statewide Testing Program. The Board shall also consider the costs of maintaining the integrity and reliability of the test if such a policy is implemented. The Board shall report the results of this study to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight by March 31, 2002." An extension was later authorized to submit the report by April 15, 2002.

This report has been prepared in response to this legislative mandate.

Background
The North Carolina Statewide Testing Program has been in existence since 1978 resulting from state legislation passed in 1977. At that time the annual testing program was initially implemented with a series of commercially-developed nationally norm-referenced tests in reading, mathematics, and language. The program also included state-developed minimum competency tests in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing objectives (language) which were graduation requirements effective with the graduates of 1981. The program was expanded in the mid-eighties to include the writing assessments at several grades and the end-of-course testing, which are both state-developed assessment programs. By the late eighties the statewide testing program was re-evaluated based on concerns expressed by the business community, lawmakers, and education leaders that the program was not sufficiently rigorous or aligned with the more rigorous curriculum standards implemented as the result of the Basic Education Program (BEP). Also, there was concern expressed about the lack of alignment of the commercially-developed nationally norm-referenced tests and the standards set forth in the BEP in 1985.

Based on legislative mandates, efforts began in the late eighties to expand the end-of-course testing program to include all subjects required for entry into the state's university system and to move away from the commercially-developed nationally norm-referenced tests in elementary and middle schools to tests that were to be administered at the end of the grade and would focus on reading comprehension, mathematics, science, and social studies. The curriculum-based tests are designed to align with the existing curriculum

standards. While there could be no state-mandated standardized norm-referenced testing in grades K-2 due to legislative action, a very comprehensive and balanced system of assessments was planned for grades 3 through 8. The program would include end-of-grade curriculum-based multiple-choice tests in grades 3 through 8 in the areas of reading comprehension, mathematics, science, and social studies. The system would include multiple measures such as the open-ended assessments at grades 3 through 8 in each of the four subject areas, and writing assessments in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10. A sample of students in grades 5 and 8 was also assessed annually in reading, mathematics, and language to gauge the progress of North Carolina students against national benchmarks. The end-of-course testing program continued to expand toward the goal of testing each high school subject required for entry into the university system. However, before the comprehension system of assessment could be fully implemented the budget and staff cuts of 1995 required that the program, and the plan for the program expansion, be reduced effective with the 1995-96 school year.

Effective with the 1995-96 school year, the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program was greatly reduced. The end-of-course tests were reduced from ten to five multiple-choice tests. The writing assessments were reduced to grades 4, 7 and 10. The open-ended assessments in grades 3 through 8 were discontinued in reading, mathematics, and social studies; the science open-ended assessment which were under development, were never implemented. The social studies multiple-choice tests in grades 3 through 8 were discontinued. The science multiple-choice tests in grades 3 through 8 were developed but were never implemented statewide. The shift to the ABCs of public education reform initiative and a performance-based statewide accountability program refocused the assessment program on the basics—reading, mathematics, and writing-although the end-of-course tests in science and social studies were retained at the high school level.

In the late 1990's, additional assessments were included in the statewide testing program to better facilitate the measurement of growth in student performance in elementary (Grade 3 Pretest in reading and mathematics) and at the high school level (High School Comprehensive Test in reading and mathematics at Grade 10). More rigorous open-ended assessments were reinstated in grades 5 and 8. The five end-of-course tests discontinued in 1995-96—algebra II, geometry, physical science, chemistry, and physics were reinstated in 1998-99. The grade 5 open-ended test was moved to grade 4 to align with National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) at grades 4 and 8. The computer skills proficiency graduation requirement was implemented in 1996-97 for graduates of 2001. In addition, the minimum competency tests were replaced with equated forms of the grade 8 end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics as the high school graduation requirements for the graduates of 1998 and beyond.

As statewide testing in North Carolina enters into the 21st century emphasis has been on staying the course with the end-of-grade reading and mathematics tests and end-of-course tests, but revising the instruments to align with the revised curricula. Several tests in the statewide program were discontinued—the national norm-referenced sample testing using the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), the high school comprehensive tests in reading and mathematics administered at grade 10, the open-ended assessments in grades 4 and 8, and

the English II end-of-course writing assessment. A high school exit exam of essential skills is being added to replace the competency tests for the graduates of 2005. The model for scoring and reporting the writing assessments in grades 4, 7, and 10 has been redesigned, and a design for returning science assessments in each of the grade spans (3-5, 6-9, and 10-12) in response to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) reauthorization of 2002 (No Child Left Behind) is being evaluated. In addition, a greater emphasis has been placed on the inclusion of students with special needs into the statewide testing program and the statewide accountability program with a focus on the development of alternate assessments and expansion of the use of accommodations for students with disabilities in response to the federal 1997 revised amendments of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA, Section 504). Also, language proficiency testing as a statewide requirement has been implemented to identify students with limited English proficiency and to set standards for inclusion in the statewide testing and accountability programs. North Carolina is also beginning to explore the use of computerized web-based assessments as an option for a comprehensive economical statewide testing program.

Current Statewide Testing Program

According to General Statute 115C-174.10, there are three purposes of the three testing programs in the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program:

(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 accountability to the public for results.

The three testing programs are:

(a) Assessment Instruments for First and Second Grades;
(b) The Competency Testing Program; and
(c) The Annual Testing Program for grades 3 through 12.

Each year the current statewide testing program requires that at least 108 unique operational forms of the tests be administered (including the alternate assessments). As a test security measure and to ensure a broad breath of measurement of the curriculum in each classroom, three forms of the tests are generally administered at each administration, except for the competency tests. In most cases the tests are administered three times a year. This is true of the end-of-grade tests in both reading and mathematics due to the retesting requirements as a component of the Statewide Student Accountability Standards at grades 3, 5, and 8. Although the Statewide Student Accountability Standards are limited to grades 3, 5, and 8, local boards of education have also adopted policies in many cases requiring retesting in grades 4, 6, and 7 as well. In order to produce 108 unique forms of the tests with the existing staff and resources, the test development and

test construction processes are very intense with numerous strict predetermined timelines and deadlines.

The tests included in the statewide testing program for the 2001-02 school year are as follows:

Test	Grades	Content	Administered
Grade 3 Pretest (6 forms)	3	Reading Comprehension Mathematics	Fall (first three weeks of school)
End-of-Grade (32 forms)	3-8	Reading Comprehension Mathematics NCCATS Accommodation	Spring (final three weeks)
End-of-Course (41 forms)	8-12	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Physical Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, English I, ELPS, U. S. History	Fall, Spring, Summer (final two weeks of course or equivalent)
Competency (7 forms competency) (6 forms MC Com S) (6 forms Per. Com S)	8-12	Reading Comprehension Mathematics Computer Skills-Multiple Choice Computer Skills-Performance	Fall, Spring, Summer
Writing Assessments (3 forms grade 4) (3 forms grade 7)	4, 7, 10	4-Narrative Writing 7-Argumentative Writing 10-Informational	Spring
Alternate Assessment Portfolio (1 form)	3-8	Four Domains: Communication, Personal and Home Management, Community, and Career and Vocational	Yearlong
Alternate Assessment Academic Inventory (3 forms)	3-8	Reading Grades K-8 & 10 Mathematics Grades 3-8 & 10 Writing Grades 4, 7, & 10	At Intervals Three Times a Year (Fall, Midyear, and Spring)

How Are the State Tests Developed?

The tests included in the North Carolina statewide testing program are developed by the Department of Public Instruction with psychometric guidance from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, L. L. Thurstone Psychometric Laboratory. Assistance with test development, testing operations including handling and shipping, testing logistics and reporting is also provided by staff hired through the Technical Outreach for Public Schools (TOPS) contractual operation at North Carolina State University though always directed by NCDPI testing staff.

The tests included in the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program are curriculum-based achievement tests designed to measure curriculum implementation and to provide information to inform school accountability decisions. The tests are survey instruments in that they assess a broad scope of the curriculum but due to the limited number of items do not go sufficiently in depth in many given competency areas to yield a great deal of reliable diagnostic information. School personnel are encouraged to use other available information about the child to supplement information generated from state tests. In cases where the test serves as a gatekeeper, students have multiple opportunities to take the tests. In addition, school districts have been encouraged to use locally developed tests to get student diagnostic information.

The test development process generally takes about 36 to 40 months to bring forth a technically sound North Carolina multiple-choice test. The process begins soon after the revised or new curriculum is adopted by establishing a framework or blueprint that lays out a plan or specifications for the building of the test. The process involves many different experts at different levels over the period of 40 months and can cost approximately $1 million a test over the period of time that it takes. Generally one develops twice as many items as are typically needed since the reject rate of test items after field testing can run as high as 50 percent. Usually six to seven forms of the tests are developed and used alternatively for the test administrations required for a curriculum cycle, although ideally at least nine equated forms of the tests are needed for each curriculum cycle.

The North Carolina Statewide Testing Program continues to use teachers to assist with writing and developing test items for state tests. However, due to the demanding timelines and deadlines, like most other states, NCDPI is beginning to contract with commercial vendors for some level of assistance with item writing for many of the projects although some projects continue to be supported solely by using North Carolina teachers to write the test items. In all cases, the items used on North Carolina tests are reviewed several times by North Carolina teachers and curriculum experts prior to using them on state operational tests. A copy of the test development flowchart is located in the appendix of this report.

If a form of the test is compromised (i.e. security breached) or released, it can no longer be used in the statewide testing program due to the loss of test validity. In cases where a form of the test is lost for any reason, it takes approximately three years to replace a form of the test if the replacement is directed solely by NCDPI and TOPS staff. Commercial publishers generally charge from $3-5 million dollars to produce a customized curriculum-based technically sound multiple-choice test with 7 to 9 equated forms of approximately 100 items each. It also takes a commercial vendor at least 40 months to bring forth a customized technically sound multiple-choice test.

North Carolina's Current Test Release Policy
The current policy for releasing North Carolina state tests limits the access to the secure tests by students and their parents. NCDPI repeats the use of equated forms of the tests

during the curriculum cycle. Because the forms are re-used, they are not released to the public. The policy varies by test and has evolved over time due to limited resources.

For years the only operational state tests released by the NCDPI were the performance-based tests such as the writing assessments at grades 4, 7, and 10 and the open-ended assessments at grades 4 and 8. The open-ended questions and the writing assessment prompts are released annually. Each of these tests is released after the test administration since by that time the security and validity of the test has been compromised and the test is never used again. The tests are released to the school districts, schools, and the department website so parents can have access to the tests 30 days after the test administration. Typically for this type of tests a scoring guide that contains the prompt as well as sample student essays is also released to the schools and to the public via the NCDPI website. Printed copies of these documents (as long as supplies are available) are provided to parents and the public by the department upon request.

For the multiple-choice tests, some copies of the end-of-grade and end-of-course tests were made available for the school districts' use with an understanding that the superintendent was to develop a policy on whether or how the "secure for local use" tests would be used within the district. At least one form of the operational EOG and EOC tests along with supporting documentation was released to districts annually from 1997-2000 or until it was determined that the program's supply of forms to be released had been exhausted and the forms left were required to maintain the integrity of the statewide testing program. (No form was ever released to the districts for the chemistry and physics end-of-course tests due to the limited number of forms of the tests.) In some cases districts chose to share copies of the tests or items with schools, parents, students, and the general public while other districts adopted policies to keep the tests secure to be used as interim assessment measures within the district or for retesting purposes for the implementation of local promotion policies. (See the "Designated Secure, Secure for Local use, and Released Tests/Forms of the North Carolina Testing Program located in the appendix of this report.)

In cases where copies of the state tests were not released as "secure for local use tests," the department produced testlets or mini-tests in many of the content areas at the tested grades that were sold to the public at the cost of reproducing the materials. In addition, the department has placed some interactive tests and sample test items on the NCDPI website. Also, the department has released some sample items to many of the local newspapers.

In the rare cases where a parent or a member of the general public makes a request to see a copy of the secure test after a test administration, a NCDPI Testing Section test development staff person under secure conditions makes arrangements, as time permits, to sit with the person to review a copy or equated copy of the test. During the session the reviewer is permitted to ask questions about the test and the test content but is not permitted to take notes or record any information about the specific content of the test.

Among the greatest benefits that department staff has seen from the use of the materials and processes described above is that teachers, parents, students and the public have been given the opportunity to become familiar with the format, structure, and content of the tests. Some have commented that it has helped to demystify the tests and lessen their anxieties about the tests. A major drawback noted by others, however, is that "the secure for local use tests" have created problems in that there is confusion about which of the tests is secure thereby creating serious test security concerns. In addition, these tests have provided a mechanism for principals and teachers to use to practice the tests probably more frequently than is reasonable. We have heard others state publicly that releasing 'the secure for local use tests" has contributed to the practice of "teaching to the tests," which is a major concern since such a practice could limit the depth and scope of the instructional delivery.

In addition, the NCDPI Testing Section staff has expressed some concerns about the test-retest effect on test validity in cases where students have been given an opportunity to practice on an equated form of the operational tests just days before the actual tests are administered. However, at this time the department has not conducted studies to corroborate this concern.

For the 2000-01 school year, North Carolina released to the general public the writing prompts at grades 4, 7, and 10, and the open-ended assessments at grades 4 and 8 (12 questions for each test were released to school districts and schools). No other tests included in the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program were released during the 2000-01 school year. The decision not to release any additional tests was made primarily due to the limited item pool for the EOG and EOC tests as well as for the graduation tests such as the competency tests and the computer skills tests. The department has released many test items and is still in the process of releasing items on the website for the more recent test development projects. Additional items will be released as the item pool is expanded—however, there is no short term plan to release intact forms of the tests except for the high school exit exam where the plan to release one equated form of the test was built into the design of the test development project and budget projections.

II. Releasing State Tests

The decision to release tests is a major decision that impacts resources to such a degree that the decision should be made at the time that the test specifications are being determined at the beginning of the test development process for a curriculum cycle. The decision should be a component of a development strategy that will facilitate the release of a form of the test. Regardless of the model used, whether it is to release one single in-tact equated form during the curriculum cycle, to develop an electronic or printed item bank, to develop testlets (several printed mini-tests), or devise a test administration design that has a single core with two additional sections for embedding various additional curriculum items and/or/plus field test items, a comprehensive plan for the release of tests must be devised at the initiation of new curriculum and test development cycles. Sufficient test items must be developed during the item writing/item development phase to accommodate such an expectation. The resources allocated for each

development project at each phase of the test development process over the 40-month period must also accommodate such an expectation.

The NCDPI, in its efforts to develop tests, does so mainly with staff from the department and North Carolina State University-Technical Outreach for Public Schools (TOPS) with psychometric guidance from the L. L. Thurstone Psychometric Lab at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The existing infrastructure for test development, the existing level of funding, the constraints on staffing, and the time allotted for test development due to the curriculum revision schedule does not provide a system for the immediate release of state tests after each test administration.

In fact, among the conclusions from the Independent Audit Panel Review of the North Carolina Testing and Accountability Issues presented to the State Board of Education in December 2001, is the reference to the primary factors that contributed to the recent problems with mathematics tests which were:

♦ "An implementation timetable that was too short. No time was available for a structured review of results to ensure adequate technical accuracy.

♦ Inadequate resources and staffing. New tests and new purposes for testing were added faster than resources and staff were added to do the work.

♦ Major changes were made too frequently to content standards. Significant changes in a short period of time spell trouble in test development and standards setting.

♦ Inadequate communication to, and direct involvement of, the State Board of Education in setting testing and accountability standards."

The report goes on to note that ... "the assessment program is not funded adequately, and needs greater coordination between the various interested parties. Design issues are present that contributed to the scoring problem in May 2001. Unless the end-of-grade testing and end-of-course testing program is modified as suggested in this report problems of this nature will likely re-occur."

As alluded to in the Audit Panel Report, the NCDPI does not have adequate resources in place to sufficiently carry out the activities, tasks, and the required documentation for the existing requirements of the statewide testing program. Additional short range mandates without adding sufficient resources to support the new mandates will create a hardship for the department and the existing staff. At this time there are no extra existing items or forms of the tests that can be released. In the major areas such as reading and mathematics, the test development revision process for the current curriculum cycles is far enough along that it will become a hardship to release forms of the tests even if more staff is added. Remember that it takes approximately 40 months to go through all of the phases of a test development project to bring forth technically sound items that can be used to construct a test.

The decision to release state tests could become another program challenge unless careful thought and consideration are given to a long-range plan for releasing state tests that addresses the resources (staff and funds) needed, the model to be used, and the timelines associated with implementation. Since, at this time, development and implementation of state tests are at different phases, the plan should also note the initial content area(s) in which such a model will be piloted since it would be unrealistic to go back and do all tested content areas simultaneously.

It should be noted that according to the negotiated rule-making regarding the reauthorized ESEA legislation (No Child Left Behind), it appears that states will not be required to release copies of the tests administered under the ESEA requirements.

Issues Related to Releasing State Tests

There are several issues that need to be considered when discussions are being held about the release of North Carolina state tests. Among the issues are:

♦ The North Carolina Testing Program required 108 operational forms for the 2001-02 school year. Because three forms of the tests are typically administered at each administration, a total of 108 unique forms are required. Would the requirement to release copies of the tests extend to all 108 forms of the tests administered annually?

♦ The current workload of the existing staff is beyond reasonable capacity. No additional tasks or expectations can be added without 1) reducing the current workload and responsibilities, or 2) hiring a significant number of additional staff at the NCDPI and at TOPS.

♦ North Carolina currently has a Student Accountability Standards policy that requires that students who do not score at Achievement Levels III or IV have an opportunity to retest twice at the end of the school year. Would the requirement to release tests extend to the administration of tests in retesting situations?

♦ The current competency and computer skills graduation tests have a very limited number of forms that are administered annually. There is no opportunity to rebuild additional forms for students who are required to take these tests. Would the requirement to release test forms include the competency tests in reading and mathematics and the computer skill multiple-choice and performance tests as well?

♦ The funding level currently appropriated for the statewide testing program does not provide sufficient funds to support the release of state tests at this time.

♦ It is possible that funds appropriated to the states under the reauthorized ESEA (No Child Left Behind) may include funds for states to use to help parents, teachers, and students understand what the tests are like especially in the areas of providing information and sample test questions.

- The upgrade of tests in the areas of reading and mathematics is far enough along into the phases of test development and implementation that it prohibits a change in test design in these areas to accommodate the release of tests for the current five-year curriculum cycles.

- How will a change in test design, if approved, to accommodate the release of tests impact the algorithms for the ABCs Accountability Program reporting?

- Should other viable options other than the releasing of forms of the tests be explored as a means of helping educators, parents and students better understand what the tests are like?

- For some content areas such as chemistry and physics, it is very challenging to create a large quantity of high quality test questions. Releasing forms of the tests after each administration could limit the NCDPI's ability to have high quality operational forms of the tests available for future test administrations in these areas.

- Will education policy-makers be able to respond to criticism (when student performance increases) that it is simply a reflection of gain resulting from teachers "teaching to the test" rather than "true" academic gains?

- Serious breaches in test security could result from educators having access to released equated copies of state tests that are so similar to the "real" tests. The confusion could ultimately compromise the validity of the "official" tests.

Resources Required to Release State Tests (Costs)
The release of state tests will require resources beyond those currently appropriated annually for the implementation and maintenance of the statewide testing program. The extent to which additional resources are needed will be dictated by the model designed for the release of state tests. Generally the annual cost is equivalent to approximately three times as much as the program costs when the program is designed with no plans for releasing tests. The decision to release copies of state tests must also be built into the design of the tests at the time of establishing the test specifications which typically is done at the beginning of a new curriculum cycle. Time, as a resource, is also a critical component of the decision-making because regardless of the funding and staff positions allocated, the development of additional multiple-choice forms of the tests will require approximately 40 months.

In addition to required increases in funding and an acknowledgement of the time it takes to bring forth forms of tests, it is also necessary to hire additional professional staff to oversee that ongoing development of tests. Continuous development each year will be required if forms of the tests are released annually. Also, additional staff will need to be allocated in the curriculum areas tested as well as areas of exceptional children and limited English proficiency since staff expertise in all of these areas is required under current standards to bring forth the tests.

In reviewing data from states with comprehensive testing programs that release copies of the tests such as New York and Texas, those states tend to also have three times as many staff in the testing unit than do other states. We have also been informed that Texas' budget for testing annually is approximately $35 million compared to an $11 million annual budget for the North Carolina Statewide Testing Program. While Texas administers the tests to more students than North Carolina, the costs for test development are not affected by the number of students.

At this time, the projected costs for North Carolina to release tests cannot be provided with a great deal of detail since a model for releasing the tests would need to be designed with costs projected for that specific model. In addition, the North Carolina Testing and Accountability Technical Advisory Committee will need to be consulted to ensure that the design is technically sound and will not compromise the integrity of the tests.

What Do Other States Do?
According to the *State Student Assessment Programs Annual Survey Data Volume I dated Fall 2001*, when asked for the 1999-00 school year (the most recent summary data available) what percentage of test items used in the state testing program is released each year, the response was that most states released writing assessments after they are administered.

The following states released more than 60 percent of their test items each year:

Arkansas   CRTs 100 percent released to school districts
Connecticut   100 percent when form change is made, every 2 years
Georgia   100 percent except linking and field test items
Massachusetts 100 percent
New York   65 percent
Idaho   100 percent
Ohio   100 percent
Texas   100 percent
Wisconsin   100 percent

The following chart depicts the responses from the individual states for the 1999-00 school year when asked what percentage of test items is released each year.

State	Component	Percent Changed	Percent Released
AK	California Achievement Test, fifth edition Norm-Referenced Testing	None	None
AL	Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing	100%	100%
	Alabama Early Learning Inventory	0%	0%
	Alabama High School Graduation Exam, Third Edition	100%	None
	Alabama Reading Assessment Grade 1	0%	0%
	Alabama Reading Assessment Grade 2	0%	0%
	Stanford Achievement Test, 9th Edition	0%	0%
AR	Criterion-Referenced Testing	100%	100% released to school districts only for use with students and teachers; not available for use by vendors or by other entities
	Norm-Referenced Testing	0%	0%
AS	Stanford Achievement Test --Ninth Edition	None	None
AZ	CRT: Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)	10-15 % of AIMS are anchor items and remain unchanged from	None

		year to year	
	NRT: Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition	0%	0%
CA	Assessments in Career Education	65%	1% per subject area
	CHSPE	100%	100%
	GED	0%	0%
	Golden State Exams	Varies	Varies 0%-1%
	Physical Fitness Test	0% of test items are consistent from year to year	100%
	Standardized Testing and Reporting Program (STAR)	50% items 0% of Stanford 9	Currently none
CO	Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science	25%	25%
	Connecticut Academic performance Test (CAPT)	100 %	60%
	Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT)	90% when a form change is made, every 3 years	Writing prompts are released each year. 100 % are released when a form change is made, usually every 2 years
DC	Stanford Achievement Tests-Ninth Edition	Not Any	Not Any
DE	Delaware Student Testing Program		
	Mathematics NRT	None	None
	Reading NRT	None	None
	Science 8 & 11		
	Social Studies 8 & 11	30%	None Now
	Standards–Based Mathematics	17 %	8%
	Standards-Based Reading	30 %	30%
	Standards-Based Writing	67 %. The stand-alone writing prompts are changed each year.	67%. The stand-alone writing prompts are released each year.

		The text-based writing prompts are not.	
DoDEA	CTB TerraNova Multiple Assessment	None	None
FL	No Response to Survey		
GA	Criterion-References Competency Tests (CRCT)	100 %	100%
	Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT)	100% of the live items, other than items needed for equating.	0%
	Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R)	None	None
	Iowa Tests of Basic Skills	None	None
	Writing Test	100% for grades 5, 8, & 11	0%
GU	SAT9 Norm-Referenced Test	0%	0%
HI	Stanford Achievement Test 9th Edition Ed. Abbreviated	None	None
IA	Standardized Testing ITBS and ITED	NA	NA
ID	Math Assessment	100%	100%
	Norm-Referenced Test	None	None
	Writing Assessment	100%	100%
IL	Illinois Standards Achievement Test and Illinois Goal Assessment Program	About 65%	Writing-all are released; reading-one complete passage and 20 items per grade; mathematics – 10-15 items per grade
IN	Statewide Assessment	40% (100% of constructed response items are changed each year, 10 – 20 % of multiple choice)	33% (100% of constructed response items)
KS	Kansas Assessment Program	100%	None

KY	Alternate Portfolio	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
	KCCT On-Demand	20% of the Open Response and Multiple Choice	15% of the Open Response and Multiple Choice
	National Norm-Referenced Test	None	None
	Writing Portfolio Assessment	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
LA	Graduation Exit Exam (GEE)	About 60% are changed	None are released
	LEAP 21 Grades 4, 8	About 75%	About 25%
	The Iowa Tests, Complete Battery	None are changed	None are released
MA	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)	One hundred percent of items used to determine student, school, and district scores are changed each year.	One hundred percent of the items on which student, school, and district scores are based are released each year.
MD	High School Assessments	100% of the test items are new and were used in the 1999-2000 field test year. It has not yet been determined the percentage of test items used in this component that will be changed each year in the future.	One test form per content area (varies from 40% to 60% of the test items per content area).
	Maryland Functional Tests	50%	0%
	Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP)	75%	1%

ME	Maine Educational Assessment	Approximately 30% of items change, except in writing which utilizes two new prompts each year.	Items common to all students are released (approximately 30%)
MI	Grade 4 and 7 Reading and Mathematics	100%	0%
	Grade 5 and 8 Science, Social Studies, and Writing	80%	100% of writing. 10% of science 10 – 20% of social studies
	MEAP High School Testing	90%	50%
MN	Basic Standards Tests	90%; 100% for Writing	Reading and Mathematics items are released usually one to two years after they appear on an initial form; 100% for Writing
	Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments	100%	Base test items (Reading, Math) released every 2-3 years. Writing prompts released annually.
MO	MAP	Approximately 50%	Approximately 50%
MP	Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition	None	None
MS	Career Planning and Assessment System	None for most tests, although some vocational specific assessments may be revised if there are	None

		major curriculum changes.	
	Functional Literacy Examination	New form of test is created from item bank each year.	None
	Norm-Referenced Testing	None	None
MT	Student Assessment Requirement	None	None
NC	NC Annual Testing Program	Several forms of the tests are available. The forms administered may vary each year.	For the past two years at least one form or 33.3 percent of the items are released annually.
	NC Testing Program – Competency Testing	0%	0%
	NC Test of Computer Skills	0%	None
	Norm-Referenced Testing Program	None – Commercially developed standardized achievement Test – Form K of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)	None known
ND	TerraNova and Test of Cognitive Skills, 2nd Ed.	None	None
NE	No State Assessments 1999-2000	Does not apply	Does not apply
NH	NH Educational Improvement and Assessment Program	30%	30%
NJ	Elementary School Proficiency Assessment	75%	Complete sample tests for ESPA are posted on the department's website. Similarly, one ESPA open-ended question with a response will be released

			annually.
	Grade 11 High School Proficiency	75%	Writing tasks are released – the task is 60% of the writing score.
	Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment	75%	Complete sample tests for GEPA are posted on the department's website. Similarly, one GEPA open-ended question with a response will be released annually.
NM	NM Achievement Assessment	0%	NA
	NM High School Competency Exam	25% - 30%	None – secure examination
	NM Writing Assessment Program	100%	Writing prompts are known to all interested parties following test administration.
	Reading Assessments for Grades 1 and 2	District option (LEA chooses instrument to assess proficiency)	District option (LEA decision)
NV	Direct Writing Assessment at Grades 4 and 8 and the High School Proficiency Examination at Grades 11/12 and Adult	100%	100% of Writing prompts are easily recalled by students and teachers and are therefore

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			released each year. Rubrics for the tests are freely distributed to assist writing instruction. These are available on the Nevada DOE website at www.nde.state.nv.us
	High School Proficiency Examination	75% of Math and Reading items are changed on each administration. Two new Writing prompts are used on each new administration.	Approximately 20% for Reading and Mathematics. 100% for Writing.
	Norm-Referenced Testing at Grades 4, 8, and 10	None – TerraNova FORM A (CTB/McGraw-Hill) used at each grade	0%
NY	New York State Testing Program	100%	65%
	Occupational Education Proficiency Examinations	98%	95%
	Program Evaluation Tests (PET)	The science test is reused without change for a period of years	0% for gr 4 science
	Regents Competency Tests	90%	85%
	Regents Examination Program	97%	97%

	Second Language Proficiency Exams	100%	80%
OH	Proficiency Testing 12th Grade	90-100% different from previous year	100% of operational items are released July 1
	4th Grade	60-70%; 90-100% different from previous years	100% of operational items are released July 1
	6th Grade	60-70%; 90-100% different from previous years	100% of operational items are released July 1
	9th Grade	60-70%; 90-100% different from previous years	100% of operational items are released July 1
OK	Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests – Multiple Choice	80%	Sample questions released each year that will not be utilized in future tests
	Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests – Writing	100%	Writing prompts are not reused in future assessments
OR	Reading, Writing, Science, and Mathematics Assessment	60% for Reading, 75% for Writing, 60% for Mathematics Multiple-Choice, 60% for Science and 100% for Mathematics Problem Solving	15% for Reading, Science, and Mathematics Multiple-Choice; 50% for Writing; and 100% for Mathematics Problem Solving
PA	Reading, Mathematics	50% Math, 25% Reading	10% Math, 20% Reading

PR	Pruebas Puertorriquenas de Competencias Escolares	During the last four years the items have not been changed.	In 1996-97 at least 15% were released.
RI	English Language Arts & Math Performance Assessment	All	None; although sample items and practice items are available.
	Health Education Performance Assessments	About 20% - several items are released to the public and school districts each year and used for professional development and as examples of sample items.	About 20% - all replaced items are released to the public and school districts.
	Writing Performance Assessment	100%	100%
SC	Criterion-Referenced Tests-BSAP-High School Exit Examination	All items are changed each year except for the linking items.	None
	Criterion-Referenced Tests-PACT grades 3-8	All items are changed each year except for linking items.	None
	Criterion-Referenced Tests-Readiness Test	None	None
	Norm-Referenced Testing-TerraNova sample testing	The grade levels will change from year to year. The tests within a grade are the same from year to year.	None
SD	Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition	None	None

		Stanford Writing Assessment Program, Third Edition	100% There is a new prompt each year	None
TN		Achievement Test (3-8)	Minimum of 70%	0%
		Competency Test	100%	0%
		High School End of Course	100%	0%
		TCAP Writing Assessment (4,7, 11)	100%	100%
TX		Reading Proficiency Tests in English (RPTE)	100%	100%
		Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) and Texas end-of-course tests	100% of items	100% of items
UT		Core Curriculum Testing (Perf. Assessment)	0%	0%
		Norm-Referenced Testing	None	None
		Utah Core Assessment CRT Program	Over the next few years, as U-PASS is fully implemented, 80% to 100% of the Core Assessments will be new items.	None at the current time.
VA		Standards of Learning (SOL) Assessment Program	Approximately 70% of test items on each new test form are unique. It is anticipated that two new forms will be developed and used in each administration.	The Department plans to release a portion of items from the main test form following each spring administration.
		Virginia Literacy Testing Program	Some rotation of previously used test forms. Test forms are always different from those	None

		administered in most recent test administrations.	
	Virginia State Assessment NRT Program	0%	0%
VT	TerraNova Assessments Series	None	None
VT	Standard's Referenced Exams	NSRE – about half. All of the multiple choice questions stay the same as they are the basis for the SAT9 estimated score. Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment-0%	None
	Vermont Developmental Reading Assessment	None	None
WA	Norm-Referenced Testing	0%	0%
	Second Grade Reading	None	All
	Washington Assessment of Student Learning	70%	0%
WI	Reading Comprehension	100%; A new test is developed every year.	100%; All test items used are released every year as a new test is developed each year but we administer a linking test in selected districts (approximately 1,000 students) after administration of the regular WRCT. This linking test becomes part of

			the next year's test.
	Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts of Examinations (WKCE)	100%; A new test form is used every year	None, as they belong to our contractor, CTB McGraw-Hill
WV	ACT Explore	None	None
	ACT Work Keys	None	None
	National Assessment of Educational Progress	None	None
	Norm-Referenced Test	None	None
	Writing Assessment	Different prompt each year	None
WY	Carl Perkins Assessment	Vocational education does not change. It is entirely performance based. Reading, writing, and mathematics assessment was administered in April 2000	Reading, writing, and mathematics state assessment items will be released at a rate of 50% for reading and 10% for math.
	Wyoming Comprehensive Assessment System	In addition to replacing released items, problem items are replaced each year. The total percentage of replaced items ranges between 10-15% each year in each content area.	Approximately 40-50% of the common items in mathematics and reading. The single common writing prompt is released at each grade level. Because we use both matrix and common items, the released

			items are approximately 10% of the item pool in each subject area.

Pros For Releasing State Tests	Cons For Releasing State Tests
Provides Information about the test ◆ Test structure ◆ Test question format ◆ How specific content is measured ◆ Emphasizes major content focus ◆ Conveys message about curriculum value ◆ Informs parents/students regarding expectations ◆ Provides basis for item-analyses ◆ Teacher can model structure and format on teacher-made tests **Demystifies the Test** ◆ Reduces anxieties ◆ Provides for greater buy-in ◆ Provides for greater understanding of tests **Provides Preview of Student Performance** ◆ Equated forms administered prior to test ◆ Can refocus instruction as a front load ◆ Provides for "along the way" prescriptions **Provides a Mechanism for Practice** ◆ Increases student familiarity with test ◆ Reduces test anxieties ◆ Allows for teaching test-taking strategies ◆ Helps students with time management/pacing while testing ◆ "Practice makes perfect" ◆ Students can have true testing experience prior to taking the real test ◆ Helps students with directions for the test ◆ Helps students deal with testing time constraints	**Provides Information about the test** ◆ Too much emphasis may be placed on the test ◆ All classroom and homework efforts may become test driven ◆ Content focus and scope may become narrow ◆ May mislead the public about what is valued in the curriculum ◆ Parents and public may get a narrow view of what is expected of students ◆ Teacher and school personnel may become too focused on item-analyses to interpret test results **Seeing the type of test questions could create test anxieties** ◆ Parents and public may become too focused on the content of specific passages or items on the tests ◆ Special interest groups can become pre-occupied with tests and consume a great deal of staff time defending content **Provides a Mechanism for Practice** ◆ Instructional delivery could become strongly dominated by practicing the tests ◆ Teachers could begin "teaching to the test" which could narrow the depth and scope of the instructional delivery ◆ The test-retest effect could have an impact on the technical validity of the official test especially when practice is given close to date of test administration ◆ School personnel may become confused about what is "real" and what is released so test security may become compromised

	Other Cons
	◆ Test design would need to change
	◆ Additional staff and resources would be needed to accommodate the practice of releasing forms of the tests
	◆ Additional field testing of each content area would be required
	◆ It may become necessary to limit the number of forms administered at each administration
	◆ narrowing the breadth of the curriculum measurement
	◆ jeopardizing the security of the tests for each administration
	◆ Limiting the data available for the regression formulas for the ABCs
	◆ Practicing the tests could reduce instructional time on tasks
	◆ Reproducing copies of released tests at the local level or by general public could create copyright violations (passages, poems, informationals, etc. used on tests are all copyrighted materials)
	◆ Results from the released forms of the tests could be used inappropriately to make decisions about student placement

Options and Alternatives for Releasing the State Tests

The department believes that a short-range plan to release state tests at this time would have an adversarial effect on the overall success of the statewide testing program given the workload of existing staff, the limited resources including time available to replenish the item pool, and the limited items in the existing item pools for each of the EOG and EOC tests. The department believes, however, that a well-designed long-range comprehensive plan to release tests is a reasonable expectation as long as resources are appropriated to support the plan and the timelines for implementation are realistic and doable.

The department believes that there are several viable long-range designs that would facilitate greater understanding of what the tests are like for educators, parents, students and other stakeholders. In addition, it will be necessary to assign testing specialists with a strong content background in each of the tested content areas to the Testing Section at NCDPI and TOPS to ensure that a process is in place to replenish and update the test item

pool annually. The existing staff, even with the TOPS contracted staff, is not sufficient to fulfill this requirement. With sufficient resources (including staff) allocated, the following options may be considered as models for releasing state tests:

Long Term Options

1. For each curriculum cycle, design the equated forms to ensure that at least one equated operational form of the test is developed with the intent to release it to schools, parents, students, and the general public one year after the initial field testing of the test forms. (Users of the test form would contact the copyright holders and incur any fees for use of copyrighted passage materials, if appropriate, when used other than in the classroom.)

2. For each curriculum cycle, design the equated forms of the tests so that once a sufficient number of forms of the tests is available after several rounds of use, certain forms would be designated "retired" during the curriculum cycle, the department would again release the retired forms as "secure for local use" copies of the tests for use in districts and schools only with or without plans to release the forms to the general public.

3. Develop a test design at the beginning of each new curriculum cycle that is different from the current design for all EOG and EOC tests. The new design would use a single core of test items that is common for all students at a grade with two variable sections that would be used 1) to embed field test items (which would eliminate the need for most stand-alone field testing) and 2) to embed a variety of items across several forms to ensure a broad breath of curriculum measurement and test security. This design would ensure that all students in a grade would be measured on the same core test items.

   For the Student Accountability Standards, each student's progress would be judged on the same common core of test questions. A different core of test questions would be used for each of the two re-testing cycles within a grade. The core items on the tests would be released to the districts, schools, and the public after each test administration. This would require a process and resources for continuous ongoing test development activities within each curriculum cycle. Student reports would yield item level results denoting the content measured, the difficulty of the item, the correct response, and the cognitive skills level measured from the Marzano et al. thinking skills taxonomy.

   For school accountability, the entire pool of items for a content at a grade across all forms, except for the field test items, would be used to determine each school's accountability status.

4. Develop a system of sample test items in a public item bank solely for dissemination to educators, stakeholders, and the general public. The system would include upgraded testlets to match each tested content area at each grade. The items are to be

field tested so that item statistics are provided along with other descriptors such as the measured competency, the thinking skills level, the difficulty level of the item, and the correct item key. The item bank would contain no fewer than 50 items for any content area at any grade but would contain as many items as a maximum as resources permit. The items would be provided on the web with a mechanism for creating interactive tests, on compact disc (CD), or in printed format for a minimal fee. There would be staff persons designated solely to the design, upgrade, and maintenance of this public item bank that would work under the direction of the staff in the Testing Section. The designated staff would work continuously and collaboratively with curriculum staff and practicing to ensure alignment with the content standards and the instructional delivery of those standards. Users of the items would take responsibility for paying fees associated with copyright waivers on published materials used as stimulus material for the test items. The designated staff would also provide statewide professional development (conferences, lectures, regional services, district, and school level services) on issues and processes related to tests and measurement including item development and use, and data analyses.

5. The NCDPI Testing Section staff would develop a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the sole purpose of hiring a vendor on a five-year contract (for each curriculum cycle) to develop, disseminate, upgrade, and maintain a comprehensive system of sample test questions (all content areas and grades where state testing is available) in an electronic item bank (and paper format) to be used by North Carolina educators, stakeholders, and the general public for a minimal access fee. The model could be designed to link with the LearnNC item bank created by the curriculum staff.

6. Continue to plan to develop 10-20 additional items during each curriculum cycle for each content area at each grade for the sole purpose of disseminating the test items to educators, stakeholders, and the general public as sample items. The additional development and dissemination of test items required under this model would be incorporated into the overall test development process for each content area at each grade for each curriculum cycle.

Short Term Options

1. Expedite plans by the NCDPI Testing Section to produce and disseminate Test Information Sheets which are 4-page documents that describe each of the tests in the statewide testing program. In addition, the documents will contain from five to ten sample test questions. These documents will be mass produced and shipped to LEAs and placed on the NCDPI website.

2. Encourage school staff and other educators to use the classroom assessment item bank that has been generated by the NCDPI curriculum staff and is available on the LearnNC website. Sufficient resources would be allocated to the classroom assessment project to ensure that it is expanded to include all grades and subject areas. The department would continue to work with practicing teachers and

curriculum experts in order to expand the item pool to fulfill the needs for the current curriculum cycles.

3. Encourage the use of the resources currently available on the NCDPI Testing Section Website and in the Communication Division. Currently there are some sample items on the website with some immediate plans to expand the pool of items. In addition, there are testlets (mini tests) available in reading and mathematics grades 3 through 8 for purchase (at the cost for copying) in the Communication Division of the department. Science and social studies testlets for grades 3 through 8 and Algebra I, English I, and U. S. History are available for purchase (at the cost for copying) through North Carolina State University-TOPS at the testing warehouse location in Raleigh.

III. Conclusion

With assistance from the department, the State Board of Education (SBE) has carefully studied the benefits of providing student's parents or guardians with copies of tests administered to their children under the Statewide Testing Program. Although the SBE believes that the goal to share copies of the tests along with the results to parents at the completion of a test administration cycle is an honorable one, it does not perceive it as a viable option at this time. With the existing workloads of the limited staff assigned to develop and implement state tests, the program's current funding constraints, the current design of the tests, and the timelines associated with the revisions of the tests, the benefits to parents at this time are exceeded by the potential detriment to the integrity of the statewide testing and accountability programs and the overall educational process and outcomes in the state.

The SBE is committed to a goal of providing meaningful and parent-friendly information to parents, students, educators, and the general public that will facilitate a better understanding of the purpose of state tests, how the tests are developed, what the tests are like, and the consequences for taking each of the state tests. At this time, as an alternative to releasing the tests, the SBE has instructed the department, as resources allow, to:

1. implement options to help parents acquire a better understanding of the tests included in the statewide testing program which shall include the release of sample test items in each tested content area and grade;

2. place this expectation among the agency's priorities effective with the 2002-2003 school year and that the department evaluate the implications of the ESEA (No Child Left Behind) requirements and how any new assessment funds from ESEA can be used to assist in this area; and

3. devise a long-term plan for releasing an ample supply of sample test items for use by parents, educators, and the North Carolina general public.

We recommend that the General Assembly ensure that there is adequate staffing and funding in the Testing Section to ensure that this mandate is effectively implemented.

IV. APPENDIX

**Designated Secure, Secure for Local Use, and Released Tests/Forms
North Carolina Testing Program**

The NCDPI makes the determination regarding the status of North Carolina-developed tests. Tests are categorized in one of the following three categories: (a) secure, (b) "secure for local use," or (c) released.

Secure Tests. Each local school and school system must store all *secure* test materials in their possession in a secure, locked facility except when in use. State Board of Education policy specifies (1) that secure tests and secure test questions are not to be reproduced in any manner, (2) that school personnel are not to disclose the contents of the tests by discussing specific test questions, and (3) that excerpts from secure tests must not be used at any time during classroom instruction or in creating test preparation materials or in resource materials such as study guides. Access to secure tests shall be limited to school personnel who have legitimate need. Persons who have access to secure test materials shall not use those materials for personal gain.

Secure state tests shall not be copied, filed, or used directly in instructional activities. No person may copy, reproduce, or paraphrase in any manner or for any reason secure test materials without the express written consent of the test publisher (i.e., the NCDPI Division of Accountability Services/Testing Section). Copying, reproducing, or paraphrasing secure test materials represents a breach of test security and is a violation of federal copyright laws, North Carolina Administrative Code, State Board of Education policy, and North Carolina Testing Code of Ethics.

Secure for Local Use. Tests/forms designated as "secure for local use" are available through the LEA central office. The local central office leadership *must* adhere to the NCDPI policy for authorized use (see Side 2). Each LEA then determines how the secure for local use tests/forms are to be used within the school system.

Released. Released tests/forms are public domain. They may be photocopied and used by anyone for any purpose without restriction.

The following table identifies all "secure for local use" and released tests/forms from the North Carolina Testing Program as of this publication date. A number of tests/forms are not designated as "secure for local use" or released because there are not enough items/forms. *Tests/forms not listed below must remain secure.*

Tests	Secure for Local Use	Released	EOC Tests	Secure for Local Use	Released
Grade 3 Pretest	None	None	Algebra I	Forms S, T	None
			Algebra II	Form I	None
EOG Grade 3	Forms L, M	None	Biology	Form J	None
EOG Grade 4	Forms L, H, M	None	Chemistry	None	None
EOG Grade 5	Forms L, H, M	None	ELPS	Form B	None
EOG Grade 6	Forms L, H, N	None	English I	Forms M, O	None
EOG Grade 7	Forms L, H, J	None	Geometry	Form G	None
EOG Grade 8	Forms M, J	None	Physical Science	Form A	None
			Physics	None	None
Computer Skills	None	Performance & Multiple-Choice[1]	US History	Forms P, O	None
			Biology Pretest	None	Form A[1]
High School Comprehensive Test	Yes, no form designation	None	Algebra I, English I, & US History Pretests[2]	Form A	None

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[1] Released tests are available on the NCDPI Website at http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/accountability/testing.

[2] The LEA test coordinator may purchase these forms by contacting TOPS at (919) 515-4632. Purchase "secure for local use" tests/forms must not be reproduced or photocopied at the local level without permission from the NCDPI due to possible copyright restrictions.

Authorized Use of Secure, Secure for Local Use, and Released Tests/Forms
North Carolina Testing Program

The table below is the NCDPI guide for authorized use of secure, secure for local use, and released tests/forms.[3]

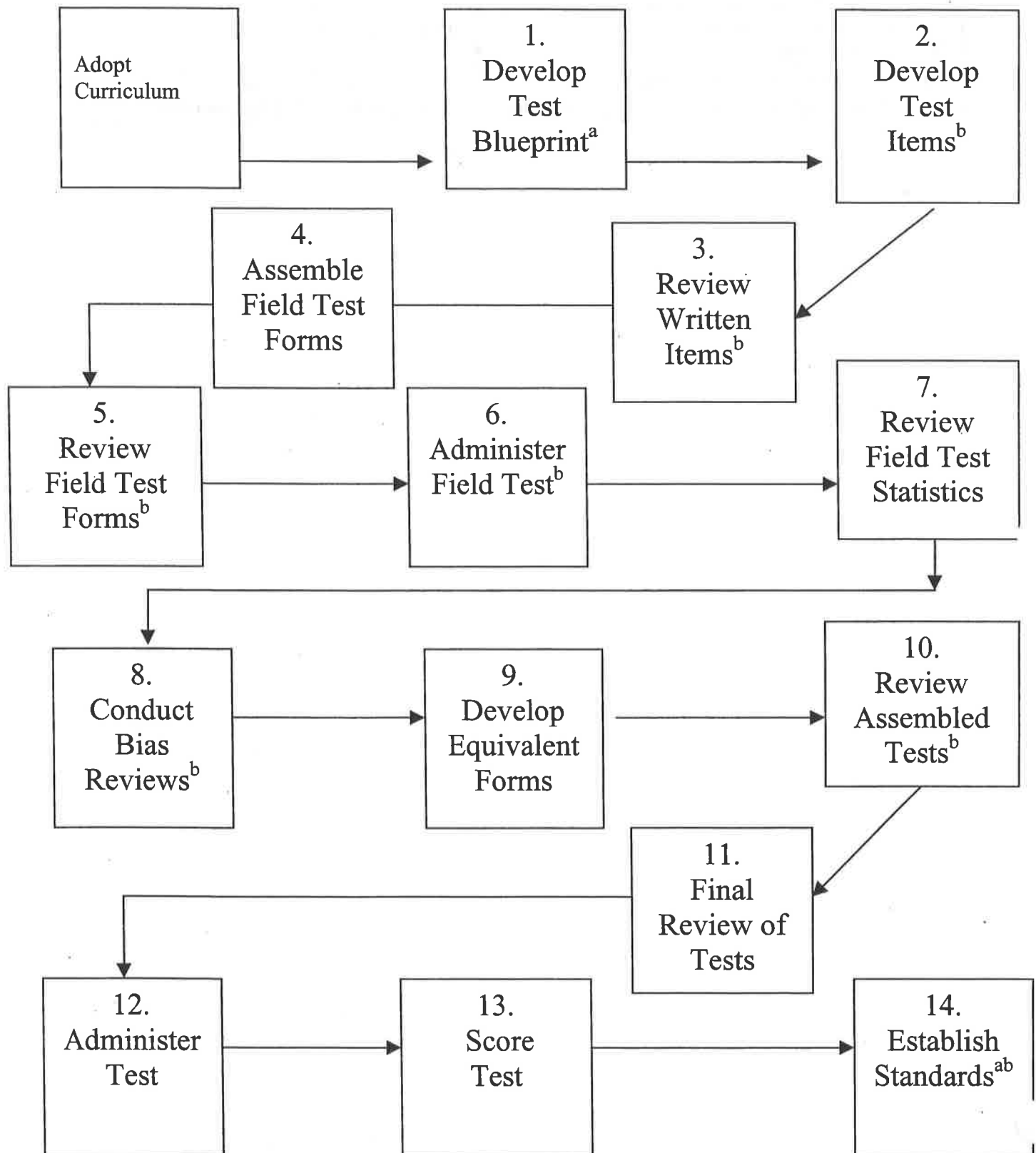|	**Secure**	*Secure for Local Use*	**Released**
Must Apply the *Testing Code of Ethics*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must Administer for State Accountability Purposes	Yes	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
Must Re-test After Declaring a Misadministration	Yes	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Not Applicable
Must Use to Meet Competency or Computer Skills Requirement for High School Diploma	Yes	Not Permitted	Not Permitted
May Conduct an Item Analysis	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Put in Test Item Banks	Not Permitted	*Only mathematics* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Photocopy Test Books	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Use as Practice Tests	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Use During Instruction (e.g., teach test-taking skills)	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Use for Staff Development	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Retest Students After Remediation or Focused Intervention	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Conduct Research Studies	*Only* permitted with written NCDPI approval[4]	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
View Tests and Test Items by Non-Authorized Personnel (e.g., parents)	*Only* permitted at	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes

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[3] *All NCDPI field tests are <u>secure</u> state tests and must <u>not</u> be used for any purpose other than those specified in the instructions that accompany those materials. The materials are <u>not</u> to be filed, retained, or copied by any means in whole or in part.*

[4] Send a written request to Louis M. Fabrizio, Director, NCDPI/Division of Accountability Services at (fax) 919-715-1204 or (e-mail) lfabrizi@dpi.state.nc.us to obtain written approval to conduct a research study using secure state tests.

	NCDPI by appointment		
Copy or Make Notes About Tests or Test Items by Non-Authorized Personnel (e.g., parents)	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes
May Test Incoming Transfer Students to Determine Next Class Sequence	Not Permitted	*Only* with permission of superintendent or LEA test coordinator	Yes

North Carolina Testing Program:
The Multiple-Choice Test Development Process

Adopt Curriculum

1. Develop Test Blueprint[a]

2. Develop Test Items[b]

4. Assemble Field Test Forms

3. Review Written Items[b]

5. Review Field Test Forms[b]

6. Administer Field Test[b]

7. Review Field Test Statistics

8. Conduct Bias Reviews[b]

9. Develop Equivalent Forms

10. Review Assembled Tests[b]

11. Final Review of Tests

12. Administer Test

13. Score Test

14. Establish Standards[ab]

a – Activities done only at implementation of new curriculum; b - Activities involving NC teachers
Steps 1-6 take approximately 18 – 24 months to complete. Steps 7-14 take approximately 16 months to complete.