

2/3/00

Overview:

H.S. Exit

Exam

HFIN

FILE

Alaska State-Statute - Secondary Pupil Competency Testing

Sec. 14.03.075. Secondary pupil competency testing. [Effective January 1, 2002]..

(a) A pupil may not be issued a secondary school diploma unless the pupil passes a competency examination in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics. The department shall determine the form and contents of the examination and shall score completed examinations. A pupil who fails to pass the examination required under this subsection and who is no longer in attendance shall receive a certificate of attendance from the school district indicating the years of attendance and that the pupil has not passed a competency examination or received a diploma.

(b) A pupil who fails the examination required under this section may be reexamined. A reexamination may not be offered more often than once every three months and must occur within three years after the date the pupil is no longer in attendance. A pupil who passes the reexamination and who meets any other graduation requirements shall receive a diploma from the school district.

Setting the Passing Score on the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam

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Feb 3, 2000

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Secondary Pupil Competency Testing (A.S.14.03.075)

- Students must pass a competency test in reading, writing, and math and complete credit requirements to receive a diploma
- Students who fail the exam may be reexamined up to three years after they are no longer in attendance.

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Developing a Competency Test

- What should be on the test? (Content)
- How will the students be assessed?
 - Legal Defensibility
- Making the decision about passing the test.

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Alaska's The High School Graduation Qualifying Examination

- Alaskans Passed the Law
- Alaskans Developed the Standards
- Alaskans Selected the Test Questions
- Alaskans Will Set the Passing Score

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Content of the Test

- The subject matter areas to be tested are:
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Mathematics
- Alaska Content Standards (1992)
- Alaska Performance Standards for reading, writing, and mathematics (1998)

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Selecting Test Questions

- Test Contractor is CTB/McGraw-Hill
- Our test questions were selected from large pool of questions developed by CTB
 - Test questions were matched to the standards by CTB
 - Test questions were then reviewed by Alaskans
 - Content match to standards
 - Cultural appropriateness to Alaska
 - Technical quality

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Creation of the Tests

- Approved items were collected together to form preliminary tests
- A statewide field test of the test questions was done in March 1999
- Technical studies were done on the field test to select a final set of questions that:
 - had highest quality and least bias
 - assured adequate coverage of the standards

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How Will the Students be Assessed?

- The test is a paper and pencil test
- The test is a collection of questions
 - Multiple-choice questions (about 2/3)
 - Open-ended questions (about 1/3)
- Given under controlled standardized conditions to ensure fairness
- The tests are untimed

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Scoring the Tests

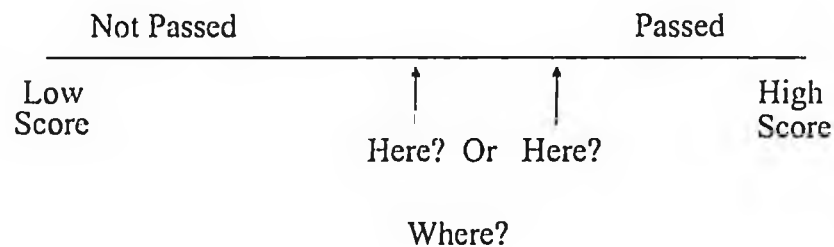
- 1 point for each correct multiple-choice question
- Open-ended questions have varying number of points using scales of 0-1 to 0-6.
- Sum of the points yields a total score

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Setting the Passing Score



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Procedures for Setting the Passing Score

- The passing score could be set today, but....
- Methods:
 - Use percent correct
 - Other earlier methods (Angoff, 1971; Item mapping, 1993)
 - CTB's Bookmark method (1995)

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Participants for the Bookmark Method

- 21 Participants needed for each content area
 - All participants will be Alaskans
 - The 21 participants will be divided into 3 small groups of 7 each
- **These participants have NO knowledge of how well Alaska 10th graders scored on the test in March.**

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Establishing a Passing Score

- Make a judgement for each test question
- “Should the HS graduate we want in the future be able to correctly answer the question?”
- Go through the test item by item and make this judgement

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The Bookmark Method's Innovation

- Use of the ordered item booklet
- Each test question is placed on a separate sheet of paper.
- These are arranged in a notebook in order from the easiest question to the hardest
- Participant places a “bookmark” at the place where they judge the question as above the level of competency desired.

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Bookmark Workshop

- Participants will take the test, study the items, scoring guides, and standards
- Participants will go through 3 rounds of setting the bookmark with discussions of differences after each round
- Participants will write performance descriptions of what students should know that are as specific as possible without educational jargon.

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Problems Solved using Bookmarking

- Participants don't have to guess at the difficulty of a question.
- Traditional method causes inconsistencies
 - If items are judged as easy (but are really hard) then these are included under the cut score
 - If items are judged as hard (but are really easy) then these are not included under the cut score

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Why Bookmarking?

- This is currently considered the best method for establishing a passing score because it has withstood legal challenges.
- Does not produce a cut score where a student who really is competent fails the test or vice versa.
- States who have used traditional method are re-doing their cut scores using the Bookmark Method.

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