

Secondary Education Newsletter

First Semester Comes to an End

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Before first semester comes to a close with testing on January 13-16, it might be helpful to review procedures and options for those students who do not demonstrate proficiency with a Level III or IV on the EOC exams.



The classroom teacher for any student who scores a Level I or II must complete a **Personalized Education Plan** (PEP) for that student. PEP guidelines and templates are located under Departments (Curriculum & Instruction—Secondary Education) on the SCS homepage.

Classroom teachers should submit the completed PEP to the guid-

ance department. This can be a “paperless” exchange as all forms are interactive and can be sent electronically.

Retest I must be offered within 15 days of the regularly scheduled exam. Focus intervention may be initiated before this first retest and continued following retest I, if necessary.

It is required that at least 20 hours of *documented*, focused intervention be given between Retest I and Retest II.

There are a number of options for this required intervention:

- ⇒ Teacher– directed– Tutoring (one-on-one or group)
- ⇒ Castle Learning
- ⇒ Odysseyware
- ⇒ Two week traditional summer school (if offered)

- ⇒ No traditional summer school but computer labs opened at individual schools for online interventions
- ⇒ Possibly online summer school (1 pilot course to be offered this summer)

Regardless of the option chosen, the hours and method(s) of focused intervention must be recorded in the student’s PEP by the remediating teacher or facilitator and submitted to the guidance counselor. Retest II will be released by Truett Preslar in Testing once the remediation documentation is received.

A Review Committee and the school’s principal will make the final recommendations and complete the PEP process.



NC Graduation Project: The Research Paper

Our first semester of the North Carolina Graduation Project (NCGP) has been a learning experience for everyone involved. For this first group of students, coming up with project topics, locating useful resources, completing the required interview, and writing up their research using the required MLA documentation required motivation and diligent work habits. English III teachers have been forced to devote much of their instructional time to the

research paper. For advisors, juggling meetings with assigned students and reading first and final drafts of the research paper placed new demands on their time. Needless to say, almost everyone in the secondary level has experienced some degree of added stress this semester because of the Project.

Because this is a **mandated** program, we must continue to look for ways to implement and manage the four components of the Project as effi-

ciently as possible. Over time students hopefully will find it easier to meet the expectations, and scaffolding of NCGP skills prior to the junior year will make the task easier for all teachers. Currently, we are exploring some electronic options that may facilitate the meetings between advisors and their assigned students.

Please email your suggestions for improving this implementation to Susan Norris. Our goal is to make this a little easier with each semester.

Why DPI included the NCGP in the High School Exit Standards

In April 2005, Governor Mike Easley signed an initiative that brings together business, education, and government leaders in forming the nation's first Center for 21st Century Skills to promote workforce readiness.

The North Carolina State Board of Education and Department of Public Instruction mandated the High School Exit Standards in May 2005 because "the future demands that students be prepared to function in a globally competitive world which will lead to their success in the workplace, higher education, the community, and life."

Three reasons are cited as evidence to support these changes to the graduation requirements:

- 1) Fundamental changes in the economy, jobs, and businesses

"Over the last several decades, the industrial economy based on manufacturing has shifted to a service

economy driven by information, knowledge, and innovation."

- 2) New, different skill demands

"Advanced economies, innovative industries and firms, and high-growth jobs require more educated workers with the ability to respond flexibly to complex problems, communicate effectively, manage information, work in teams and produce new knowledge."

- 3) Closing achievement gaps

"For the past decade, the US has focused nationally on closing achievement gaps between the lowest- and highest-performing students—a legitimate and useful agenda, but one that skirts the competitive demand for advanced skills. . . To prepare students to be competitive, the nation needs an 'NCLB plus' agenda that infuses 21st

century skills into core academic subjects."

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, along with its subsidiary North Carolina Business Committee for Education have proposed that "The North Carolina Graduation Project represents the 'first best chance' for high school students to demonstrate competency in skills and knowledge that are in demand across the nation and around the world."

Hopefully, this information from The NCGP Implementation Guide, the 21st Century Skills, Education and Competitiveness Report and the findings from the NC Business Committee for Education 2006 Partner Survey will help explain why our state—along with numerous other states—have adopted the Graduation Project.

DROPOUT PREVENTION: Relevant Research Nuggets

1) Among developed countries, the United States ranks 18th in high school graduation rates. . . “ (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2007)

2) In the 2006-2007 school year, 23,550 students in grades 9-12 dropped out of school in North Carolina. This represents 5.24% up from 5.04% in the 2005-2006 school year (NCDPI, 2008)

3) Four Year Cohort Graduation Rate:

State:	69.9%
Stanly County Schools	75.1% (2008)
	78.1% (2007)

(NCDPI: 2007/ 2008 report)

4) 7,000 students dropout of school every day—more than 1.2 million each year (that’s approximately one every 67 seconds). (Mattie C. Stewart Foundation, 2008)

5) One study found that high school dropouts are more likely than

graduates to be

- ⇒ Unemployed
- ⇒ Living in poverty
- ⇒ Receiving public assistance
- ⇒ In prison
- ⇒ On death row
- ⇒ Unhealthy
- ⇒ Divorce and/or single parents with children who drop out of high school themselves

(Bridgeland, Dilulio, & Morrison, 2006)

5) The average annual income for a high school dropout in 2005 was \$17,299, compared to \$26,933 or a high school graduate. A college graduate will earn more than \$1 million more in their lifetimes than a high school dropout. (Mattie C. Stewart)

6) If the number of dropouts were reduced 50%, taxpayers would save \$45

billion per year (Balfanz / Bridgeland)

7) Top Five Reasons Dropouts Leave School:

- ⇒ Classes not interesting (47%)
- ⇒ Missed too many days to catch up (43%)
- ⇒ Spent time with people not interested in school (42%)
- ⇒ Had too much freedom (38%)
- ⇒ Failing in School (35%)

(The Silent Epidemic, 2008)



Fifteen Best Practices of High Performing High Schools with relatively Low Dropout Rates

Practices that are embedded in the NCGP are in **boldface print**.

- Systematic Renewal
 - A continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives related to school policies and goals
- **School-Community Collaboration**
 - A network of community support to the schools
- Safe learning environments
- Family Engagement
- Early Childhood Development
- Early Literacy Development
- **Mentoring / Tutoring**
- **Service-Learning**
 - Combining community service experiences with academic learning
- Alternative Schooling
- After-School Opportunities
- Professional Development
- **Active Learning**
- **Educational Technology**
- **Individualized Instruction**
- **Career and Educational Technology (CTE)**



“Future Ready” Graduates

Beginning with the 2009-2010 ninth grade class, all students will be expected to meet the requirements outlined under the Future-Ready Core Course of Study. This course of study encompasses what was previously designated as the Career Prep, College Tech Prep, and College/University. The primary differences between this course of study and previous courses of study are

- An additional mathematics course for those students who previously did not pursue the College/University Prep Course of Study
- A recommended four elective credits in a concentrated area; and
- An increase from 20 to 21 (plus local requirements) for the total number of credits required for graduation

The Occupational Course of Study

will continue to be made available for certain students with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Plan.

Why this change? A recent survey found that over 40 percent of college faculty feel that first-year students are academically unprepared for college-level courses. Nearly the same percentage of employers feel recent high school graduates lack the skills to advance. Even high school graduates when asked, say they would have taken harder courses if they had known what it would take to be successful after graduation. The ACT Study, “Ready for College and Ready for Work: Same or Different?,” found that “whether planning to enter college or workforce training programs after graduation, high school students need to be educated in a comparable level of readiness in reading and mathematics.” The goal of the SBOE is

that all students graduate prepared for post-secondary education and 21st century careers.

(Taken from Making the Grade: Future Ready Graduates, a publication of NC Newspapers in Education with support of NC Press Foundation and DPI, Fall 2008)



Freshman Registration Handbook

This year, in an effort to not only economize but also to go green, only the Freshman Registration Handbook will be printed and distributed

to students and their parents at the eighth grade registration meet-



ings. This handbook will include helpful information explaining the new Future Ready Core Course of Study, the graduation requirements detailed in the High School Exit Standards, and suggested strate-

gies for success from the College Board.

The Registration Handbook for students other than freshmen will be posted at the Stanly County Schools homepage under Secondary Education.

Shifting to Career Clusters

No, the shift from pathways to career clusters is not just another name change! This is a shift in the way we, as educators, are attempting to inspire students to think about their post-secondary opportunities. Many years ago, workers stayed with the same company of the majority, if not all their careers. So when a student graduated from high school with a career in mind, it could be a “narrow vision. Today students will change jobs and careers more frequently than many of us trade cars. There has to be a change in how we are preparing students to meet the world when they graduate from high school, and CTE is shifting to career clusters in an attempt to do just that.

No longer is CTE focused on a narrow set of skills. Career clusters are designed to show students the interrelationship of disciplines across academic subjects as well as



career and technical education subjects. Career clusters were developed by educators and members of the business community on the national level and then adopted at the state level. North Carolina has adopted thirteen career clusters.

The clusters link related professions with high school and community college curriculum to support that skill set and knowledge. There are two levels of skill requirements within each career cluster: foundation and enhancement. More importantly, career clusters are designed to reflect the shifting world of

employment with new and emerging careers well represented.

So what does all this mean? This means that once the State Board of Education passes the final version of the NC Career Clusters (hopefully in January 2009), you will need to reeducate yourself about the opportunities and inter-related careers available for our students. In addition, it gives a framework to make all the pieces of the puzzle fit from

“Today students will change jobs and careers more frequently than many of us trade cars.”

academic to CTE to the Graduation Project. The career cluster model represents the “big picture” for high school students.



Stanly County Schools Secondary Education

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Shannon Batchelor, Director of CTE / Vocats
Susan Norris, Coordinator, HS Exit Standards/
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The purpose of this Secondary Education Newsletter is to foster ongoing communication between all educators and staff working in and for our high schools. It is our hopes that this quarterly electronic newsletter will be a place to share information and articles that will keep you informed about current and upcoming changes to the high school curriculum. We welcome your input about this newsletter or topics that you would like to see addressed. Email any member of our Secondary Education Team to share your comments and suggestions.

News from the Schools:

Congratulations to **Albemarle High School** as a recent recipient of a NC Dropout Prevention Grant. **AHS** received approximately \$100,000 to be used to develop their Freshman Academy program. This program, which involves all freshmen at AHS, is a nationally-researched strategy that is geared at helping students to stay in school and graduate.

Got news of a special recognition for your school? Let us share your success!

Review Option: Castle Learning

In addition to providing their students with review tutorials, teachers can supplement their test preparation by utilizing the Castle Learning software, available at all our high schools. Castle Learning Online is a web-based service for reviewing a wide variety of courses in mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts. It can be used to help assess student strengths and weak-

nesses. Study sessions can be tailored to meet the individual student's needs.

Immediate feedback is given to the students as they answer questions in the form of hints, reasons, and related vocabulary.

Once passwords are established for each student, he or she may access it during a class session in the computer lab or as an individual at home.

