

Overview of High School Exit Standards

State Board Policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D.0503) identifies two “Exit Standards” that students who entered ninth grade for the first time in 2006-2007 and thereafter must meet. These High School Exit Standards are the following: (1) passing the end-of-course (EOC) assessment in five courses, and (2) successfully completing a Graduation Project.

The five required EOC assessments are in English I, Biology, Algebra I, Civics and Economics, and US History. In order for the score to be considered “passing,” it must be at Achievement Level III (with one standard error of measurement) or above. If a student *passes one of these courses but does not pass the EOC*, he or she will be given the opportunity to retake the assessment. If the student does not pass the assessment the second time, the school will provide additional instruction/tutoring and allow the student to retake the EOC again. If a student has still not shown proficiency after taking the EOC three times, a school-based committee will meet to review a portfolio of the student’s work and make a recommendation to the principal regarding next steps for that student. Students who have not passed the course will not be given the opportunity to retake the EOC.

The second Exit Standard is successful completion of a Graduation Project, a performance-based exit assessment consisting of four components: a research paper, an oral presentation, a portfolio, and a product. Students begin work on this project during the freshman and sophomore years with the project culminating during the student’s senior year. Students across the state are assessed using four rubrics (one for each component of the project) developed by the Department of Public Instruction.

As students begin work on the Graduation Project, they receive support through a school-based advisor and community-based mentor knowledgeable in the topic of the student’s research. Likewise, at each high school a Graduation Project Coordinator and Graduation Project Steering Committee provide an infrastructure of support for students during all stages of the process.

The combination of demonstrated proficiency on five EOC’s and successful completion of the Graduation Project with its emphasis on performance-based assessment allows students to show their mastery of content, skills, and processes prior to graduating from North Carolina high schools. In Wake County we are committed to supporting our students in these requirements and challenging them to achieve at the highest level possible.