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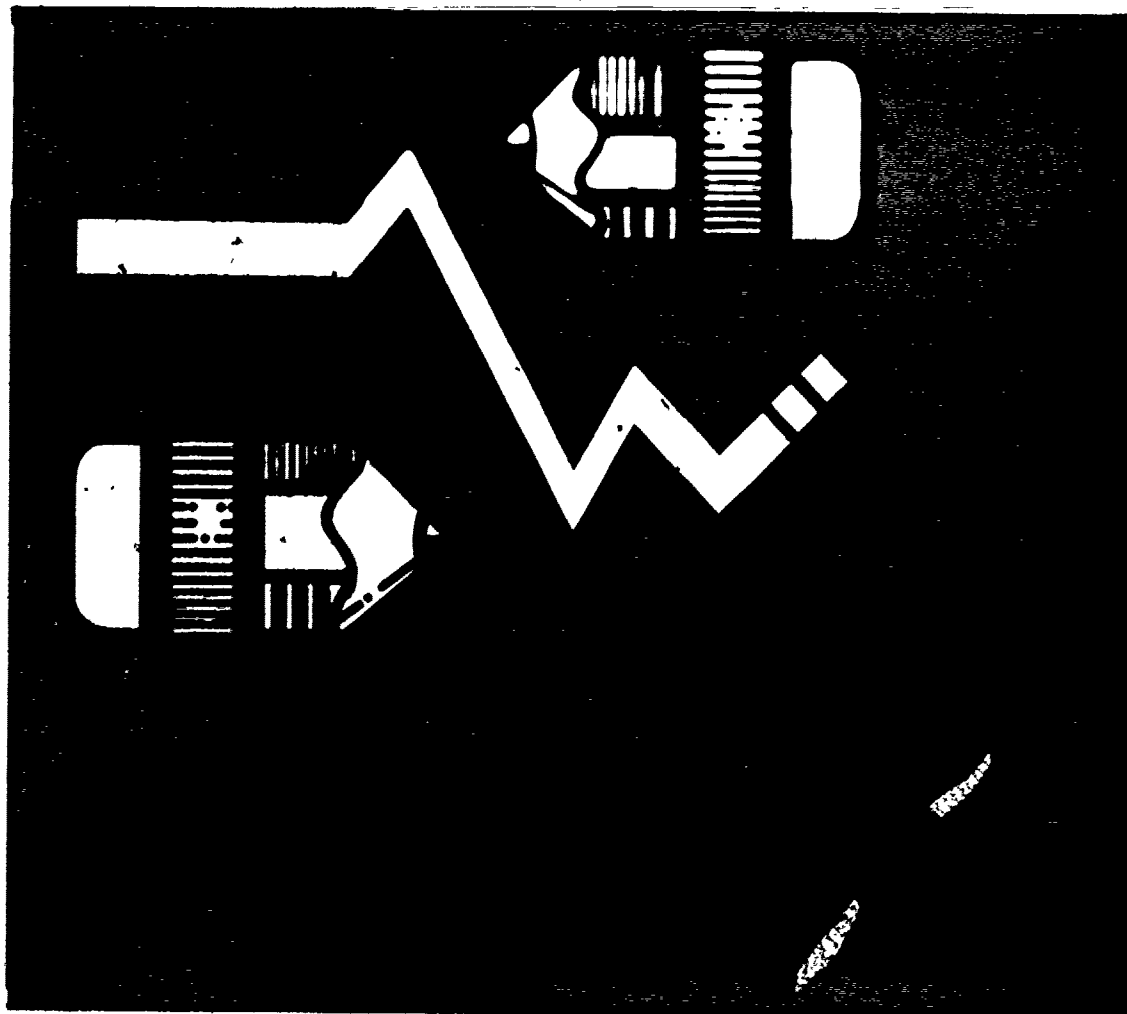
## ABSTRACT

The National Institute of Education (NIE) sponsored a "Clarification Hearing" to examine the pros and cons of minimum competency testing (MCT). The purpose was to provide information that will assist educational decision makers and others as they address some of the more critical issues concerning MCT policy and programs. As a result, NIE produced the following materials: a verbatim written transcript of the 3-day hearing, video cassettes of the hearing, summary video cassettes for each day of the hearing, and a documentary providing an overview on minimum competency testing, also available on video cassette. This guide is intended to aid the use of these materials in making decisions related to MCT policies and programs. An overview of the clarification process used in the study, an outline of the cases presented by the pro and con teams, a summary of each witness' testimony, and a brief description of each MCT program discussed at the hearing are provided. Suggested discussion questions intended to stimulate further examination of pertinent issues at the state and local levels, and suggested activities for making use of the materials for policy making, staff development, and research follow. A key for locating witness testimony on the videotapes and in the transcript is also provided. (Author/GK).

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# A User's Guide to Video Cassettes & Transcript



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McLeod Corporation  
for The National  
Institute of Education



## PREFACE

The National Institute of Education (NIE) is pleased to present this User's Guide to aid in the use of products developed from NIE's clarification hearing on the pros and cons of minimum competency testing (MCT). The purpose of the hearing was to inform educational decision-makers on issues regarding MCT. This guide is intended to assist educational decision-makers, other educators and researchers as they access and analyze the videotapes and written transcripts of the hearing.

The guide provides an overview of the clarification process, an outline of the two opposing cases presented at the hearing, and summaries of the witness testimony. In addition, the guide includes a thought-provoking discussion guide with suggested study questions and a suggested set of activities that can be adapted by the user to address local concerns.

While the major topic of the clarification hearing was MCT, many other educational issues were discussed at the hearing. Therefore, educators who are not affected by state and local MCT programs or policies will still find much of the testimony to be of interest. Additional topics addressed at the hearing included: parental and community involvement in schooling, technical testing issues, effective schools research, and issues related to minority, handicapped and language-minority students.

The hearing represented a unique approach for the examination of a controversial policy issue, by providing a public forum for examining the issue from differing, often competing, perspectives. The project was unique also in its use of broadcast television as a means of getting the information delivered to the user audiences.

A documentary on competency testing has been produced by PBS and is also available on video cassette.

### Purpose of the Guide

This User's Guide is designed to promote the use of these materials to help in decisions related to MCT policies and programs. Most of these decisions are made by educational policy makers, such as school board members, legislators, and high level school administrators. These policy makers are the primary audience for the User's Guide. Additionally, the guide will be useful to educators who have responsibility for implementing MCT programs or who are affected by MCT policies. Researchers interested in the clarification process, MCT or other educational issues, will also find the guide to be a useful tool in analyzing the videotapes or transcript.

The information contained in this guide provides suggestions for continuing discussions of educational issues at the state and local level. While most of the issues deal directly with MCT, many others were discussed at the hearing, e.g., research on effective schools, technical testing issues, and how to involve parents and community in the process of schooling. To facilitate discussion of these educational issues the guide includes suggested discussion questions. These questions are organized by issue and are keyed to relevant testimony. In addition, the guide includes suggested formats and activities that can be used as forums for stimulating discussions of educational issues. The suggested activities were developed with specific audiences in mind, such as school board members, researchers, teachers, etc.

The User's Guide also provides a brief overview of the clarification process used in the study, an outline of the cases presented by the pro and con teams, a summary of each witnesses' testimony and, a brief description of each MCT program discussed at the hearing. The guide provides a key for locating witness testimony on the videotape and in the transcript.

The success of the project was due to the efforts of many individuals. The NIE Project Director was Enid Herndon, Senior Associate, who directed all aspects of the clarification process, the hearing and the television production and who designed and managed the production of this User's Guide. Special thanks is also due to Barbara Jordan, Hearing Officer, and her assistant, Paul Kelley, who together monitored the entire clarification process and ruled on disputes. The team leaders, W. James Popham and George Madaus, were responsible for the high quality of the cases presented at the hearing. Their cooperation, energy and creativity gave vitality to the entire study. Each team leader was backed by a team of very capable educators, scholars and lawyers who worked many hours and traveled many miles to develop the cases and secure witnesses.

The contractor who managed the clarification hearing process was McLeod Corporation, Washington, D.C., led by Project Director Jim Lieberman.

The videotapes were produced by the Southern Educational Communications Association with Maryland Instructional Television. Frank J. Batavick was the Executive Producer and George Beneman, the Director.

The User's Guide was written by Enid Herndon and Judy Shoemaker of NIE's Testing Team, with assistance from Martha Burns, McLeod Corporation. Ann Drennan and Thel Kocher of NIE's program on Testing, Assessment and Evaluation assisted with the final editing.

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## I INTRODUCTION

### Background

The term minimum competency testing (MCT) is popularly used to describe a variety of educational programs that use tests to determine whether students have met expected minimum levels of achievement. Currently, 39 states and a number of local school districts have instituted such programs in response to public demands for educational quality. But, the issue is controversial. Despite the frequency of these programs, many questions remain concerning the potential effects, positive and negative, on students and on schooling.

On July 8, 9 and 10, 1981 the National Institute of Education sponsored a "Clarification Hearing" to examine the pros and cons of minimum competency testing. The purpose was to provide information that will assist educational decision makers and others as they address some of the more critical issues concerning MCT policy and programs. Is minimum competency testing an effective alternative for the improvement of educational programs? How should the tests be used and the programs implemented? What are the benefits? What are the drawbacks? Do they hurt more than they help?

The three day hearing was held before an invited audience of educators, members of professional and constituent organizations and media representatives. As a means of getting information to the wider educational community, NIE has produced the following materials:

- o A verbatim written transcript of the 3-day hearing
- o Video cassettes of the 3-day hearing, 23 cassettes in all
- o Three 1-hour summary video cassettes, one for each day of the hearing
- o A 1-hour documentary providing an overview on minimum competency testing, also available on video cassette.

### Purpose of the Guide

This User's Guide is intended to aid the use of these materials in making decisions related to MCT policies and programs. Most of these decisions are made by educational policy-makers, such as school board members, legislators, and high level school administrators. As such, these policy-makers are the primary audience for the guide. However, the guide should also prove useful to educators who have responsibility for

implementing MCT programs, groups or individuals who are affected by MCT policies, and researchers interested in the clarification process, MCT, or other educational issues.

The guide provides a brief overview of the clarification process used in the study, an outline of the cases presented by the pro and con team, a summary of each witness' testimony and a brief description of each MCT program discussed at the hearing. Additionally, the guide contains suggested discussion questions intended to stimulate further examination of pertinent issues at the state and local levels and suggested activities for making use of the materials for policy making, staff development and research. A key for locating witness testimony on the videotapes and in the transcript is also provided.

### Contents of the Guide

The guide is divided into seven sections:

- Section I is the introduction.
- Section II provides an overview of the hearing, its planning, development, goals and objectives.
- Section III outlines the cases presented by the two teams and gives the user a framework for viewing the tapes.
- Section IV poses several questions decision-makers should consider when making decisions about pertinent issues. It is designed to provide the user with a clearer understanding of each issue as it relates to policy and programs and to stimulate continued discussions of issues relative to local needs and concerns.
- Section V provides suggested uses and formats for using tapes and transcript to help form responsive policy decisions; as aids in staff development; and as a basis for developing research initiatives.
- Section VI provides a summary of each witness' testimony within the context of the witnesses' role and experience with MCT programs. Graphic representations of evidence presented at the hearing are also provided.
- Section VII gives the user several resource options for a more in-depth examination of the issues. This section includes:
  - (a) a list of the 57 witnesses with an index for locating their testimony on the 3 1-hour summary cassettes, the complete set of 24 cassettes, the hearing transcript and the User's Guide.



- (b) references to documentary evidence introduced at the hearing; and
- (c) the bibliography of references used by the teams in building their cases.



## II

### THE CLARIFICATION HEARING: DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

#### Purpose of MCT Hearing

Minimum competency testing is among the more controversial efforts to assure that children learn what they need to in our nation's schools. There is considerable agreement that if schools do nothing else, they ought to assure that their graduates have mastery of both basic and more complex skills. There is also agreement that schools are not yet doing as well as they must and can for all children. There is, however, considerable disagreement on whether a system of testing for promotion or graduation, or to classify students shown to be in difficulty will be a boon or a bane.

Sorting out the central issues in this debate and marshalling what evidence there is on these issues -- both the pros and cons -- can be a formidable task. The minimum competency testing hearing was designed to bring together available information and present it in a manner that is fair, thorough and accessible to the public.

#### Description of the Hearing

The hearing was conducted in a trial-like setting using procedures adapted in part from the judicial process. Hearing officer, Professor Barbara Jordan, LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin, presided. Evidence was presented by two research teams who built cases and defended positions on opposite sides of three major issues regarding the beneficial versus the harmful effects of MCT programs on (1) students, (2) curricula and teaching, and (3) the public's perception of educational quality. Dr. W. James Popham, UCLA, was team leader for the side defending the beneficial effects of MCT. His team included: Reginald Alleyne, Jr., UCLA; Carol Bloomquist, UCLA, Celia Rodrigo, Instructional Objectives Exchange; and Anthony Trujillo, Superintendent of Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District (California). The opposing team was lead by Dr. George Madaus, Boston College, who presented the case against MCT by citing its harmful effects. He was assisted by team members: James Breeden, Boston Public Schools; Norman Goldman, New Jersey Education Association; Walter Haney, Huron Institute; Wade Henderson, Center for Legal Education Opportunity (CLEO); Robert Linn, University of Illinois; Diana Pullin, Washington D.C. Civil Rights Attorney; and Renee Marie Montoya, Chicago Education Project.

In all, 57 witnesses from around the country gave testimony about their personal and professional experiences and opinions

regarding MCT programs. The witnesses included public figures such as consumer advocate Ralph Nader, U.S. Representative Shirley Chisholm, and columnist William Raspberry of the Washington Post as well as chief state school officers, local superintendents, principals, teachers, school board members, parents, university professors and researchers, representatives of teachers' organizations, and others. Testimony was given in accordance with rules and evidence established by the two teams to ensure integrity and validity of information presented. Direct, cross, redirect and recross examination of each witness were permitted to promote comprehensive coverage of each issue addressed.

### The Planning Process

The hearing was the culmination of an 18-month process of planning and development. Prior to the selection of the team leaders and the hearing officer, NIE convened representatives of various groups who were concerned about MCT. This group reviewed NIE's plans, identified an initial set of issues, and submitted nominations for the team leaders and hearing officer. NIE then selected the two team leaders and the hearing officer. Selection of the team leaders was based on three primary criteria: professional qualification, availability, and the extent to which their personal views coincided with the position they had been nominated to defend. Criteria for selection of the hearing officer included national recognition and respectability, availability, experience with judicial or deliberative proceedings, and no previous public position on issues related to MCT. Team leaders then selected their team members and began building their cases. Case-building involved finalizing the issues to be debated, deciding on specific points of contention, contacting numerous groups and individuals to make sure their concerns would be represented, and finally identifying witnesses and supporting documentary evidence. Team leaders met frequently to discuss their cases and share information. Throughout this process, the hearing officer was assisted by Dr. H. Paul Kelley, University of Texas at Austin, in moderating each meeting and resolving disputes.

From the beginning of the planning process, it was clear that given the complex, controversial nature of the issues, a unique and dynamic research approach would be necessary. In developing a useful framework there were several considerations. Typically in research endeavors one side publishes a report capturing national attention, the other side responds in scholarly journals, often after several months, and these decisions may or may not address both sides of the same and central issues. The first concern, then, was to develop a study framework that would encourage presentation of diverse points of view around central issues in an organized and structured manner.

Secondly, it was recognized, that if the results were to aid the formulation of responsive policy initiatives, it was crucial to consider the perceptions of those who are or will be affected by existing or emerging policy. Thus, the framework had to allow for wide participation by those groups and individuals, lay and professional, who have some vested interest in, or who are impacted by MCT programs.

Finally, as with any research project, there was need to ensure the integrity and validity of results. The study framework, therefore, had to provide a systematic set of rules and procedures for the collection, synthesis and presentation of information.

The judicial process as an organizing structure offers many important concepts that accommodate these concerns.

1. It provides a structured forum for the examination of issues from different perspectives.
2. It allows for public participation in the process through the presentation of human testimony, including the perceptions, opinions and judgments of those affected by policy and program decisions. Often these more subjective forms of evidence help put facts into proper perspective. Testimony can then be examined within the context of facts and situations.
3. It permits introduction of a wide range of evidence (documentary evidence, human testimony, quantitative data), the clarification and testing of which can occur immediately through cross-examination and rebuttal testimony.
4. It provides rules, standards and procedures for collecting and presenting evidence to insure the integrity of information.

### The Results

While the framework for the hearing borrowed extensively from judicial proceedings, it was not intended to result in a victory for one side or the other. The hearing was designed to serve an educational function by providing a public forum for discussion of a controversial topic from differing and often competing view points. The clarification of issues and points of concern were the desired outcome. There was no jury present to render judgments or to make recommendations for future policy decisions. All decisions and/or judgments about the information presented are left to those concerned with policy and program decisions at the State and local levels.

### III THE CASES: PRO AND CON

This section outlines the cases presented by each team, pro and con. It is intended to serve as a guide to key topics for discussion before, during or after viewing the video tapes.

#### Definition of Minimum Competency Testing

From state to state and school district to school district, minimum competency testing programs take many forms and serve a variety of functions. The clarification hearing did not attempt to illuminate the broad spectrum of these programs, or to determine their relative value. Rather, the hearing was concerned with some very specific uses of minimum competency tests and the positive versus negative effects that follow from these uses. This focus on uses and effects is intended to provide an information base that will inform decisions relative to the diversity of programs and local concerns. Within that context, minimum competency testing is defined in terms of specific types of tests used for specific purposes.

Minimum competency testing (MCT) refers to programs mandated by a state or local body which have the following characteristics.

1. All or almost all students at designated grades are required to take paper and pencil tests designed to measure basic academic skills, life survival skills, or functional literacy;
2. A passing score or standard for an acceptable level of student performance has been established;
3. Test results may be used to certify students for grade promotion, graduation or diploma award; classify students for, or place students in remedial or other special services; allocate compensatory funds to districts; or evaluate teachers.

#### Stipulated Agreements

MCT is, indeed, a controversial topic and the uses contained in the definition the subject of much debate. However, not all of the uses were under contention. Based on their research and experience both teams agreed that there are certain functions which minimum competency testing should not serve. Both teams specified that minimum competency tests should not be used to.

evaluate teachers, allocate educational resources or retain students at each grade level. The teams were emphatic in their repudiation of the use of MCT for these purposes.

- (1) Teacher evaluation - It was stipulated that current research and testing technology precludes the use of, minimum competency tests to evaluate teacher performance. Using MCT for this purpose unjustly holds teachers responsible for circumstances beyond their control: (a) test scores cannot distinguish between students who have not learned because of lack of motivation or learning disabilities and those who have not learned because of ineffective teaching; (b) schools differ one from the other with regard to the amount of available resources, rates of vandalism, drug and disruptive problems and most other factors.
- (2) Resource allocation - The teams agreed it was equally unwise to use the results of MCT programs to allocate financial and other resources to different schools or school districts. One practice is to award the most dollars to the local education agency with the lowest test scores on the assumption that more money is needed for compensatory education. As a consequence, this practice rewards failure, not success, because it is in the local educational agency's financial interest not to succeed. Additionally, if MCT is implemented only at certain grade levels, resources may tend to be focused only at those levels, to the exclusion of others.
- (3) Grade-by-grade retention - It can be argued that students who are given multiple opportunities to pass minimum competency tests can, in time, pass in spite of the imprecision of testing technology. If minimum competency tests are used each year at every grade level, however, too much weight is given to student performance on a single examination. As a result, it is nearly impossible to provide the multiple testing opportunities that could, for example, be offered when passing the test is used only as a graduation requirement, or at selected, spaced grade intervals.

Though important issues, these three uses did not receive direct attention during the hearing. That tests have value for instructional improvement in the basic skills also was not at issue. The hearing focused instead on minimum competency test uses about which there is genuine controversy.

#### Statement of Issues

The two teams did not agree about the use of minimum competency test results to certify or classify students, or the



effects of such use on students, teaching and curriculum and on public perception of the quality of schooling. By certify it is meant that test results are used to decide whether a student has successfully completed a given level of education -- that is, test results are an essential component in determining promotion, graduation or type of diploma to be awarded. By classify it is meant that test results are used to group or place students, or to select students for admission to auxiliary education programs or services.

The three major issues around which each team built its case for or against MCT are as follows:

- o Will MCT programs that use test results for student certification and/or classification have beneficial or harmful effects on students?
- o Will MCT programs that use test results for student certification and/or classification have beneficial or harmful influences on curriculum and teaching?
- o Will MCT programs that use test results for student certification have positive or negative effects on public perceptions of educational quality?

The pro team took the position that minimum competency testing, when used to certify or classify students, constitutes an educational intervention which will have "decisively positive effects." Conversely, the con team took the position that minimum competency testing used for these purposes is an unnecessary evil that will "gravely harm" American education, and that the nature and extent of this harm cancels any small benefits associated with such use. Table I outlines the case that each team developed in support of its stated position of the issues.

#### The Arguments Pro and Con

The two teams argued and presented evidence that there are certain aspects of MCT programs that give rise to beneficial effects on the one hand, or harmful effects on the other. The pro team presented seven (7) positive program features which, if adopted by state and local education agencies, are likely to yield beneficial results. The con team contended that these program features represent an ideal which in reality was off set by aspects of MCT as currently practiced that yield negative effects. The content focused primarily on technical considerations related to the adequacy of tests and standard setting, though other features of MCT programs were also addressed. These features and contentions are summarized below, pro and con, in Table 2 followed by an outline (Table 3) of the beneficial versus the harmful effects that ensue.

TABLE I

Pro Team Case

Con Team Case

I. Scores in the 3 R's have sunk too low. The public has lost confidence in the high school diploma. MCT will reestablish the importance and integrity of a high school diploma and honesty in public school promotion.

II. There is a need for a single test that can be used to make decisions and maintain quality control.

III. The greatest value of MCT is in the identification of student deficits and subsequent remediation.

IV. MCT places responsibility for quality and performance where it belongs -- on the educational systems. Educators are held accountable for ensuring that students do achieve.

V. MCT is the only viable alternative for the improvement of educational quality. It initiates more rapid system change than is usually possible in education.

Basic skills achievement is not declining. Publicized declines in test scores reflect deficits in more complex higher order skills. MCT will not address these higher order skills.

A paper and pencil test is not adequate as a single determiner of competence. Test scores alone should not be used to make critical decisions about students.

MCT is redundant with other testing and teacher assessment of student progress. Diagnostic/prescriptive teaching is not synonymous with MCT. In fact, MCTs do not provide diagnostic information.

MCT is a political response to an educational issue. It is administrative and bureaucratic. It takes responsibility off of the educational system and places an unfair burden on the students.

There are proven alternatives for educational improvement that do not use testing as the basis for making critical pass/fail decisions.



TABLE 2

Pro Team Positive Program Features	Con Team Contentions
<p>1. <u>Competency Selection.</u> All concerned constituents have been given ample opportunity to influence the selections of the competencies encompassed in the MCT program. For example, community representatives have been involved meaningfully in the competency selection process. In particular, representatives of minority groups have participated actively in selection of competencies.</p> <p>Since curriculum determination in the United States rests largely in the hands of local decision-makers, there is no way to make absolutely certain that only competencies of high merit are selected for MCT programs. However, the careful selection of competencies through an open process will increase the likelihood that defensible competencies, namely, those which encompass genuinely basic and important skills, will be selected.</p> <p>2. <u>Appropriate Competency Tests.</u> The tests being used in the MCT program are criterion-referenced measures, designed to measure clearly defined competencies. The tests have been constructed to inform instructional decisions. Adequate attention has been devoted, both judgmental and empirical, to the elimination of bias. The tests satisfy psychometric standards for well</p>	<p>(a) When state level MCT programs are used to certify or classify pupils, there is a shift in the control of curriculum and teaching from local communities to a State concept and control of education of children and distances parents and community from meaningful involvement in critical educational decisions.</p> <p>(b) The whole idea of selecting competencies as a basis for predicting future adult success or even survival is a misnomer. There are no valid predictors.</p> <p>(a) Tests, no matter how well constructed, are prone to error which can only be minimized, but never eliminated. This inherent error in tests results in the inevitable misclassification of individual pupils.</p> <p>(b) It is recognized that tests, if used properly can provide teachers, students and parents with useful information.</p>

TABLE 2 cont'd.

Pro Team Positive Program Features	Con Team Contentions
<p>constructed criterion-reference measures.</p> <p>Although the shortcomings of educational tests are recognized, use of these tests is preferable to other less data-based methods used for certifying or classifying students. Properly constructed tests are sufficiently accurate for purposes of discriminating between competent students and those who are not competent with respect to the skills being measured.</p> <p>3. <u>Teaching-Testing Congruence.</u> The instructional program coincides with the competencies being sought in the MCT program. Students receive ample time-on-task opportunities, that is, practice on the competencies sought in the program. Students who fail initial attempts to pass the competency tests receive on-target remedial instruction.</p>	<p>But when they are allowed to become the sole or the primary determiner of pupil certification or classification, irreparable harm can result. For decades, professionals involved in test development and interpretation have stressed the dangers of over-reliance on test scores alone. Sound and fair assessment practices require that test scores be used as only one of many sources of information when making important decisions about students.</p> <p>(c) Paper and pencil tests do not measure and/or predict "life," "survival" or "basic" skills for adult roles. First, the skills are not measured by the performance of tasks as they would be applied in real life situations. Secondly, paper and pencil tests do not measure other non-cognitive skills which lead to success in adult roles (e.g. motivation, confidence, leadership).</p> <p>(a) The content of tests used in MCT programs does not always match the content and skills taught to all students. At the secondary level, passing specific items on a minimum competency tests is strongly related to the curriculum track the pupil happens to be in.</p>

TABLE 2 cont'd.

Pro Team Positive Program Features

Con Team Contentions

4. Multiple Testing Opportunities. Students receive several opportunities to pass the competency tests. Early versions of the competency tests are administered to isolate students in need of special instructional needs.
5. Adequate Phase-in Time. There is sufficient warning given to students, perhaps several years, during which students can be prepared to display proficiency on the competency tests.
6. Sensible Standard-Setting. There has been a systematic, data-derived effort to set a minimally acceptable cutscore for students' test performance. Even though fundamentally judgmental in nature, the standard setting process should be open, systematic, and involve all concerned constituencies.

- (b) On the other hand, when instruction is geared to the limited realm of skills measured by a paper and pencil competency test, rather than the actual development of competencies, students may be placed in remedial classes to the neglect of higher level skills and course content not measured by the test.

It is agreed that multiple testing opportunities should be provided for MCT. However, repeated testing takes away from instructional time and adds little new information about instructional needs. It is unnecessary where certification and promotion decisions are not at stake.

Where adequate phase-in time is not provided, students are unfairly penalized and held accountable for curriculum content they may not have had. This impacts primarily on minority students who have experienced a long history of inferior educational opportunities.

- (a) Procedures used to set passing scores are arbitrary, and are often dictated by fiscal and political considerations. The cut scores for classification and/or certification associated with MCT differ widely from program to program as a result of how, and by whom, such standards are set.

TABLE 2 cont'd.

Pro Team Positive Program Features

Con Team Contentions

7. Coordinated Staff Development. As the MCT program is established, related staff development support for the teaching and administrative staff is provided. Such staff development should be focused on strategies and tactics for promoting student mastery of the MCT program's target competencies.

- (b) Setting a single standard for all pupils within a program ignores individual differences and special needs (e.g. language minority and handicapped students) and often leads to uniform prescriptions which may not be appropriate for some children.
- (c) A single cut score, above which all students pass and below which all students fail, ignores the inadequacy of test technology for establishing such critical decision points. This problem particularly impacts students scoring just around the cut score for whom a single item answered correctly or incorrectly could determine their future life choices.

The problem in education is not that the teachers do not know which pupils need help or how to teach them. Rather, they often lack the support services and administrative backing to deal with such pupils. There are alternative programs to that enable almost all pupils to master basic skills. The logistics attending the delivery of such instruction must be made on educational priority and support provided. Their effectiveness, however, does not depend on the punitive use of minimum competency tests for classification, promotion or graduation.

# ISSUE I

WILL MCT PROGRAMS THAT USE TEST RESULTS FOR PUPIL  
CERTIFICATION AND/OR CLARIFICATION HAVE HARMFUL  
OR BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON STUDENTS?

	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Mastery of the Skills	By systematically isolating student deficits in fundamental skills and then remedying those deficits, more students will master basic skills as reflected by their performance on competency tests.	Focus on the "test" as a guide for instruction will result in students learning only to take the test. The development of competence in the basic skills is not assured.
Attitudes Toward Self and School	Many students will acquire more positive self-concepts and more positive attitudes toward school as a result of becoming proficient in basic skills.	Minimum competency testing labels children as "failures," which is counterproductive to their further educational progress and subsequent employment. Failing MCT has a serious negative effect on children's self-concepts and increases their anxiety levels.
Mastery of Skills Other than the Basics	Students will learn far more than the basics, because increased mastery of basic skills will enhance their acquisition of other skills and knowledge.	Students who fail an MCT are often cut off from further educational and vocational opportunities which otherwise would be open to them and which, in all likelihood, they could pursue successfully.
Drop out Rate	With clearly defined objectives and expectations students will become more involved in curriculum and in learning. As a result they will be more motivated to stay in school.	As students experience themselves as failures, increased numbers will drop out of schools.

## ISSUE II

WILL MCT PROGRAMS THAT USE TEST RESULTS FOR PUPIL  
CERTIFICATION AND/OR CLARIFICATION HAVE HARMFUL  
OR BENEFICIAL EFFECTS ON STUDENTS?

	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Curricular Emphasis	Clearly defined competencies, selected by an open decision process, will be more defensible than many current curriculum emphases which often have been unthinkingly inherited rather than selected rationally.	When a test becomes the sole or even the primary determiner of educational or life choices, test scores tend to become the major end of schooling rather than a useful but fallible indicator of achievement. When this happens, what is on the test becomes the de facto curriculum. When educational assessment is geared to minimums rather than to a broad range of educational outcomes, the minimums embodied in these all important tests become the maximums.
Teacher Effectiveness	Clearly defined competencies permit teachers to enhance their instructional effectiveness by (a) providing students with more time-on-task, that is, practice relevant to the competencies, and (b) acquiring more positive expectations of students which will enhance teachers' perceived sense of efficacy.	Inordinate amounts of time are devoted to teaching for the test, to the detriment of other subjects. Raising or inflating test scores, not the improvement of competencies, becomes the object of the exercise.
		Teachers are moved from subjects where they excel in teaching to remedial classes for which they are not prepared.

ISSUE III  
WILL MCT PROGRAMS THAT USE TEST RESULTS FOR STUDENT  
CERTIFICATION AND/OR CLASSIFICATION HAVE POSITIVE  
OR NEGATIVE EFFECTS ON THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION?

	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Value of the High School Diploma	Performance-based indicators of student accomplishments constitute a move toward truth-in-packaging regarding our schools' efforts, thus eliminating "seat time" promotions. The meaning of the high school diploma will be restored.	
Curricular Emphasis	The clarity of competencies and ease of interpreting the meaning of criterion-referenced test results will demystify the schools' curricular targets and thus heighten public confidence in the aspirations of the educational system.	
School Effectiveness	The test-based evidence of improved student performance will reassure a skeptical public regarding the schools' educational effectiveness.	The public will be misled by apparent gains from one year to the next on MCTs which are often simply the result of making the tests easier, rather than being attributable to sound teaching and effective learning of the real skill required.



### Positive Effects

### Negative Effects

#### Curriculum

Increased efficiency in promoting the MCT program's target competencies will result in more available time for other instruction and thus lead to expanded curriculum coverage. Teachers of advanced courses will no longer be forced to teach basic skills. They will be able to turn their efforts and resources to higher level course content.

Focusing on minimum competency test scores deflects attention and resources from the broader aims of schooling, including development of specialized talents and vocational preparation. Typically, this includes reduced investment of time, personnel and money in the higher academic areas such as music, art, physical education and vocational education, which are not covered on minimum competency tests. Subjects not tested are seen as less important.

#### IV

### SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR ANALYZING THE ISSUES

This section lists questions for additional study of some of the policy and program issues raised at the hearing. The questions are designed to facilitate discussion among decision-makers and are meant to be suggestive of the types of issues facing decision-makers as they consider minimum competency testing as well as other educational programs. Some questions were suggested by the hearings but not actually cited. If the hearing addressed the issue, this section lists that reference with the witness listed in parentheses.

For all issues listed here, there are study questions that can't be answered by studying the transcripts. Rather, these questions are meant to stimulate your own thinking, taking into account local school needs.

As indicated in the next section, these study questions can be used in any number of forums and by many different audiences. They are organized by issue so that users can select topics of most interest to them.

#### Decision-Making Process

Deciding whether or not to implement an educational program (MCT or any other program) is a complex process requiring consideration of many factors, such as local needs and resources, possible program effects (intended as well as unintended), and alternative strategies. At the hearing, several witnesses talked about the decision-making process. The questions below were suggested by their testimony.

#### A. Factors that influence decision-making

Begin by reading the testimony of these educational decision-makers, noting what factors influenced their decision:

Murray	Benton	Wallace
Cronin	Hall	

1. What evidence did decision-makers use when considering whether or not to adopt MCT?

Listened to the public's concerns (Murray).  
Description of survey of 10 districts in Illinois and why they chose MCT (Hall).

Did not think MCT would restore confidence, too simplistic  
(Cronin)

Opposition from NEA (Myrick)

State-adopted MCT would conflict with local control (Benson)

Serious reservations in using a 3-hour test for diploma sanctions  
(Cronin)

2. How much weight do you feel the following information sources should be given in making policy decisions?

Research reports produced by local research and evaluation office

Test score reports (local, national)

Program evaluation reports

Testimony of administrators

Testimony of teachers

Testimony of parents

Public opinion

Budgetary constraints

National issues

Demographics and student population shifts

B. Factors that lead to effective schools

Research on effective schools can provide decision-makers with information on the ingredients necessary to make schools and programs successful. Three witnesses at the hearing described what they found to be key factors for successful schools. Read the testimony of Meiers and Austin.

1. What are the key features that each believe are essential for effective schools?

Meiers:

Parents, children and staff believe their school is the greatest.

Get teachers who know curriculum and like children.

Treat teachers with respect; give them some autonomy.

Develop trust among staff, principal, parents and children.

Parental involvement

Austin:

Local control of school

Principal has high expectations for students and staff and has had teaching experience.

Teachers have high expectations for students.

Parent involvement

Children believe in themselves, know they can succeed, have high self-esteem, and value hard work.

2. What do the two witnesses say about the role of testing or assessment as a factor for effective schools?
3. Based on your own experience, what other factors contribute to effective schools?

C. Considering alternatives to MCT

Most of the hearing focused on the impact on MCT programs, yet many witnesses, especially for the con team, testified that many successful schools do not have MCT programs.

1. What are alternative ways to restore quality to educational programs?

Improve the quality of the high school transcript. (Cronin)  
Use multiple indicators of student success. (Gilbert, Linn)  
Examine effective schools research. (Austin)

2. Study the programs described at the hearing that appear to be successful but do not include MCT. How do these programs evaluate and monitor student achievement?

Wallace, Fitchburg School District, Massachusetts and Pittsburgh School District, Pennsylvania  
Meier, Central Park East Elementary School, New York City

D. Needed resources

Although there was little financial data presented at the hearing, cost factors have a great deal of impact on decision-making. Costs can be assessed in terms of real dollars per student, or in terms of staff time and other resources needed.

1. What is the approximate cost, per student, for implementing MCT?

Cost per student (Shine)

2. What are the hidden costs of MCT?

Costs in keeping parents involved -- notices, conference time (Schmidt)

Expensive to construct or translate tests for non-English speaking students (Quinones)

Takes funds away from other instructional programs (Shine)

3. Are there any financial gains resulting from MCT?

Each year legislatures have given more funds for compensatory education. (Turlington, Priddy)

Computers obtained for students in remedial MCT classes, but now used by all students (Ramsey)  
Detroit voted more money for the MCT program when state funds were cut. (Rutherford)  
State board put more money into remediation. (Priddy)

4. Is MCT cost effective?

Benefits outweigh costs. (McFadden)  
Not cost effective (Hall, Shine)

5. Does MCT increase the administrative burden on the schools? How can the administration of such a program be handled efficiently and unobtrusively?

Schools will become more bureaucratic. (Wise)

6. As decision-makers consider the pros and cons of MCT, it is important to consider educational as well as political realities. What are the educational "costs" of not implementing MCT?

Public is unlikely to continue to support education without external exams. (Scriven)  
Educational change and improvement will continue to take decades. (Trujillo)  
Minorities and others allowed to graduate without skills (Turlington, Raspberry, cross examination of Berry)  
Funds for remediation might be lost. (Turlington, Rutherford)

## Setting Standards

### A. Standards for grade level promotions

1. How are standards set in your school for grade-to-grade promotion?
2. Do grade promotion standards in your school district change depending on the grade level (elementary, secondary)?
3. Would you characterize the grade promotion system used in your school as "social promotion?" What are the advantages of social promotions for the student, the teacher, the parents? What are the disadvantages? What are the long-term consequences of social promotions?
4. What role does teacher evaluation of student performance play in determining grade promotion?

What role does the parent play? What should be the determining criteria for grade change as the student progresses through school?

5. Traditionally, what role has teacher appraisal of student progress had in determining standards for grade-to-grade promotion? For high school graduation?

B. Standards for high school graduation

1. One piece of information that kept recurring at the hearing was the fact that a test score is rarely, if ever, used as the sole criterion for determining high school graduation. What other factors are usually considered? Who determines the relative weights of each of these sources of information - state board of education? Local school board?
2. How are standards set in your school for high school graduation?
3. What do you think should be the relative weight of each of the following in determining whether or not a student graduates from high school?
  - (1) course grades
  - (2) Carnegie credits or unit credits for specific subjects
  - (3) standardized test scores
  - (4) performance measures
  - (5) mastery of individualized educational programs (e.g., IEPs used with handicapped students)
4. What should be the role of the state board of education in determining standards for high school graduation? Do state-determined standards conflict with the concept of local control of schools?
5. Some districts are examining the idea of differentiated diplomas according to levels of competency achieved. What do you think might be the advantages and disadvantages of this system?

C. Minimums vs. Maximums

1. In minimum competency testing, the emphasis is put on minimum levels of skills required of all students. What would be the consequences of adopting a "maximum" competency testing program? What are the consequences for high vs. low achieving students? Read testimony by Benton.

2. Does emphasis on the minimums necessarily mean the maximums will be ignored? Read testimony by Collier.

D. Alternative methods of setting standards

1. In MCT, test scores are used to make decisions (promotion, remediation) about students. Determining standards of test performance or setting the "cut scores" has been a problem. The basic problem is how to separate "masters" from "non-masters," that is, how do you identify the score above which students are likely to be competent and below which students are likely to be incompetent? What procedures have MCT programs employed to set cut scores? What's the most common procedure?
2. Do different procedures yield comparable results? To what extent do these procedures rely on individual judgment? On empirical data?

Four methods contrasted, using same data (Linn)

3. Different school districts, under the same state mandated MCT program, may establish different cut scores (e.g., California). What problems does this raise for transfer students?
4. Some have said that standards are primarily a political not a technical problem. What role have political decisions had in setting standards? In what way do financial and other resources affect standard setting?

Role of politics in MCT decisions (Wise, Nader, Raspberry, Shine)

5. MCT is one way to establish educational standards for grade promotion or high school graduation. What are alternative (non-MCT) ways to set standards?

Improve the quality of the high school transcript. (Cronin)

Use multiple indicators of successful performance including test performance. (Gilbert, Linn)

Local control over standards, based on community needs (Tyler, Cronin)

Different standards for different populations of students, especially handicapped (Shea, Levinson, Calfee)

Effective schools research shows factors that promote success. (Austin)

Examples of effective schools without MCT (Meiers)

Four different methods compared (Linn)



## Parent and Community Involvement

Effective schools research, according to Dr. Austin's testimony at the hearing, has shown that strong parental and community involvement in the schools is often associated with successful schools.

### A. Parental Involvement

1. What evidence was presented at the hearing concerning the involvement of parents in the planning and implementation of MCT? How successful have those efforts been?

Involvement of parents has led to support for program. (Leonard)  
Parent attendance high for honors assembly (Dyer)  
Parents call schools more often and are more involved. (Spight)  
Parent participation not happening (Schmidt)  
State control of MCT distances parents from local school. (Shine)  
Parents upset with pull-out method of remediation. (Lee)

2. What has been your experience in getting parents to participate in educational programs?
3. How successful have these efforts been?
4. What are the major factors that hinder parent participation?
5. What can the school do to encourage parent participation?
6. Does the testimony from the hearings suggest any new ways to involve parents?

### B. Community involvement

1. What evidence was presented at the hearing concerning the reaction of the business community to MCT programs?

MCT guarantees employers that students will have basic skills.  
(Schneider, McFadden)

Employers are now more willing to hire students; MCT has led to better school/employer relations. (Collier)

2. What evidence was presented at the hearing that documents the public's concern about the quality of education?

People are losing confidence in the educational system in South Carolina. (Murray)

Several districts in Illinois cited public demand for MCT. (Hall)

3. To what extent did the public mandate use of MCT as a way to improve the quality of education?

"I did not hear a great outcry from parents for MCT." (Wise)  
No public outcry for MCT in Iowa (Benson)  
While 10 districts in Illinois with MCT cited public demand, no district could produce evidence. (Hall)

4. Can MCT restore public confidence in the schools?

Public will not continue to support education without external examinations. (Scriven)

Parental involvement leads to support. (Leonard, Peña)

Working with advisory committees and media (Sandifer)

MCT indicates to the public that the quality of education is high. (Stiff)

Involving the community has increased their support for the schools. (Rutherford)

Simplistic, shortsighted to think MCT will restore public confidence (Cronin)

Confidence further undermined if not misled by another educational fad (Calfee)

State control of MCT distances parents from local schools. (Shine)

5. What is the public's perception of the quality of schooling in your community?
6. How are the schools portrayed in the local newspaper (editorial and feature articles)?
7. Does the public support the schools by attending athletic events, plays, concerts, open houses?
8. How can you improve the public's image of your schools? How can you involve the business and professional communities in the work of the schools?
9. If your district has MCT, has that program helped or hurt the school's public image? Have public attitudes changed since the implementation of MCT?

### Adequacy of Test Instruments

#### A. Value of test information

1. Most MCT programs were designed to be accountability measures and to demonstrate to the public that students have mastered certain skills. As a result, most of the tests now being used were developed as certification or mastery tests. Educators, faced with preparing students to pass such tests, have tried to use the test information to make diagnostic decisions. Can a test

adequately serve both goals (certification and instruction)? Is there an inherent conflict between the two goals, or can tests be developed to serve both goals?

Tests are useful educational tools. (Ebel, Turlington, Shine)  
Instructional component of MCT programs described by a test (Schilling)

Too few items to make instructional decisions (Hall)

Competency objectives are broad but test specifications are narrow. (Bracey)

Individual student scores not necessary for curriculum evaluation (Hall)

2. Generally, how adequate are tests for making important decisions about individuals?

Tests are useful indicators of success. (Turlington, Ebel)

Test scores are consistently related to future performance. (Ebel)

Tests should never be used to make decisions about individuals. (Nader)

Current tests are not sufficiently precise. (Tyler, Berry)

Tests are the least useful pieces of information. (Meier)

3. To what extent are test scores used to certify adult competency in settings outside of school? In what skill areas are tests well suited to measure competence? In which skill areas are tests wholly inadequate?

Compare and contrast testimony of Ebel and Nader.

4. Do you agree with Ralph Nader that tests should never be used to certify individuals? Why or why not?
5. How useful is test data to making instructional decisions? Does the information from MCTs provide a new source of instructional information?

Support for use of tests (Ebel)

Tests generally separate competent from incompetent. (Raspberry, Popham)

Tests should be one of many pieces of information. (Meier, Wallace)

Tests are the least useful pieces of information. (Meier)

Data from MCTs are redundant with teacher knowledge and with other test scores. (Farr, Benson, Bracey)

6. What types of testing or assessment provide the most useful instructional information? Could these types of assessment be easily incorporated into an MCT program?
7. Is all test data redundant to teacher's knowledge of student skills? Under what conditions are tests better or more reliable sources of information?

## B. Test design issues

1. Most of the MCTs now in use are paper-and pencil multiple choice tests. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these types of tests?

Multiple choice tests are useful. (Turlington)

Multiple choice tests are tops in excellence. (Ebel)

Making choices is realistic. (Ebel)

Always possible to find a few faulty items (Raspberry)

Multiple choice tests are often trivial and tricky. (Nader)

Multiple choice tests do not measure judgment, analysis. (Meier)

Making choices not realistic (Nader, Bracey)

Multiple choice tests focus on the right answer, not the thinking process. (Calfee)

2. William Raspberry said that he can't define test bias. What definitions are commonly used by measurement specialists? By lay people? What criteria are commonly used to determine whether or not a test or an item is biased against a certain group of test takers? Why do you think Raspberry finds most definitions unsatisfactory?
3. Most experts at the hearing talked about bias in terms of bias against racial minority groups. To what extent should we be concerned about sex bias in achievement tests? Are there other types of bias -- other groups that might not do well on tests due to cultural differences?
4. What procedures can be used during the test development process to reduce the chances of having biased items? What statistical techniques might be used to identify biased items?

## Special Populations

How do you assure fair treatment for special populations of students? The hearing discussed several alternatives for students such as the handicapped, racial minorities and language-minority students.

### A. Effects on handicapped students

Read the testimony of two parents of handicapped children and their experiences with MCT. (Levinson, Shea)

1. What special problems arise with handicapped students and MCT?

Conflicts with P.L. 94-142 (Cronin)

Denial of constitutional rights (McNally, Levinson)

2. What might be some solutions to these problems? What are their advantages and disadvantages?

Differential standards (Cronin)

Other options:

Use of IEP's

Different tests, depending on student's skills and handicapping conditions

3. What test instruments are currently available for use with handicapped students? What skill areas are tested?
4. How can standardized tests be adapted for use with handicapped students? How could these adaptations be validated?

B. Effects on minority students

1. What is the impact of MCT programs on minority students? Do MCT programs unfairly discriminate against minorities because of their reliance on test scores or do MCT programs provide new opportunities to students who have traditionally not been well served in the past?

Present (non-MCT) system is harmful to minorities. (Scriven, Turlington)

Differences between blacks and whites are reduced with MCT. (Schilling, Johnson)

Minorities are not well served without minimum skills. (cross examination of Berry, Raspberry)

If teachers teach, minority students will learn. (Johnson)

Opposition of MCT by some civil rights groups is misguided. (Raspberry)

Expectations for minorities increased. (Turlington)

Students who had been pushed aside got long overdue attention. (Ramsey, Schilling)

Shift of concern from equal educational opportunity to minimally adequate education (Wise)

There is no equivalency of educational preparation, therefore MCT is unfair. (Chisholm, Bracey, Berry)

Those who don't pass are tracked into a very narrow curriculum, making differences even greater. (Schmidt)

There is a negative impact of labelling minority students as failures. (Chisholm)

2. Minority students typically do not perform as well as whites on standardized tests of achievement. What is the impact of setting cut scores at different points for minority students? How do various cut scores

affect the number of minority students who pass/fail the MCT's?

Comparison of failure rates with different cut scores and impact on minorities (Linn)

Gap between black and white test performance is closing. (Farr)

### C. Effects on language minority students

1. There was much discussion at the hearing concerning whether or not language minority students should be required to take MCT's in English. What evidence was presented on this point?

Law requires passing a 12th grade test in English, but before 12th grade, the test may be in another language. (Calvillo-Schmidt)

MCT is in English. (Schilling, Mireles)

Bilingual students are different from native speakers and should be tested differently. (Taracido)

Since the language of U.S. is English, all students should pass the test in English. (Trujillo, Mireles)

Direct word-for-word translation of a test is inadequate; tests should be equivalent in terms of system, culture and experience. (Quinones)

### Curriculum and Instruction

#### A. Competency selection

Much of the public's concern with the quality of education has centered on the lack of skills of high school graduates to cope with adult life. As a result many of the MCT programs mandate that competency must be demonstrated in life skills areas such as basic occupational skills (filling out employment applications, responding to want ads) and basic consumer skills (comparison shopping, filling out an income tax form).

1. How are these "life skills" defined and measured? Read the descriptions of programs and identify the competency definitions.
2. When competencies needed for different occupations vary so widely, is there a common set of life/occupational skills that all students should learn?
3. What problems are encountered when we try to test "life skills" with a paper and pencil test? With a performance test?
4. If students are to be tested on "life skills," then these skills must be taught in schools. How are



schools teaching these competencies? What changes have been made in curricula to accommodate the teaching of life skills?

5. What evidence would be needed to demonstrate that there is a match between testing and curriculum?

#### B. Curriculum clarification

One feature of minimum competency testing is the specification of competencies that students are expected to learn. Since schools must prepare students in these areas, the specifications are used as the basis for the design of instruction. Controversy has arisen over the resulting effects of this process: has MCT unduly narrowed the focus of instruction or has it aided instruction by clarifying its goals and objectives?

##### Clarification:

Curricular clarification is seen as an advantage. (Sandifer, Rankin)

Clarification leads to increased efficiency and more time for higher-order skills. (Leonard, Hedgepath)

Aids better lesson plans (Hedgepath)

Promotes better instructional system (Schilling)

Intentional narrowing, increased use of small group instruction, good for slow learners (Priddy)

##### Narrowing:

Leads to distortion of reading curriculum (Meier)

Time spent in remediation focuses on trivial tasks. (Calfee, Bracey, Lee)

MCT's emphasis on basics may explain decline in reading comprehension. (Farr)

Has negative impact on textbook selection. (Gilbert)

Leads to declines in courses in social studies, literature, and other electives (Sullivan)

1. What are the consequences of increased curriculum clarification on the following:

- (1) professional development of teachers?
- (2) high vs. low achieving students?
- (3) individualized instruction?
- (4) high order skills?
- (5) affective outcome?



2. What are the consequences of a narrow curriculum which focuses primarily on basic cognitive skills on each of the above?
3. To what extent was MCT described in general terms as a catalyst for educational change and instructional reform?

MCT is responsible for renaissance in education.

(Turlington)

MCT is turning the system around. (Schilling)

MCT led to quickest educational changes ever seen. (Trujillo)

MCT is the vehicle to do a better job. (Jefferson)

MCT is only a beginning. (Scriven)

MCT is not a panacea. (Cronin)

MCT strikes at the very heart of education. (Shine)

Testing diverts education from its major goals. (Calfee, Nader)

4. To what extent have MCT programs affected the way teachers teach?

Increased clarification of instructional goals provides greater efficiency. (Spight, Dyer, Jefferson, Leonard)

Promotes more small group and tutorial work (Priddy)

Aids better lesson plans (Hedgepath)

Teaching looks more and more like testing. (Benton)

Teachers are coaching for the test. (Scriven, Meiers, Lee)

#### C. Teacher reaction to MCT

1. What has been the reaction of teachers to MCT?

Initial apprehension, and general objections overcome (Sandifer, Leonard)

Teachers become more responsible for what is taught and the achievement of their students. (Trujillo)

Support of NEA affiliate (Andrews)

Opposition from NEA affiliate (Myrick)

Teachers concerned with adverse impact on curriculum and methods of teaching. (Gilbert, Sullivan)

MCT will attract less talented people to teaching and will de-professionalize teaching. (Wise)

2. What methods might be used to ensure teacher cooperation when new education programs are introduced?

Teacher should play a large role in the whole process (Andrews)

3. How important is teacher cooperation to the success of the new programs?

4. How can teacher support and cooperation be sustained throughout the implementation of new programs? What practices have been successful in your school? What practices have not been successful?

D. Effects on student motivation

1. Have MCT programs had any effects on student retention and attendance?

Enrollment was very high in summer remedial programs. (Dyer)  
Students had a heightened interest in education. (Rutherford)  
Evidence on dropout rates in Florida (Sullivan, cross examination by Popham)

2. To what extent might changes in retention rates and attendance be due to other causes, such as a general decline in enrollment or local economic situation? How can the various factors be sorted out?
3. What techniques seem to be successful in improving attendance of high school students? In reducing dropout rates?
4. How can the community help in keeping students enrolled in school or in successful work study programs?
5. What additional, unanticipated effects has MCT had on students?

Peer relations improved, students helping each other (Ramsey)  
No one wandering through halls when successful program in place (Dyer)

Students who fail increase their effort to learn. (Dyer, King)  
Passing increases self-esteem. (Stiff, Schilling, Rutherford, McFadden)

Increased attention to slow learners helps self-esteem. (Ramsey Rutherford)

Pullout for remediation can be a detriment to their whole educational experience. (Sullivan, Lee, Stevens)

Labeling students as failures can be devastating. (Chisholm, Berry, Myrick)

E. Responsibility for learning

Read the following testimony, keeping the study questions in mind:

Scriven  
Chisholm  
Cronin

Wise  
Raspberry  
Trujillo

1. The use of MCT to determine promotion, graduation or further instruction places responsibility for learning squarely on the shoulders of the students. That is, their test performance will determine the decision to be made. To what extent is this a fair and/or reasonable demand?
2. Who else has responsibility for contributing to a child's education? What role do teachers and administrators play? What more should parents/teachers do beyond providing an opportunity to learn and developing sound educational programs?
3. In your opinion, has there been a shift in responsibility for learning in recent years? Over the last 30-40 years?
4. What do professional teacher groups think about the role of the teacher in responsibility for learning?

NEA affiliates and their positions (Myrick, Andrews)

## SUGGESTED USES FOR TAPES AND TRANSCRIPTS

This section provides suggestions for using the video tapes and transcript developed from the hearing. It is designed to suggest a range of possible activities for decision-making, professional development and research. The user is encouraged to adapt or modify the ideas presented here and to develop new ones.

### Description of Materials

Documentary. The documentary provides an overview of MCT programs across the country. It includes interviews with school administrators, parents, students and teachers involved in MCT programs in New York, Florida and California.

Three 1-hour video cassettes. Each of the three cassettes provides a summary of a day of the hearing. Key testimony is highlighted and summary statements provided. The specific testimony included on each tape was chosen by the respective team to illustrate its case.

Complete set of hearing cassettes. The entire hearing was recorded and produced on video cassettes. These cassettes are available as a set or individually for more comprehensive coverage of a given topic, or a witness' testimony. Section VII provides the index to the cassettes.

Hearing transcript. The transcript provides written coverage of the entire hearing. It is a verbatim transcript consisting of 3 volumes, 850 pages. An index to testimony by witness is provided in Section VII of this User's Guide.

### Suggestions for Decision-Making

The hearing addressed a number of issues of concern to educational policymakers. While most of these issues deal directly with MCT, many other issues were discussed as well; e.g., what makes an effective school, technical testing issues, how to involve parents and community in the process of schooling. The activities suggested below are designed to promote continued discussion of the issues at the state and local level, and the formulation of responsive policy decisions through public participation in the policy process.

#### A. Committee or Task Force

**Problem:** To develop recommendations for policy or program decisions.

**Participants:** Professional staff and local groups or individuals who have experience with, knowledge about or will be impacted by the decision.

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
3 1-hour hearing cassettes  
Hearing transcript (all or selected volumes)  
Local documents  
Other resources (See Section VII of the User's Guide for additional resources)

Suggested Procedures:

- o Specify the task - e.g., to develop a set of recommendations for modification of a remedial program

or

to make recommendations as to whether the state should adopt a local option or state MCT program.

- o Develop a list of relevant questions for consideration which will guide the process. The questions should be aimed at evaluating features and effects of program alternatives, including the existing program. Use questions from Section IV as a starting point.
- o Assign specific issues/questions to individuals or groups, depending upon the task force. Each group or individual will examine their assigned issues using tapes, transcripts, etc. and their own knowledge and experience, and will report back to the larger group on their findings.
- o Based on findings and suggestions, task force recommendations will be developed.

B. Decision-Making Board (Panel/Jury)

Problem: To decide whether to adopt or recommend adoption of a particular policy or program under consideration.

Audience: Decision making body, e.g., a school board or a special board of community members and educators.

Participants: The board and invited participants including community members, educators and other vested interest groups.

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
3 1-hour hearing tapes  
Documentary  
Hearing transcript (all or selected volumes)

Suggested Procedures:

- o Delineate plan or policy under consideration (e.g., promotional policy; implementation plan).

- o View the video tapes; examine testimony from transcripts.
- o Have other witnesses present testimony, pro and con, relative to the plan or policy from a local viewpoint.
- o Caucus to accept, reject, or modify the plan/policy.

### C. Analysis of Alternative Programs

Problem: To inform decisions about alternative program strategies.

Audience/Participants: decision makers/program planners

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
 3 1-hour hearing cassettes  
 Hearing transcripts  
 Summary testimony (Section VI User's Guide)

#### Suggested Procedures:

- o Review transcript tapes and/or summary testimony from Section VI to locate school districts/schools like your own (racial mix, size, rural/urban).
- o Study testimony from each of these programs. What was their experience with MCT, pro/con? What factors have led to success? What role (if any) did MCT play in the success? Could success have come about with MCT or without MCT?
- o Analyze your own community and school district needs. Is there a widespread concern about the quality of schooling? About the meaning of a high school diploma? What are newspapers saying about the schools? Is a decline in basic skills evident? What are the primary concerns of the school district: handicapped or minority students? parental involvement? Other?
- o What ideas/experiences could you adopt, based on local community or school district needs?

This activity may also be modified for a staff development workshop.

### Suggestions for Professional Development

The activities suggested below are presented in the form of workshops for use in both pre-service and in-service professional development programs. The workshops are designed to provide experience in the examination of critical educational issues and the application of pertinent information to local situations and suggested practice. The tapes and transcript provide the basis for discussion and examination.



School districts and state departments of education may want to collaborate with state and local teacher training institutions to provide these and/or similar workshops for educational credit.

A. Professional Development Workshop I

Purpose: To provide staff development relative to local programs.

Participants: Teachers, administrators.

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
3 1-hour hearing cassettes

Suggested Procedures:

- o Develop a set of discussion questions pertaining to curriculum and instruction. (See Section IV of the User's Guide for assistance)
- o Show the tapes
- o Have participants discuss the questions relative to your local program.
- o Have participants develop their own set of do's and don'ts for instruction.

B. Professional Development Workshop II

Purpose: To provide hands on pre or in-service activity in the examination and application of policy issues.

Participants: Teachers, administrators, and other interested staff.

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
3 1-hour hearing cassettes  
Documentary  
Hearing transcripts (optional)

Suggested Procedures:

- o Several questions of general interest are raised on the documentary. Make a list of these questions and give it to participants.
- o Show the documentary. Stop after each question for group discussion.
- o Show the three 1-hour hearing cassettes; provide for review of transcripts (optional).

- o Have participants respond to the following:  
How were the questions addressed by the hearing? What do participants see as the positive aspects of MCT? Negative aspects of MCT? What recommendations would they make for development of a model program, with/without MCT?

A modified version of this workshop may also serve as a useful tool to inform community members about MCT issues and solicit comments as to their interests and concerns.

### C. Simulation Activity

**Purpose:** To provide experience in the application of concepts and information in making decisions about educational policy and practice.

**Participants:** Professional staff, students of educational policy and practice..

**Resources:** 3/4 inch video cassette player  
3 1-hour hearing cassettes  
Documentary  
Hearing transcripts (optional)

#### Description of the Activity:

On July 10, 1981, the Board of Education of the Anytown School District set as its mission the development and implementation of a comprehensive program of basic skills instruction and assessment to be fully implemented by September 1, 1987.

The program is to accomplish the following goals and purposes:

#### General Goal

To guarantee to the public that students graduating from Anytown High School have "minimum educational competency in reading, language arts and mathematics."

#### Specific Purposes

1. To provide meaningful and relevant instruction through setting standards for performance at each grade level;
2. To inform students as to what is expected of them in learning situations so they can assume more responsibility for their own learning;
3. To increase the percentage of students achieving the performance standards;

4. To identify student needs and remediate those needs in relation to expected performance standards;
5. To improve teacher technique and competency by providing feedback about student progress;
6. To provide checkpoints for student progress in the acquisition and application of basic skills;
7. To provide a means to minimize or eliminate meaningless and irrelevant instruction, while developing standards for quality instruction;
8. To establish standards or expectancies toward fulfilling the requirements for a high school diploma;
9. To inform parents of the status and progress of their children; and
10. To improve continuously the educational system, using data that are gathered regarding student attainment of goals.

The superintendent and his staff have been charged with responsibility for developing a 5-year plan of implementation in line with the stated goals and purposes. In this simulated activity a task force appointed by the superintendent will develop recommendations for the 5-year plan.

**Suggested Members:**

**Chair:** The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction.

**Members:** The Director of Bilingual and Migrant Education  
 The Director of Special Education  
 The Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Research and Evaluation  
 Secondary teacher (English Department)  
 An elementary teacher  
 A principal (secondary school)  
 The Executive Director of the local Hispanic organization  
 The P.T.A. president  
 A representative of the local chapter of the NAACP  
 A university professor specializing in educational measurement  
 A respected member of the business community

It is not expected that the task force will develop a complete 5-year implementation plan. Rather, the task force might outline a plan that addresses one or more of several critical policy issues covered by the hearing that should be considered in decisions about educational programs:

- o Curriculum development or revisions
- o Test development or selection
- o Test administration and use
- o Standard setting
- o Special populations
- o Parents and community involvement
- o Phase-in time
- o Staff development
- o Instructional program

Procedures (in preparation for the activity):

1. Provide participants with a copy of the simulation and their respective roles in advance.
2. Have the participants view the tapes.
3. Provide participants with transcripts; the analysis of testimony presented in Section III; and/or summary of testimony, Section VI.
4. You may want to develop a list of specific questions to guide the activity. The following questions are intended to serve as examples. Section V of the guide may also provide some ideas.
  - o What procedures will be used for curriculum development/revision? Who will be involved? What should be the curricular emphasis, given the goals and purposes of the program?
  - o What type of test(s) should the school district use? To what extent will new tests supplement/replace the existing testing program? For what purpose(s) will the tests be used: graduation, promotion, remediation, program evaluation, etc.? At what grades and at what time of year will students be tested?
  - o How will tests be developed/selected? How will the cut score be determined? What other technical issues must be considered and how will these be addressed?

- o What consideration will be given to specific populations: handicapped, language minorities?

Background information on the Anytown District is included here to provide the context. You may also want to develop specific roles for all or some of the task force members to ensure that a variety of points of view are represented in the discussion.

### Background Information

The district. The Anytown School District is located on the fringe of a central city. It enrolls 20,000 students in 18 elementary and 6 high schools. The district serves students primarily from middle to lower middle class families. The ethnic mix in the district is 40% white, 35% black, 20% Hispanic, 3% Asian and 2% other ethnic groups. Over the past five years, the number of black students in the district has remained about the same, while the number of white students has dropped and the number of Hispanic students has doubled. This trend is likely to continue in the coming years.

In addition to its basic tax supported program, the district participates in a variety of categorical programs, including both state and federal compensatory education, state and federal bilingual, state gifted, state and federal special education and a special state funded experimental reading program which operates in grades K-6. The district derives approximately 17% of its operating funds from these categorical programs.

Ten percent of the students in the district have been classified as limited or non-English speaking. The state mandates bilingual programs for these students. In 1980 the federal Office of Civil Rights found the district to be out of compliance with the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling Lau v. Nichols and is monitoring the district's efforts to provide adequate programs for language minority students.

The district's testing program. State test: the state requires testing of all students in grades 3, 6, and 12 each year. A state developed test is used to assess student performance on the minimum state requirements. The state test is given in March and takes about one class period to administer. The state scores the test and reports results by grade to the district and to the press in May.

District testing. All students in grades 1 through 9 and grade 11 are given the California Achievement Test (CAT) in reading, mathematics and language in September, and May of each year. The CAT is a standardized test. Results of the May post-testing are reported to the Board, parents and teachers in September. In addition to norm-referenced scores the test also provides objectives based information for each student in each of the three curricular areas.

Categorical programs. Compensatory education: approximately 29% of the district's students participate in a Title I program. The program operates in grades 1 through 9. Students are identified using scores from the CAT administered by the district. In addition to remediation provided by the classroom teachers, students attend a remediation lab for three hours per week.

Bilingual and migrant education. The bilingual program services approximately 13% of the student population. Hispanic students receive special tutoring in their native language and instruction in English as a second language in addition to the regular program of instruction. Asian and other students receive English language instruction and special tutoring, but not in the native language. All students are required to take the district administered CAT.

Anytown has a migrant student population of about thirty and has a program with one full-time staff member who provides special instruction as necessary. There is a much higher proportion of migrant students in the fall and spring. This instability of the population creates special problems for the school district. The migrant program overlaps the bilingual program to some degree. Many of the migrant children have a primary language other than English. Migrant students may receive special tutoring through the bilingual program in addition to special instruction from the migrant teacher. These students are not tested as part of the district and state testing programs. Instructional needs are determined on the basis of prior school records (if available) and informal teacher assessment.

• Special education programs. Approximately 9% of the district's students are enrolled in special education programs. Four percent (4%) have relatively minor learning disabilities or emotional problems and are mainstreamed, but receive special instruction from the special education teacher one hour a day. Another 1% have physical handicaps and 4% are in programs for the educably mentally retarded (EMR) or severely emotionally disturbed.

Students in these programs are assessed through informal teacher-made tests. Teacher judgements of their progress are summarized in the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Mainstreamed students are also required to take the CAT.

Currently, programs for EMR include 35% black students, 39% Hispanic students, 26% white students. Of the 500 students identified as academically gifted, 20% are Asian, 7% are Hispanic, and 71% are white. Services to the gifted are provided through enrichment classes on a school by school basis.

State funded reading program. This is a goal directed, performance-based program. Three of the 18 elementary schools in the district participate. All teachers K-6 in the participating



schools identified reading skills and concepts that all students should know at the beginning and at the end of each school year. Comparisons were made among teachers and among objectives that students should master in each grade from kindergarten to grade 8.

Statement of the Problem. Despite the many programs and services available to students there has been a decline in standardized test scores, particularly at the upper grades (9-12). Students also score below the state average on the state administered test. While the decline at the lower grade has leveled off, parents and community continue to voice concerns about poor student performance. There is a general feeling among teachers, administrators, as well as the public that promotion is too automatic. Many students leave elementary school and enter secondary schools poorly prepared. At the same time, teachers complain about too much testing that has little bearing on their teaching.

#### Suggestions for Research

Testimony was presented at the hearing on the pros and cons of several educational issues. Whenever issues are raised with arguments presented for contending positions, there are questions for research. Regardless of whether MCT is being considered for adoption or program modification, or whether MCT is a concern at all, review of the tapes and transcripts reveal a number of questions germane to educational program development and improvement.

Tapes and transcripts can be used to identify what issues are prevalent; what the various perspectives on the issues are; how other school districts addressed these issues. School district research staff and other educational researchers may want to develop their own research agenda and conduct empirical studies to examine issues relative to local program concerns.

#### Research Activity:

Purpose: To develop a research agenda for program development and improvement

Participants: State department of education and/or school district research staff, college/university or other educational researchers.

Resources: 3/4 inch video cassette player  
Transcript  
Other school records  
User's Guide

Procedures:

- o Review tapes to identify issues raised.
- o Examine the various perspectives on the issues. Use the User's Guide Sections III-V to aid in this analysis.
- o Examine how these issues relate to local program concerns regarding program development and improvement.
- o Develop a set of research questions pertinent to local concerns.
- o From testimony examine how other school districts and researchers have dealt with the issues empirically.
- o Develop a research plan, long range and short range, to study issues and impact.

## VI SUMMARY OF WITNESS TESTIMONY

Section VI provides a summary of each witness' testimony within the context of the witness' knowledge and experience with MCT programs. This Section is divided into four parts:

- o Testimony by national figures on general issues related to MCT
- o Testimony presented in relation to specific state and local MCT programs
- o Testimony on alternative educational programs
- o Testimony on technical issues presented by experts in the field of educational measurement.

OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF MCT

Mary Berry, Commissioner and Vice Chairman  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Washington, D.C.

Roger Farr, Professor of Research in Education  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana

The Reverend W. W. Finlator, Pastor  
Puffin Baptist Church  
Raleigh, North Carolina

Ralph Nader, Director of the Center for Responsive Law  
Washington, D.C.

William Raspberry, Syndicated Columnist  
Washington Post

Michael Scriven, Director of the Evaluation Institute  
University of San Francisco

Ralph Tyler, Consultant, Science Research Associates  
Chicago, Illinois

Arthur Wise, Senior Social Scientist  
Rand Corporation, Washington, D.C.

MARY BERRY, Commissioner and Vice Chairman,  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Dr. Berry has an extensive background in the field of education serving as faculty member and administrator at various universities around the country. As Assistant Secretary for Education at HEW, Dr. Berry commissioned a study on basic skills and quality because of concern with the decline in test scores. The conclusion of this study regarding MCT:

1. MCT will not solve the educational equity problem.
2. MCT is unworkable and exceeds the present "state of the art of testing."
3. It is appropriate to use MCT to diagnose but not to "hold back."

### Effects on Students

#### Effects on Minority Students

- a. Any student can pass a test if they are taught enough.
- b. Minority students often are not taught enough or taught well so the MCT discriminates and eliminates them through the test.
- c. There is a cycle of inequity starting by failure on the MCT. It starts with a "non-pass", which results in no diploma, which means no college admission. Thus, if a minority student doesn't pass the MCT he is eliminated from college.

### General Conclusions

1. There is a need to validate the MCT to see that it tests what is actually learned in school.
2. MCT is not a panacea, it is begging the problem of poor quality education.

### Cross Examination

There is growing concern over the quality of education. All people on the HEW panel were educators and chosen by the National Academy of Education. Hence, they may be somewhat biased about the criticism of education but no more so than lawyers would be biased about the legal system. Everyone is biased in one way or another. Experts always disagree. Tests and measures are useful for diagnostic and remedial purposes, but not for making decisions on diplomas, degrees, and passing from grade to grade. Dr. Berry is opposed to social promotion. Basic skill tests are

given appropriately in early grades. Students should not be tested for basic skills when they get to the 12th grade on a pass or fail basis. There is a need for accountability on the part of the education system earlier in a student's school life. No one is served by entering college without basic skills; minority students are no exception.

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM  
U.S. House of Representatives

Mrs. Chisholm is an educator by professional training and has maintained her interest in education by serving on the Education Committee in both New York State and federal legislatures. Her testimony was drawn from that knowledge and experience. The decline of scores on other state tests and the desire of students, parents and teachers to know what skills are really needed prompted the consideration of minimum competency testing (MCT). Though not all testing is bad, Chisholm fears that relying on one test too heavily is very bad.

#### Effects on Students

1. The impact of MCT is different for different types of students.
2. MCT puts students on the "trash heap" when they could produce more.
3. MCT labels a student for life.
4. Some students cannot function in class but can function in the world.
5. If all students started at a common base when they entered school perhaps MCT could work, but there is a recognition that no common base exists nor is there an equivalency of education preparation after children enter school.
6. Tests are developed by people from very different circumstances than many of the students taking the tests. It is difficult for many students to answer items composed by people with different cultural conventions and expectations.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

To mandate the subject matter to be included in the curriculum on the basis of teaching basic skills is inappropriate because there is no agreement on which skills are basic skills.



## Effects on the Public's Perception

MCT can become a way of veering the public away from the school system's problems.

## Cross Examination

The present quality of education is not satisfactory. Some testing as part of the educational system is acceptable. MCT to improve instruction would be important, but minimum competency testing should not put the responsibility for evaluating instruction on the students. State leaders could come up with a basis program to measure competency, but in doing so it would be critical to insure that the tests aren't skewed to one socio-economic status or another. There is also a need for individualization of tests. Efforts to eliminate bias in testing have been launched. The diploma should stand for something. Diplomas without skills are useless.

## Redirect Examination

There are some acceptable uses of MCT, but it is unsupportable as the sole criteria for a diploma. It is best to use composite factors, not just one. Supporting "truth in testing," Chisholm encourages the disclosure of items to students to stop the secrecy associated with testing.

ROGER FARR, Professor of Research  
in Education, Indiana University

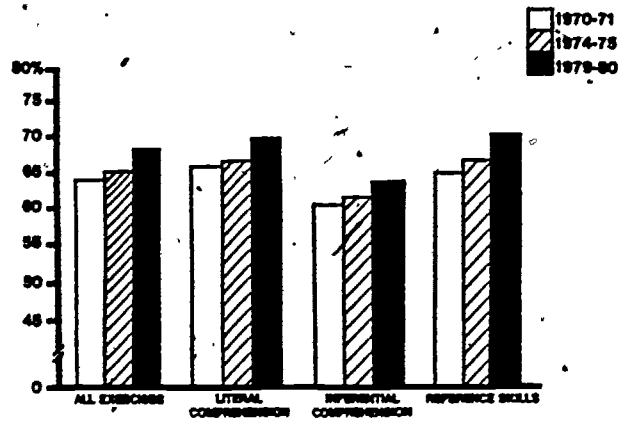
Dr. Farr is a recognized specialist in the area of reading and measurement. For the past ten years he has conducted studies of literacy trends in the U.S. His conclusions to date form the basis for much of this testimony.

1. There has been confusion between a decline of SAT scores and a decline in scores on tests intended to measure basic literacy. A person must read at the 9th or 10th grade level just to take the SATs. Further the SAT is not an indicator of future success in life roles.

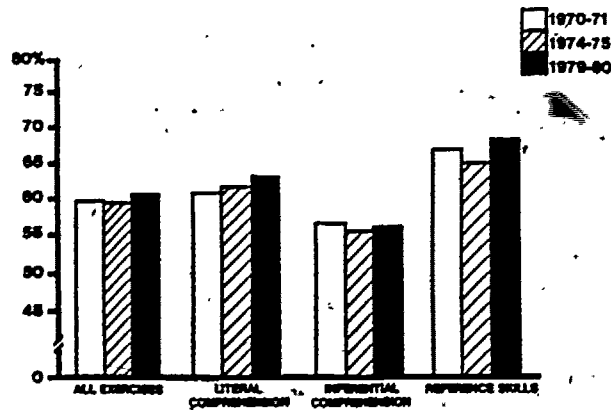
Basic literacy skills have not declined. The National Assessment of Educational Progress says that literacy skills are up, not down. At upper levels of schooling, (13 to 17 year olds), the literacy level is essentially unchanged.

3. Most 17 year olds have basic skills. Minority students are slightly lower, but the gap is closing.
4. Reading achievement in 1976 was markedly better than in 1940-45. It is a myth that people can't read.

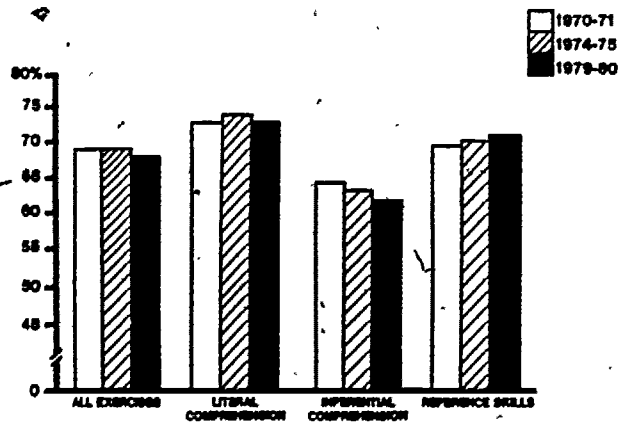
**CHANGES IN 9-YEAR-OLDS' READING  
PERFORMANCE, 1971-80**



**CHANGES IN 13-YEAR-OLDS' READING  
PERFORMANCE, 1970-79**



**CHANGES IN 17-YEAR-OLDS' READING  
PERFORMANCE, 1971-80**



## Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. MCT will hurt reading because:
  - a. The emphasis on basic word recognition inhibits higher levels of comprehension and may account for future declines in reading.
  - b. MCT focuses on basics when schools are already at an all time high. In reading in grades 1 to 6 it holds back progress.
  - c. Performance on the MCT will hurt the cause of improved reading. Schools will judge their worth on the basis of student performance on the MCT. Minimum standards then become the basis for evaluating acceptable achievement.
2. Poor readers can be identified through means other than MCT.
3. MCT suggests that schools and teachers can't make judgments.

## Effects on the Public's Perception

Public dissatisfaction was one of the main reasons MCT has developed rapidly.

## General Conclusion

MCT should be subjected to sustained and healthy scrutiny.

## Cross Examination

Even if the MCT program is specifically attentive to minorities, it is still questionable. No one asks why Detroit schools are all black and why there are no jobs for the students who graduate from those schools.

RALPH NADER, Director  
Center for Responsive Law

## Effects on Students

1. Minimum competency testing is not a consumer (student) protection device, because if it were it would:
  - a. Be openly refutable. (It is not because there is a secrecy in the preparation. Analysis by the student is after the fact.)

- b. Protect the consumer. (It does not because it is affected by how the student feels; the testing environment; the test quality; may not reflect what the student has learned; and cannot predict adult competency.)
2. Minimum competency testing may affect a student's career because of labelling the person less than competent.
3. Minimum competency testing penalizes students who use "subtle reasoning."
4. Minimum competency testing is fraught with cultural bias.
5. Students are affected by minimum competency tests because the tests are multiple choice tests. There is "no value in multiple choice tests as predictors because they do not measure judgment, determination, experience, character, idealism, wisdom or creativity." So to use multiple choice tests to determine quality is unfair.
6. MCT damages students who fail, especially minority students who internalize their feelings more. Failure destroys their feelings of self worth.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Minimum competency testing doesn't improve the quality of public schools "except by exposing their own absurdity."
2. Minimum competency testing is seen as a student problem and not as a school or system problem.
3. Minimum competency testing does more to "harm the public perception of education."
4. Minimum competency testing is a "political numbers game."
5. Minimum competency tests do not deliver what they promise. MCT is a diversionary technique to avoid system improvement.
6. Minimum competency testing throws the system into central decision-making which is fraught with politics.

#### Cross Examination

Minimum competency test opposition is consistent with concern for the consumer, in this case, the student. There are

profit-making vested interests involved in minimum competency testing. Minimum competency testing does not do what it promises, which is to create quality education. Multiple choice tests can never measure skills and knowledge, because multiple choice questions are ambiguous. Time limits on answering make them even less acceptable. There are better alternatives to improving education than minimum competency testing. Minimum competency tests are meaningless because:

1. They don't predict adult competency.
2. They don't reflect what is taught in the curriculum.
3. They are ambiguous.
4. They have a class bias.
5. People can't express their uniqueness on a multiple choice test.
6. Schools themselves can best measure what they teach, not outsiders.
7. There is a need to focus on improvement of education but one test won't do it.
8. Budgets are tight and school funds should go to the improvement of education, not for a "new frill."

WILLIAM RASPBERRY, Columnist  
The Washington Post

As a distinguished journalist, Mr. Raspberry has analyzed and written frequently about various educational issues, including minimum competency testing. There is a growing waning of confidence in public education. Schools weren't doing what they should, so people looked for objective ways of assessing the schools' accomplishments and found MCT. They were looking for a minimum level of achievement on the part of students -- "at least the basics."

#### Effects on Students

1. The impact of MCT on students depends on how the MCT is instituted. To introduce MCT in 12th grade is "an assault." If MCT is used throughout children's educational life, it will help the students and be routine to them.
2. In the District of Columbia, half of the third graders did not pass the MCT; the worst effect was not on those children. The terrible thing is that before MCT so

many children were promoted through social promotion without those basic skills. Some students were embarrassed by their scores on the MCT, but in the long run it really helped them to know how much they really didn't know.

4. MCT communicates to students that education is a serious matter.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. People fear MCT because they believe that students (especially minority students) haven't got minimum skills; it is true that deficiencies will be revealed by the MCT.
2. Some oppose MCT because of embarrassment and pity; they want to protect minority students because they feel sorry for them. "If you believe these students are capable, you would insist on tests. The assumption is that these students are stupid."
3. MCT will help but not satisfy the public's right to know.
4. Only when the public is confident that nothing complimentary will be revealed, does the opposition vanish.
5. The MCT movement is an impetus to reexamine educational systems and increase the effectiveness and understanding of the schools. It is a program that makes us look realistically at our schools.

#### General Conclusions

1. MCT performs a quality control function for schools and students.
2. We need to get over fighting MCT and insist on competency.
3. There is no need to use MCTs as weapons, but rather as aids to be sure that students learn what is necessary.

#### Cross Examination

The public has a right to know what is on a test, but for the most part a layman cannot understand the subtleties of test construction. When asked what cultural bias on a test is, Raspberry said he doesn't know what cultural bias is, so he can't answer the question. If a test failed bright students and passed students who aren't competent, Raspberry would be concerned, but if not every student passes the MCT, it isn't the



fault of the test. The current process of evaluating the quality of a student's progress is of great concern. The problem is that there is no confidence in teachers and schools, and so the public really doesn't want more of their decisions. MCT at the diploma level without a phase-in stage is not good. There is a need to improve writing and understand how it relates to test scores. Racism in education can best be resolved if early diagnosis and remediation of educational problems occur.

### Redirect Examination

Raspberry is not opposed to other indicators being used for making promotion decisions, but those indicators must show the student's actual ability. If all people are equal, then why is there a need for the protection of some, namely minorities? In Florida at the 11th grade level, students are given the MCT that tests 6th to 8th grade level skills. Raspberry asks "Why shouldn't they pass?"

MICHAEL SCRIVEN, Director  
Evaluation Institute, University of San Francisco

Dr. Scriven is a recognized scholar in educational research and evaluation. He is author of fifty or more articles and books on evaluation. He supports the concept of MCT.

MCT is the last hope for credibility in public education. If we cannot stand behind our products, then there will be a further erosion of public support. MCT is a significant effort to restore public faith.

### Effects on Students

1. The effects of MCT on students depends on how they are used. MCT is not automatically effective or positive in its impact on students, but they can be made to be positive if used in the right way.
2. A high quality MCT program will affect students positively.
3. Self-concept and self-confidence will be impacted by how honest all concerned are willing to be about the results. Sometimes this is unpleasant, but leads to a new start for the student.
4. From MCT students learn about the real world -- a world that has standards.
5. Students will not suffer as MCT evolves. It's worse now. They suffer more harm from not having skills but being promoted. It misleads them and their future employers.

6. Minority students deserve better than to be lied to. If you disguise results and you don't acknowledge problems, then how can you know where or how to change?
7. Tests can help pinpoint areas where students need help.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. MCT strengthens the teacher's hand because it offers some objective evidence of student progress. When there is no MCT and everything rests on teachers' judgments, parents pressure for social promotion, and teachers are then unduly pressed to promote students. This is a natural consequence of the system and does not reflect incompetence on the part of teachers. The MCT is a support system to the schools.
2. The people who teach are responsible for the outcomes. The burden of responsibility is on them, not on the students.
3. The curriculum may in the short term be watered down, but in the long run the same standards soon will be applied to the whole curriculum, not just the basics.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

Because of the tradition of local control of education, teachers are often put in the role of "bucking" parents. MCT offers some independence, professionalism and objectivity, and enables people to talk about what the tests show. This makes the MCT a useful "weapon" in the community in working with parents.

#### Conclusions

1. If the average of the MCT test scores go up and down from time to time, that is not as important as graduating people lacking basic skills. The people who are being hurt are the ones who have been hurt by being promoted as if they are competent and then finding out that they aren't.
2. MCT is a beginning and isn't perfect, but it helps and it can be improved. Minimum standards must be identified and developed. Students need to learn about the real world and the real world has standards.
3. Tests are said to be redundant with what teachers know. That may be true, but often teachers are helpless to act on what they know. Teachers must be able to take appropriate educational remedies. They are not always able to do that now.

4. Scriven is not certain that all teachers know everything they can learn from MCT results. Parents probably do know, and teachers may, but the taxpayers and employers don't know. MCT is a way for them to find out.
5. The validity of MCT is less than perfect, but it is better than nothing. What is the alternative?
6. The passing cut-off score is set capriciously. This is a problem, and there is a right and wrong way for the setting of this score to be done.
7. MCT isn't a solution but a step. It casts some light on ways to improve teaching and educational resources.
8. MCT is an issue of the last chance. MCT is a tiny thread that connects schools with external reality. We find out from MCT if people are able to cut it or not and that is important.
9. MCT is a test of the minimum competence of the schools.
10. The issue is not what is wrong with MCT, but what is the better alternative -- testing to determine competency, or to predict future successes.
11. MCT has to be possible because it is done at higher levels of education and by employers.
12. The questions raised by MCT are, "Can testing and education face up to those who pay the bill? Do we go on with the big lie and counterfeit diplomas?" If so, say goodbye to public education. The only alternative to that is external testing.

#### Cross Examination

1. The best way to evaluate programs and individuals is with many measures, but the ways we are using in our public schools are not working well. Now the simplistic approach of the MCT must be used.
2. "When multiple independent indicators are used by multiple independent people, using multiple independent standards, we don't know what they are or what they say."
3. Simple solutions are upsetting but may be the best alternatives.
4. The security of the test is a problem. There are times when scores go up but not skills.

RALPH TYLER, Consultant  
Science Research Associates

Dr. Tyler is generally regarded as one of the most influential contributors to American educational produce. His conclusions about MCT result from his 60 years of experience in education.

General Conclusions

1. Good teachers use standards to motivate and guide and have multiple standards to deal with individual differences; a single competency measure doesn't fit all.
2. Survival isn't the purpose of education. The purpose is to go beyond the survival level and improve.
3. A Florida study showed:
  - a. A mismatch between content taught and competency tests;
  - b. Emphasis on reading and math was evident, as was the neglect of science, art, social studies, and literature;
  - c. Minority students were more likely to get low scores than others, and in that way "the victims [of poor education] were blamed for their lack of achievement."
4. Professional educators recognized individual differences when working on big decisions. They often seek a second opinion. Test manuals since World War I have said not to make decisions based on one test.
5. Testing is useful to teachers when they are used as tools for teaching and learning, but only when the results are verified over time.
6. Improvement in education comes from the bottom up and focuses on individual teachers, students and schools. There is a need to help local schools solve their own problems.
7. The way to improve education is to study the students to find out what they are like and then help them, not to give them a minimum competency test.
8. In times of inflationary crisis, people blame social institutions, especially education.

9. The National Assessment of Educational Progress showed no decline in reading and math achievement. In fact, the last assessment showed improvement in the disadvantaged in these areas.
10. The public is reacting to the perceived problem of declining SAT scores, but they have declined because lower level students have started taking that test.
11. The public has not been made aware of the improvement toward the goal of universal literacy which has changed from thirty-five percent in 1935 to eighty percent now.
12. Minimum competency testing exists in other areas (e.g., driver's license tests), but that is different than basic reading and math skills because:
  - a. One relates to a specific task (driver's license);
  - b. A reward is given (the license);
  - c. The certification may be retested (when the license is renewed). None of this is true for the school minimum competency testing.
13. Minimum competency testing is a promotional device.

#### Cross Examination

The quality of education has not declined, but the schools now serve a different kind of student and many more students and levels of students today. Minimum competency testing is not a reward, nor is a high school diploma. The biggest problem in the erosion of schools is from out-of-school forces such as television. Any program that uses a specific test to make educational decisions is unfair to the students.

ARTHUR E. WISE, Senior Social Scientist  
Rand Corporation

Dr. Wise has served as associate professor and associate dean of education. He has been called the most outspoken opponent of MCT by Time Magazine.

#### Effects on Students

1. Skill performance is different than educational achievement, yet skill performance is what is tested.
2. Minimum competency testing distracts from the real problem of weak students.

3. Minimum competency testing dehumanizes the education process.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Minimum competency testing is a political response to the public, not an educational innovation.
  - a. Test score trends have gone up in the 1970's.
  - b. Minimum competency testing came into existence because legislators wanted control over the schools.
2. Minimum competency testing is an outgrowth of political and fiscal conservatism. By focusing on basics, it is possible to reduce what schools are expected to do, and thus it is possible to reduce the numbers of teachers and aides in schools.
3. Minimum competency testing seems like an easy way to fix hard problems.
4. Minimum competency testing diverts public attention away from equal opportunity and allows for the development of "minimally adequate" education instead of equal opportunity for all; it redirects the national spirit.
5. Minimum competency testing is the latest attempt to apply the scientific management model.
6. Problems of the schools are better solved at the local level.
7. Minimum competency testing undercuts public confidence in education, and will make the schools even more bureaucratic.

#### General Conclusions

Public education is in trouble. It is not up to date and has many problems. Bureaucratizing the school systems won't help to remedy the problems.

#### Cross Examination

Most states are not into minimum competency testing at this point. Not all educators are worried about state control, but recent concern with federal control is a pattern that will filter down to states. Wise believes federal aid should go to disadvantaged populations. There are proper roles for federal, state and local levels in education. Taxpayers have the right to know, and parents have the right to be involved, but state tests won't do that. Minimum competency tests should not be used as the single

indicator for promotion. Parents never expressed a desire for minimum competency testing, but parents did show concern for the decline of public education.



CALIFORNIA .

Lorenzo Calvillo Schmidt  
Board of Regents

Robert Schilling, Superintendent  
Hacienda La Puente District

Anthony Trujillo, Superintendent  
Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District

## Description of State Program

In 1976 the California State Legislature passed a law requiring each local school district to develop a program of minimum competency testing in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics. Each local district was to establish standards for high school graduation in the four subject areas and develop or select assessment instruments to determine if those standards have been met. Beginning with the graduating class of June, 1981, those students who do not pass locally administered tests will not be granted diplomas. All students are to be given the test starting in the 10th grade. Where weakness is shown, remediation is to be provided. Once tests are passed, the students have fulfilled the MCT requirement and need not re-take the test. All course requirements for the local district must also be completed.

LORENZO CALVILLO SCHMIDT  
Board of Regents of California

Mrs. Schmidt, a state board member, opposes MCT. She states that testing as a vehicle to improve instruction is fine. As a way to hold back students, it is wrong. In her testimony she cites two state reports to support her views.

## Effects on Students

1. Minority students are much more likely to fail MCT than others: 15% of whites fail, 29% of Hispanics fail, 35% of blacks fail, 19% of students with English as their first language fail, 48% of those with limited English fail, 67% of the non-English speakers fail, one and a half times as many Hispanics fail as whites, two times more blacks fail than whites.
2. Students who fail the MCT are trapped in narrow curricular options and remedial programs.
3. MCT labels students. Even if parents want their children to go on to college, the students have been tracked into education at a lower level.
4. Forty-nine percent of California's students move every year; since the California state law mandates local MCT programs, as opposed to statewide programs, students who move away get "caught." Every move brings different standards for the student. The children of migrant workers have even more problems.

5. Since the law says that MCT in the 12th grade must be passed in English, this has a severe impact on non-English speaking students. Multiple choice tests must be used at all levels. Before the 12th grade the test can be in a language other than English.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The quality of remedial programs is questionable.
2. Teachers are forced to teach remedial programs, but they aren't trained to teach remedial courses. At the same time they are so busy with the remedial courses there is not time for them to teach in the areas for which they were specially trained.
3. School resources are redirected to narrow foci of remediation away from broader academic pursuits.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. The public was angry, so MCT was instituted as a simple solution to a complex problem.
2. In California parent participation has been very poor. Seventy-five percent show for parent conferences in some districts, and in other districts there is no attempt to have a parent participation plan.
3. There are fiscal implications to trying to get and keep parents involved in the MCT programs. The cost of notifying parents plus a conference time with parents have not been planned in the budget. This leads to low morale among teachers and administrators.

#### Cross Examination

1. The opposition is to the number of remedial courses, which are increasing, as compared to other courses, which are decreasing.
2. Proposition 13 decreased funding for school resources at the same time that the requirements for MCT were imposed.
3. There are a variety of educational and funding vehicles to get at the special needs of student groups. There is no need for MCT to accomplish that. Minorities and non-English speaking students were known to be having problems before MCT.
4. Failing the test does not necessarily mean that the student does not have basic skills.

ROBERT SCHILLING, Assistant Superintendent  
Hacienda La Puente School District

Hacienda La Puente School District is 58% minority. Many students have acquired English as a second language. The dominant language minority group is Mexican American. Robert Schilling, Assistant Superintendent of this district, testified.

#### Effects on Students

1. Eighty percent of the students pass the MCT.
2. A study of students shows that fewer students have dropped out of senior high school since the MCT standards for graduation were set. Schilling said that this was "because they believed they could get help and did."
3. Students realized that they could do better, and since the MCT students are more diligent and have "better self esteem."
4. Effects on minority students:
  - a. Initially, more minority students failed MCT than others, but the longer the MCT program has been in effect, the less the scoring differences between minority students and others;
  - b. The MCT is in English and all students must pass in English; the schools help students overcome difficulties with the English language.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

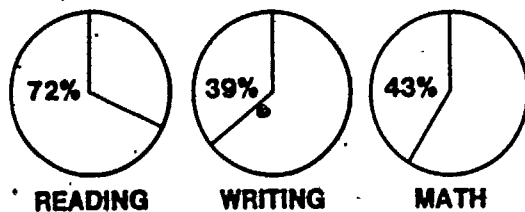
1. Minimum competencies are only a base for broader instruction; competencies are embedded in other courses.
2. Instructional materials provide for self-study and bilingual education.
3. Teachers are supportive of MCT.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Minimum competency testing turned the system around in the eyes of parents and students.
2. Many people were skeptical at first, but now are positive in their opinions on MCT.

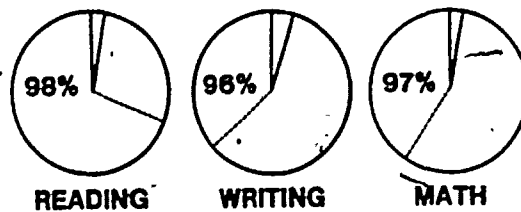
**PER CENT PASSING  
HACIENDA LA PUENTE MCT  
CLASS OF 1981**

**FIRST ADMINISTRATION - 9TH GRADE**





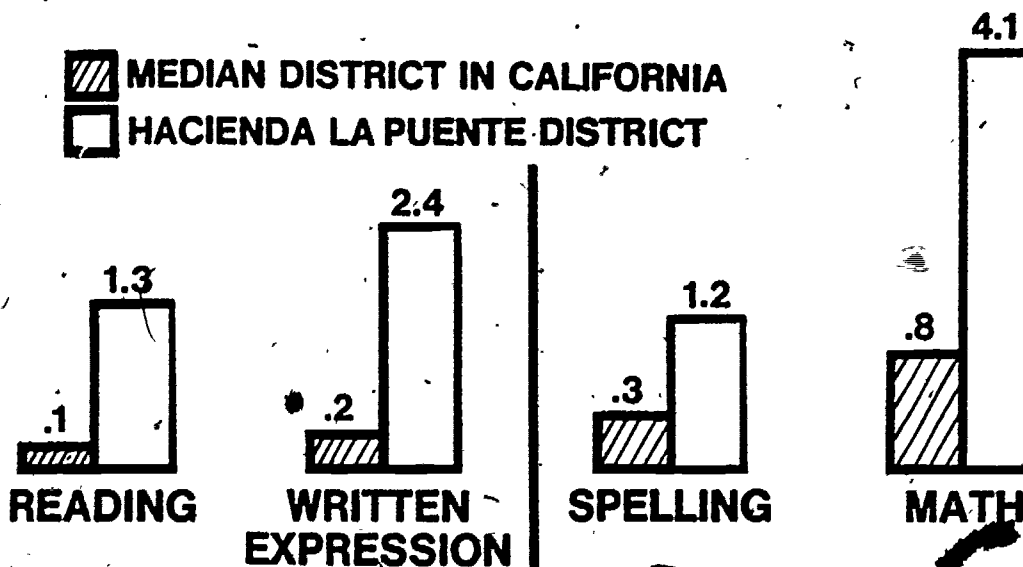
**PER CENT PASSING  
HACIENDA LA PUENTE MCT  
CLASS OF 1981**

**MARCH 1981**



**12TH GRADE CAP SCORE IMPROVEMENT  
1979/1980 - 1980/1981**

 **MEDIAN DISTRICT IN CALIFORNIA**  
 **HACIENDA LA PUENTE DISTRICT**



**LOCAL DISTRICT GAIN  
=10 TIMES STATE**

**LOCAL DISTRICT GAIN  
=5 TIMES STATE**

### Cross Examination

Perhaps the senior class drop out rate is not down solely because of the diploma sanction (having to pass the MCT prior to receiving a diploma). The school system made many changes at the time the MCT was introduced, so there is no assurance that the improvement in the competence of students is directly attributable to the MCT.

ANTHONY TRUJILLO, Superintendent  
Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District

Marin County has a high socio-economic level and is a "high wealth" district in California. The Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District serves eleven feeder elementary districts. It is a "high achieving" district. Anthony Trujillo, Superintendent of Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District, testified.

### Effects on Students

1. Since the institution of MCT there is evidence that students have a more complete mastery of skills and demonstrate higher achievement.
2. More students failed to qualify for a high school diploma because of deficiencies other than passing the MCT.
3. Hispanic (and other language minorities) should be required to pass the MCT in English because that is the language of the USA and they must function in the USA.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Since MCT, students with problems in articulation between elementary education and the next level have been given more time by their teachers.
2. Teachers were involved in the development of the MCT and programs of remediation. This took away the teacher's excuses for inadequate education of students being imposed on them by those outside who exerted control over the school system.
3. Educators were skeptical at first of the imposition of MCT on their schools. Now, after having experience with the system, they support it.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. "Counterfeit diplomas" don't help Hispanics (Trujillo is Hispanic); the real issue is acquisition of skills, not a piece of paper.

2. The public is more satisfied with schools than before the MCT, but still feels it is not enough, because competencies are tested for minimal skills, not maximum skills.
3. The public and those in the school system have seen that MCT is the quickest way to get educational change to occur. Without it what has occurred in a short time would have taken 10 years.

#### Cross Examination

1. It is possible for a student to get a diploma without passing the MCT. There are alternate ways they can be assessed on the same skills.
2. MCT was a means to an end. The test was the impetus for focus on the articulation between elementary and secondary education. If not every student should learn a skill, that skill should not be on the test. The enrollment of the school district is declining. That explains why the number of graduates is decreasing, not the MCT. In fact, the drop out rate is low.



DENVER, COLORADO

Frederico Pena, Attorney and  
Colorado State Legislator

## Program Description

The Denver public school system has had an MCT requirement for a high school diploma for about 20 years. There is a state law allowing districts to have some form of proficiency testing if they choose, but it is not mandatory. The Denver Proficiency and Review Tests are administered twice yearly to students beginning in grade 9. Those who do not pass with initial testing may re-take the test in grades 10, 11, and 12 as necessary. The tests cover minimum competencies in the basic skill areas of reading, language, spelling and mathematics.

The Denver school district is about 50% Hispanic with a large number of predominately minority schools.

FREDERICO PENA  
State Legislator

Representative Pena believes that the number one factor to improve schools is parent involvement, not MCT. Parents need to know their rights and responsibilities and be more involved in policy making and review. Pena testified that the appropriateness of MCT depends on the purposes for which it is used:

1. It can be appropriately used to identify problems and intervene instructionally. Such an intervention program should begin in grade 1.
2. MCT should not be used to deny diplomas.
3. MCT should not be used as the core of a school's educational program.

When MCT is used for diploma sanction, there will be negative effects. Pena described some of the negative effects he has evidenced in Denver.

## Effects on Students

1. There is a high drop out rate in Denver among Hispanic students, which Pena attributes to MCT.
2. The rates for passing the MCT are high (90% to 100%). What this says to students is that they are good and there is no need for them to be tested, or the test is too easy and doesn't mean anything. In either case, the effect on students is not positive.
3. If standards are set, students will strive to achieve them. The point is that on MCT students know that they must do "X" to achieve so that they do not worry about anything else.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

Public education is not responding to the public's needs by producing students with skills who can compete, in spite of MCT.

#### Cross Examination

1. Parents Pena works with at Colorado State have rejected the MCT.
2. It would be possible for Pena to support MCT if it were administered K through 12 and there was parent involvement in the MCT process.

#### Redirect Examination

Decisions about individual students should not be made on the basis of a test.

DETROIT MICHIGAN

Arthur Jefferson, Superintendent

Stuart Rankin, Assistant Superintendent  
Research, Evaluation and Planning

Clara Rutherford, School Board Member

Zodie Johnson, Region V Superintendent

Susan Dyer, Test Coordinator  
Mumford High School

Linda Spight, Test Coordinator  
Henry Ford High School

## Detroit Public Schools

The Detroit Public School system is the sixth largest in the U.S. It serves over 220,000 students, 86% blacks, about 2% Hispanic and 12% white.

There is no state mandated MCT program in Michigan. The Detroit program was instituted at local initiative. Detroit Public Schools High School Proficiency Program is primarily designed to examine the curriculum and instructional program in order to define more sharply what students are expected to learn, particularly in the fundamental skill areas of reading, mathematics, and writing skills. Students are tested for diagnostic purposes. In mathematics and reading the tests are multiple choice tests, but the writing portion requires students to produce a writing sample. The writing section of the test must be hand-scored. Tenth graders can take the exam. If they pass, they do not take it again. If they do not pass, educators in the school system use the information to remediate students according to their individual needs. Students who pass all sections of the Proficiency Test in grade 10, 11, or 12 receive an endorsed diploma. Students who do not pass all three sections of the proficiency exam get regular diplomas. The cut off score for an endorsed diploma is 65% to 70% depending on the test.

The first Proficiency Test was given in 1980 as a logical extension of reading and mathematics programs that were instituted in Kindergarten through grade 8 between 1975 - 1977. The community, educators, and consultants participated in the selection of the competencies to be tested at the high school level. The test was developed with external assistance under the control of Detroit Public Schools. Specific steps were taken to ensure that test content is linked to the curriculum and instruction.

ARTHUR JEFFERSON, General Superintendent  
Detroit

## Effects on Students

1. MCT clarifies the expectations of students.
2. Students get their diplomas at the end of 12th grade even if they fail the MCT, but those who pass get an "endorsed diploma."
3. Evidence from other achievement tests shows that students are achieving better than before the MCT. It is too early to have hard data on the improvement in the basic skills levels of students, but it appears that students' skill levels are improving.

4. Eighty-six percent of the students in Detroit public schools are black. So, though any competency measure has the potential for discriminating, the predominance of the black community has precluded racial discrimination in testing.
5. Black students can learn and a disservice is done if that is not assumed. To do less than expect black students to acquire basic skills sells those students short.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. MCT has led to an improved classroom instructional program.
2. Testing is used to diagnose. Instruction follows the diagnosis.
3. Teachers teach competencies and skills. They do not teach to the test.
4. In-service time is used to develop materials for use in teaching the competencies and skills.
5. MCT helps educators focus on what to teach and why to teach it.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. The public's expectations for the schools are clarified by MCT.
2. The respect of the parents and the public is enhanced by MCT.
3. MCT is one step to general improvement and accountability for schools.

#### Cross Examination

1. Enrollments are declining in Detroit, but drop out rates are still too high as well.
2. There is no hard data on the value of an endorsed diploma as opposed to an unendorsed diploma.

### Effects on Students

1. The test is difficult and students generally score better the second time they take it.
2. Students take their school work more seriously since MCT.
3. From available evidence, it is clear that learning is happening.
4. The MCT program is humane to students; to let people leave school without skills is inhumane.
5. All students are treated like they can learn and then teachers help them to succeed.
6. Students view of their "self worth" is related to their ability to perform basic skills.
7. There is a greater mastery of skills at early levels and so there is a need to up-grade the MCT for high school.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Remedial programs have been instituted since MCT and they work.
2. There has been a clarification of teaching objectives and methods.
3. MCT is really an instructional program, not just a testing program.
4. The MCT focused on instruction and brought clarity of instruction to teaching.
5. Instruction is not limited to basics.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. The advisory group (professionals and laymen) monitor MCT. They say MCT is close to its goals and seems to be on target.
2. The media was invited to take the test if they would agree to publish their test results. Only one person took the the school district up on the offer. A Radcliffe graduate took the test and said it was difficult.



## Conclusions

There is a need to continue to examine the use of the "endorsed diploma." MCT could be given at earlier grade levels.

## Cross Examination

1. There are many reasons for dropouts. The most important is the success (or lack of success) experienced in school each day in the classroom, not the test alone. Failure on the test alone does not cause a student to drop out.
2. Endorsement of the diploma is determined by a composite of information on parts of the test. When asked if the raw data are useful, Rankin said that both the composite and raw data are useful, depending on how they are used. Student and parent information is broken out by skill areas and they have three sessions with a counselor. This information is not shared with employers.

CLARA RUTHERFORD  
School Board, Detroit

## Effect on Students

1. Most students have passed the MCT in the last few years. The MCT program came about because of a discrimination law suit. The school board needed to show that its first commitment was to quality education. Offering MCT to students was a way to address the issue.
2. Students are being treated as productive citizens by the community when the community knows they have basic skills.
3. Diploma endorsement is good for the self-concept of students.

## Effects on the Public's Perception

1. The key to the Detroit MCT program is communication with the public. Since the schools are owned by the taxpayers, the community had input into the program right from the start. The community is largely black and they agreed to endorse the program. The MCT is seen by the community and the schools as a program, not just a test. The community endorsed MCT because "every mother wants for her baby the sweetest berry on the bush."

2. There was a total community input from industry, churches, and fraternities. No one wanted to miss the hearings on MCT because everyone thinks he/she can run the schools. This was their chance to be heard.
3. The press wanted to find fault with the MCT program, so they ran polls. Even the polls were positive.
4. Detroit voted more money for the MCT program when the state cut its funding.
5. The total community is involved in MCT and sees it as a chance to increase the efficiency of the schools. The business community helps by giving equipment to schools that will help train students for their businesses. Some give employees leave time to help students learn their work.

### Conclusions

1. The "sharp edges" of the MCT program need to be honed, but there is an increasingly positive attitude toward MCT by the public.
2. Detroit may become the model MCT program for others.

### Cross Examination

Thirty percent of the senior class failed the MCT. When asked how it would feel to fail by one point, Rutherford said, "this would be as hard for the student as it is for the student who has performed very well academically and misses valedictorian by .10 points."

ZODIE JOHNSON, Region V Superintendent,  
Mumford High School, Detroit

Although students' skills are measured at grade twelve, the skills that are tested begin to be taught in kindergarten.

### Effects on Students

1. MCT doesn't harm children. Minority children need to know teachers believe they can learn.
2. Students help each other to learn skills.
3. Students are going voluntarily to summer school to take remedial courses so they can get their diplomas endorsed.

4. During the bus strike there was very high attendance. Students seem to like school better since MCT.
5. Students get rewards (buttons, pins, scarves, etc.) in recognition for doing well academically. They seek recognition and learn more in the process.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. With MCT teachers' expectations are clear.
2. "If we (the educators) teach, the minority students will learn. If we look for why they can't learn, then we don't focus on learning and teaching."
3. Attitudes of teachers are most important. They evaluate the MCT program as excellent now, but at first they had to be persuaded. Their attitudes changed as they realized the focus was on helping and teaching students.
4. Teachers volunteer to go to workshops to be able to help students better.
5. The MCT has built teachers' confidence that they can teach. Success breeds success.
6. The curriculum focuses on building the highest possible level of competency, not just on minimal competency. Johnson feels strongly that black women have a special need for such skills since they are bearing a triple burden of being black, female and poor.
7. Objectives for the curriculum have been focused because of MCT.
8. Motivation of students is a concern of teachers. One technique they used was to publish a book of student writings. They also have had a fine arts festival, cross age tutoring programs, science fairs, and awards programs. All these things together build basic competencies.

#### Cross Examination

When a student fails an exam, there is a feeling of failure on the part of many. That is why in Detroit they try to remediate before a student takes the MCT. If a student fails the MCT, they get a list of things they need to work on. If they passed an area on the first testing they do not have to be tested in that area again.

SUSAN DYER, Proficiency Test Coordinator  
Mumford High School, Detroit

Ms Dyer is responsible for disseminating information on the Detroit minimum competency test to parents, students and teachers. Test scheduling and the dissemination of test results are included in her responsibilities.

#### Effects on Students

1. Students get remedial help if they have difficulty on the minimum competency test.
2. All students are anxious to see test scores. Those who passed are just as interested as those who did not.
3. Two hundred and fifty students enrolled in a summer program to help them pass the minimum competency test. During the program there was no fooling around in the halls or other timewasting activity. The retention rate was high. Students take the minimum competency test seriously.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Minimum competency tests tell specifically what is expected and why.
2. Minimum competency testing identifies how to teach the content. Materials are available. The teacher doesn't have to stop and figure out what and how to teach.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Parents are involved before the minimum competency test because they get information on the testing program.
2. Results of the test are shared with parents.
3. Parents have become more involved with the schools since the start of the minimum competency testing program and they feel a sense of pride when their child succeeds on the test.
4. Minority parents are pleased with the minimum competency testing program because they thought it was bad to send their children out after finishing school without the skills they needed for employment.

#### Cross Examination

1. The minimum competency testing program would stand on its own even if there were no "endorsed diploma" for those who pass it. The key desire of students is to do well.

2. A plan that would allow students to take the minimum competency test only if they were seeking endorsement of their diplomas (voluntary endorsement) would take something away from Detroit's minimum competency testing program.

LINDA SPIGHT, Proficiency Test Coordinator  
Henry Ford High School, Detroit

#### Effects on Students

1. The basic skills of students have improved since the start of MCT and now students are ready to master higher skills.
2. MCT has helped minority students. The harm to minority students would be to give them a useless diploma.
3. Minority students rate the MCT program positively. In a summer program for those who failed part of the MCT, a writing class assignment resulted in 90% of the students in the class saying that there should be MCT.
4. Minority students engage in peer tutoring to help each other to prepare for the MCT.
5. Seventy students who graduated in June are in summer school programs so they can get endorsed diplomas, even though they have already been accepted to college.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Since MCT, the public believes that schools and students are serious about education.
2. Parents call the schools more often and are more involved.

#### Conclusions

1. The overall impact of MCT is positive, but it has only been around for 2 years at the high school level.
2. So far, the feedback on MCT is positive from all sources, and evaluation of the program to date is good. Spight recommends expansion of MCT.

FLORIDA

Ralph Turlington, Commissioner of Education

John Myrick, President, Florida Teachers Association

Claire Sullivan, Former Assistant Superintendent  
Pinellas County, Florida, President Florida  
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

## Description of Program

In 1976 the Florida Legislature enacted the Educational Accountability Act requiring the establishment of "minimum performance standards" in reading, writing and mathematics and the testing of all students in grades 3, 5, 8 and 11 on these standards. The Act further required that local boards establish standards for graduation that include the state standards. These local graduation requirements were to affect the graduation class of 1979 and all subsequent classes.

In 1978, the Legislature passed additional legislation. Beginning with the class of 1979, all students must pass a state developed and administered "functional literacy" test in order to receive a diploma. This requirement was in addition to state and local basic skills requirements. Those not meeting state requirements were to receive only a certification of completion. Remediation is provided for students who do not pass either the functional literacy tests or basic skills tests administered by the state.

The diploma sanction has been postponed until 1983 as the result of a court ruling in the case of Debra P. vs. Turlington. However, components of the program are still in place, including remedial programs and local graduation requirements. In 1983, barring further court action, students will have to pass the functional literacy test with a score of 70% to receive a high school diploma.

RALPH TURLINGTON, Commissioner of Education  
State Department of Education

Mr. Turlington's testimony is based on his experiences as chief administrator of the Florida MCT program.

## Effects on Students

1. Scores show positive results -- more application and use of basic skills.
2. Test scores reflect a real increase in learning.
3. The skills of students are improved in both reading and math.
4. Students have been supportive of the MCT program.
5. Students want their diplomas to mean something. They want standards.
6. Minority students prior to MCT expected little of themselves and the schools expected little of them.



Now that MCT exists, the expectations of both the schools and the minority students are clearer.

7. The improvement in instruction has helped minorities. MCT identifies those students who need help -- they get it, and the system is accountable.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Since MCT, the curriculum has been oriented to improving instruction and resources.
2. The curricular goals now have to be of Florida State quality.
3. Teachers teach what they test in reading and math.
4. Teachers used to think they were not permitted to retain a student without the permission of a parent. Now teachers can keep a student back based on their skills and performance.
5. MCT makes it possible for teachers to resist the pressure for social promotion.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Minimum competency testing came about because of a public mandate for accountability of schools and educators. Public sentiment was that many children did not learn what the schools were teaching.
2. There has been a renaissance of education in Florida. The response of the public is positive and supportive. Each year the legislature has given more funds to compensatory education.

#### Cross Examination

Validity of functional literacy tests has been studied, but it is difficult to prove in any absolute way whether a person is functionally literate.

JOHN MYRICK, Counselor  
Winter Haven High School Teachers Association

The Florida Teachers Association, an organization of 34,000 members, opposes the state's minimum competency testing program. The members do not believe a multiple choice test is adequate as the sole criterion for promotion. In Florida the passing or failing of the MCT is the deciding criterion. A student can pass everything else, but if he doesn't pass the MCT, he isn't promoted.

## Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Teachers teach to the test.
2. The minimum standard set by the MCT becomes the maximum standard strived for in the classroom.
3. The results of MCT may be used against teachers.
4. MCT labels some students as failures, as people not good enough to make it in life.
5. Teachers do not have any data that shows MCT has promoted educational excellence.

CLAIRE SULLIVAN, Educational Consultant  
Former Assistant Superintendent,  
Pinellas County; President, Florida  
Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development

Pinellas County has a total student population of 96,000. There are 13 high schools varying in size that serve 32,000 students.

As assistant superintendent, Claire Sullivan was directly responsible for program development and implementation in the county. Responsibilities included implementation of the remediation program and the preparation and conduct of workshops for the Florida Competency Program in Pinellas County Schools.

Ms. Sullivan is concerned that some significant questions regarding social, political and economic issues were not asked or answered before minimum competency testing was implemented. These issues are the focus of her dissertation. The purpose of her study is to raise issues for decision makers, especially questions concerning the appropriateness of quantitative versus qualitative measures for decision making. It is her position that a production test would be a much better measure than a multiple choice test. Much of the testimony presented was based on her doctoral study.

## Effects on Students

1. MCT has resulted in some children being taken out of vocational education and being put into remedial classes so that they will be able to pass the test.
2. The atmosphere in schools changed with the start of MCT. This is especially noticeable in class size. In social studies classes, there are fewer students while in remedial reading and math, there are more students and more sections than ever before.

3. Capable students brag that they passed; this is the first step in saying that "I made it." What is lost is that this is a minimum standard. It becomes the goal and no higher goals are set.
4. The impact on the borderline student may be to encourage school dropout. Test failers who should be test retakers don't retake the tests because they are no longer in school. However, this assertion cannot be sustained absolutely on the basis of available data.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The issue raised is "are basic skills tied to effective functioning." On the assumption that this is true, drastic changes have been made in students' programs to prepare the student for the test.
2. Certain programs, like literature, are being cut back because of the focus on basics. Without higher skills, students will still do poorly on SATs. Students should be learning to read for both process and content, not just one or the other.
3. MCT is causing a reduction in the number of valid electives available to students.

#### Cross Examination

Questions were raised as to the validity of data on dropouts since Florida does not have procedures to gather data on who drops out or why.

ILLINOIS

Joseph Cronin, Former Chief State School Officer

Melvin Hall, Assistant Professor  
Sangamon University, Springfield

Sharon Schneider, Teacher  
Richwoods High School, Peoria

Patricia Shea, Parent  
Peoria

### Description of Program

There is no state mandated requirement for MCT in Illinois. The State Board of Illinois under direction of the State Legislature is to provide aid to local school districts who opt to institute local MCT programs. It is generally recognized that the State Board's support for the idea of MCT has not been strong.

JOSEPH CRONIN, President, Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corporation  
(Former Chief State School Officer of Illinois)

As the chief state school officer of Illinois, Joseph Cronin was not in favor of state mandated minimum competency testing programs. It is his view that standards for promotion should be set by teachers at the local level and then reviewed by the local school board. Rather than minimum competency testing there is a need to support better teaching and research.

### Effects on Students

Of primary concern is the equitable treatment of special students.

P.L. 94-142 (the law mandating educational access to the handicapped) mandates that minimum competency testing would have to be provided to the individual handicapped student, even if the student was unable to participate in group testing. Some schools have already given MCT to handicapped students as well as others; other schools have opted to rethink the appropriateness of MCT. Peoria, Illinois, set a common standard for passing all students. That issue is now in court.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. "Minimum competency testing has now become minimum confidence testing," since if all can pass the test, the public will have confidence in public education. This assertion is wrong.
2. The value of the diploma is over-emphasized; in truth, there is a myth that the diploma is the demonstration of educational quality. No one ever asks for a diploma; rather potential employers almost always request the transcript, which gives more information.

### Cross Examination

Local minimum competency testing is all right if a school wants it, but there must be assurance that all - including the

handicapped -- can be assured equity. Tests have a role in evaluation and diagnosis, but a single statewide test will not benefit the schools or the students.

MELVIN HALL, Assistant Professor  
Sangamon University, Springfield

Dr. Hall was commissioned by the State Board of Education to study local assessment programs in Illinois. The study took a case study approach based on site visits and personal interviews. Dr. Hall's testimony was based on findings from that research.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Uses of MCT varied between districts, as did effects.
  - a. Some used MCT basically as a diagnostic tool, but in interviews teachers said tests were too limited in the numbers of items to directly prescribe instruction.
  - b. Some used MCT to decide promotion and/or retention. The basic finding was that MCT doesn't add to student evaluation. It isn't needed.
  - c. Some linked MCT to remedial work in one district. Teachers were hesitant to use the test to decide which students would be in remedial courses because PLATO computerized programs were used in some places for remedial work. No evaluation of effectiveness was employed because the equipment was too new, but there was evidence as to how often the PLATO system was used.
2. The methodology used to construct and evaluate tests varied widely. Technical quality was sometimes questionable.
3. Though the study was not charged to evaluate the cost-effectiveness, the researchers suspect that it is not cost effective.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

Although schools reported that the community-at-large, businesses and employers demanded MCT, there are not firm indicators of how strongly they wanted it, because there is a lack of documentation. There is evidence of a racial motivation for using MCT. It was seen by administrators as a way of keeping up school quality in the eyes of the public when a large number of blacks came into the system.

## Cross Examination

Case study research is vulnerable as is any method of subjective judgments, though the study is based on direct quotations that are verified. The case study method is subject to one set of biases. Other research methods are subject to other biases.

## Peoria, Illinois

In 1976 a decision was made in Peoria to put a program into effect to assure the public that the schools were "doing something." Approximately 1200 people were involved in rating skills they thought were important. In 1977 a test was developed by staff members with community input and was implemented in 1978 in a pilot program.

Students take the minimum competency test for the first time in the 11th grade. After taking the test a student is given an option of taking refresher courses that are offered. Since the minimum competency test examines reading, language arts and math skills, remediation is focused in these areas. During the senior year if a student has not succeeded in passing all of the three tests, the student is required to go into the refresher program in the particular area where weakness was shown.

SHARON SCHNEIDER, Teacher  
Richwoods High School

Richwoods High School has approximately 1700 students, 15% minority. It serves every area of the community because there is a busing program. Thus all socio-economic levels are involved in the schools. Sharon Schneider is a teacher at Richwoods High School in Peoria.

## Effects on Students

1. On first administration of the MCT in Peoria, many students got low scores (24% passed, but after remediation, 84% passed).
2. Although students are excellent; there has been an increase in confidence and self-esteem among students.
3. MCT should not be tied to the awarding of a diploma for handicapped students, though at this time it is.

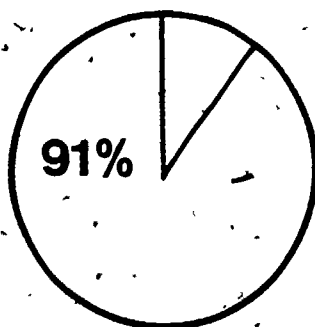
## Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The curriculum focuses on the teaching of twenty-five basic skills in three areas (reading, language arts and math) and many other things that are beyond the test.

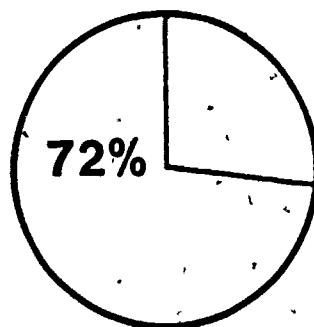


**PER CENT PASSING PEORIA MCT  
CLASS OF 1980**

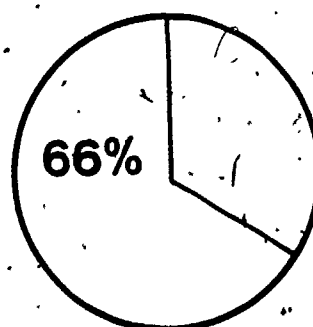
**FIRST ADMINISTRATION**



**READING**



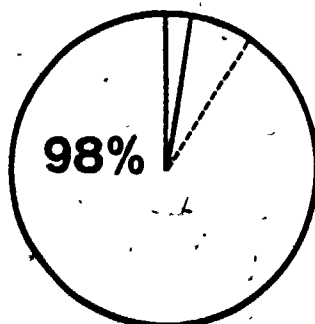
**LANGUAGE  
ARTS**



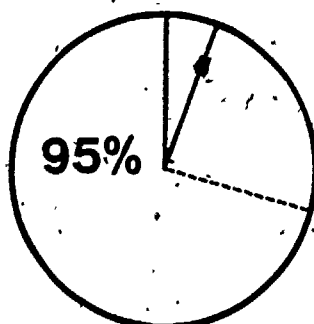
**MATH**

**PER CENT PASSING PEORIA MCT  
CLASS OF 1980**

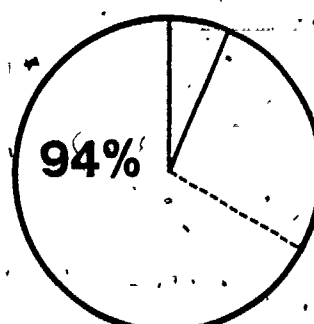
**FIFTH ADMINISTRATION**



**READING**



**LANGUAGE  
ARTS**



**MATH**

2. At first teachers feared the MCT, but now are enthusiastic.
3. Teachers volunteer to help students who have difficulty with the MCT skills.
4. The curriculum doesn't allow time to teach to the test. The student knows what areas are covered on the test, but it is the student's responsibility to learn the skills.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. MCT was introduced in response to public pressure.
2. MCT guarantees employers and parents that the student will have basic skills.
3. With MCT the diploma says something.

#### Cross Examination

Though the test has been valuable, it would be inappropriate to say that it definitely separates capable students from incapable students.

PATRICIA SHEA, Parent  
Peoria, Illinois

Patricia Shea is the mother of a son with a learning disability. Mrs. Shea testified that her son tried hard in school, got A's and B's in special education classes but "takes longer to learn things." He finished his special education Individual Educational Program. He took and failed the MCT five times. He tried hard on the test, but after five failures his mother said not to take it again. The teachers tried to help and he spent his senior year studying for the MCT. Because he failed, he did not receive a high school diploma. After he left school, he joined the National Guard and took their tests. Based on those test results, he is now able to go to any Illinois College. He owns his own business and is successful in business and life.

#### Effects on Students

1. The student was very disappointed and frustrated when he kept failing the test, even though he was trying his best.
2. The MCT didn't measure his ability to succeed in life, since he is succeeding in business and life, without passing the MCT.

### Cross Examination

The pro team opted not to cross examine the witness, conceding that differential standards for diploma award should be established for handicapped students.

IOWA

Dr. Robert Benton, Superintendent of:  
Public Instruction, Iowa Department  
of Public Instruction

ROBERT BENTON

State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Iowa does not have a state minimum competency testing program. Dr. Benton testified about the decision not to adopt MCT.

There is reason for concern about the level of student achievement. However, in Iowa achievement tests are already used on a voluntary basis in 90% of the schools. There are critical issues related to the assessment of student achievement:

- o breadth of the curriculum.
- o current status of student achievement
- o control of education (state vs. local)
- o source of educational standards
- o responsibility for community progress.

After examining all of these issues, Iowa opted not to establish a minimum competency test.

#### Effects on Students

Minimum competency testing exists. Minimum achievement becomes maximum required achievement. Minimum competency tests do not provide more information than already existing data on the achievement of students. The existing information is adequate for making decisions on student needs.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

Minimum competency testing used for promotion decisions degrades the professionalism of teachers and fosters teachers' focus on the test as a classroom activity.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

The focus should be on helping local schools improve. The legislative code in Iowa says that decisions on individuals in the schools belong at the local level.

#### Conclusions

There are better ways to improve education than to use minimum competency testing.

#### Cross Examination

When asked if he opposed testing, Benton said no, he was opposed to minimum competency testing, not all testing. Locally initiated and administered minimum competency testing is acceptable, but not minimum competency tests on a broader scale.

### Redirect Examination

Iowa achievement tests (which are the tests used in most schools in the state) are diagnostic but are used for determining student promotion. One or two districts use minimum competency tests to determine promotion in a narrow range. The public is not asking for minimum competency tests.

MASSACHUSETTS

PENNSYLVANIA

Richard Wallace, Former Superintendent  
of the Fitchburg Massachusetts, Schools; Current  
Superintendent of Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, Schools



### Program Description

A form of minimum competency testing was instituted in 1978 by the Massachusetts State Board of Education as part of the Basic Skills Improvement Program. However, passing a minimum competency test is not a graduation or diploma requirement. The basic thrust of the program is diagnosis and follow-up.

RICHARD WALLACE, Superintendent of Schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
former Superintendent, Fitchburg, Massachusetts

Fitchburg, Massachusetts, is a city of approximately 40,000 people. It is a declining industrial city where 50% of the population has less than a high school diploma. The poverty level in Fitchburg is high, indicated by the large percentage -- 50% of youngsters -- who are entitled to free school lunches.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is a large industrial city with a population of approximately 400,000. There are 47,000 students in the schools with a black student population near 51%. The number of students in the free lunch program is 70%. In Pittsburgh there was a board of education decision that mandated that a basic skills assessment test would be administered in grade 11. If a youngster fails to pass that test, he/she is routed into a special course in the senior year. If a student passes that course and meets all other criteria, he/she can graduate. Retaking the test is not necessary. Wallace is not a proponent of MCT as a requirement for graduation. He prefers instead an achievement monitoring system. The basic tenets of the program he implemented in both districts were described.

### Achievement Monitoring System

Agreement is reached on what is expected of students in the basic skills areas at each grade level by asking teachers to identify the twenty most important learning outcomes in math, reading, and writing for their grade levels.

Fifty to sixty percent of a teacher's instructional time is centered on the key learning outcomes they have identified.

Tests are given to students every sixth week regardless of whether the students have had instruction in those objectives or not. The tests are redeveloped by the teachers. There is one item per objective.

Teachers rely on their own judgment in making instructional decisions about youngsters. A teacher will ignore the achievement monitoring system result if it does not confirm his/her judgment.

### Effects on Students

1. Students are assessed on the total context of their educational performance rather than on the limited information provided by a minimum competency test.
2. Students receive continuous feedback on progress.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

Teachers must rely on their own judgments. Tests are too imperfect a measure of a student's performance to be trusted alone.

### Cross Examination

1. Minimum competency testing is a single instrument. It would be better to have a total system with testing as one part.
2. Parents and the public may want minimum competency testing, but since other alternatives exist, it is inappropriate for them to force minimum competency testing on the school system.

## **MONITORING ACHIEVEMENT IN PITTSBURGH (MAP)**

**SKILL EXPECTATIONS  
FOCUSED INSTRUCTION  
FOCUSED MONITORING  
INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS  
STAFF DEVELOPMENT.**

NEW JERSEY

William Shine, Superintendent  
Cherry Hill School District

Esther Lee, Title I Teacher  
Washington Township Public Schools

Henry Stevens, Teacher  
Camden Public Schools

### Program Description

The New Jersey Minimum Basic Skills Program features tests in the third, sixth, ninth and eleventh grades. In 1985 these tests will be used for certification for high school graduation. Right now they are being used to identify students for remediation and to classify school districts or schools in the state as approved or unapproved.

WILLIAM SHINE, Superintendent  
Cherry Hill School District

Cherry Hill School District is a middle to upper middle class school district. There are 14,000 students in kindergarten through grade 12, two high schools, three junior highs and fifteen elementary schools.

### Effects on Students

1. When the MCT is used for promotion decision making, it strikes at the heart of public education. "Kids who have cognitive deficits at the 12th grade level are called upon to validate a school. This is cruel and is politically motivated. This is a political response to an educational problem."
2. Students are labeled and divided by the MCT. Districts are already segregated to some extent, but this will get worse with the MCT.
3. Teachers will force students to take remedial courses and deny them participation in broader and higher level educational activities.
4. The local level educator is vying with the State Department of Education over control of the curriculum. The issue isn't who is more competent, but rather who can be more responsive to local educational needs.
5. The MCT funds take away from other kinds of instructions. It costs \$13 to \$24 per student per day to give the MCT. The MCT takes two days, plus other days used to prepare the students for the test. All but one student passed the test. This is not cost effective, and it wastes time that could be spent on other instructional tasks.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. MCT is a response to public criticism that the press can understand.

2. Easy MCTs make schools look silly and further erode their credibility.

#### Cross Examination

1. A diploma being attached to a single test is pernicious.
2. The costs of miseducation of students are high.
3. It is possible to create tests that are credible.
4. The press wants harder tests and standards, but education must work with the media to explain the complexities of testing. There are no easy answers.

ESTHER LEE, Title I Teacher  
Washington Township Public Schools

Washington Township is a rural, growing suburban district. There are 7,000 students. It is located 20 miles east of Philadelphia.

#### Effects on Students

1. Students who fail the MCT are "pulled out of class" and given remediation based on the test. They are segregated by ability in reading classes. There is a stigma attached to that segregation.
2. Students get a false perception of skills involved in reading because they only deal with subsets of skills now.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Remediation for students formerly occurred in the classroom with all the other children. Now students who don't do well are taken away for remedial work.
2. Formerly in rapid reading courses in the high school, there was a mix of all students. Now students are segregated by ability.
3. Decisions about students are based on the MCT. There is no consultation with teachers about what is best for a student.
4. The old idea was to build programs to meet individual needs. Now the idea seems to be to make students and schools look better to the public, so teachers teach to the test. What they are teaching are isolated fragments of educational material.

5. A teacher knows who to help. A teacher doesn't need a test to tell what to teach or who needs help.
6. The teacher is the best decider of who should be promoted and who should not.
7. The state says that the schools should use multiple factors to decide who will be promoted, but it is easier to use the test scores and that's how it's done.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

Parents are upset and have complained to the school board because their children are missing out on science and social studies, and instead are having drilling exercises and homework.

#### Cross Examination

1. What students need most is confidence in themselves.
2. The public doubted the old ways. So the state mandated MCT. The value of MCT is blown all out of proportion. Schools are pretty good. Local control and standards are needed. There is not need for a local MCT. There are enough measures of achievement being used already.
3. Paper and pencil tests may be valid, but a student should always have a chance to explain their responses.

HENRY STEVENS, Teacher  
Camden Public Schools

Camden is a predominantly black community, twenty to thirty percent Hispanic and about five to ten percent white.

Stevens' position is that there is no doubt that students need to acquire skills in school. Promotion without skills is not good. But MCT has a negative effect in both students and teachers and doesn't help students acquire skills.

The people best qualified to decide on student needs are the teachers. When they make decisions about students, teachers may use test information as one piece of the many things that go into the decision. No student identified on the MCT as needing help had not already been identified by their teachers as needing assistance.

#### Effects on Students

1. Students spend their time in school learning to take the MCT. There is doubt that they really learn more skills.

2. Peer pressure labels students. It is tough for a student who is taken out of class for remedial work when that student returns to class. Ninth graders this year will have to pass the MCT to get their diploma and go on to high school.
3. There are more drop outs in the culturally and educationally deprived student groups.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Instruction becomes geared to the narrow focus of the test. Failure on the test means remedial work and that means test preparation.
2. Teaching becomes coaching for the test.

#### Cross Examination

The public has a right to know about its schools. It is possible to make a good school system with proper leadership and resources.

#### Redirect Examination

It is possible to let the public be informed without tying promotion to the student's score on an MCT.



NEW YORK

M.D. Taracido, Attorney  
Puerto Rican Legal Defense Fund

Nathan Quinones, Executive Director  
Division of High Schools

Deborah Meiers, Principal  
Central Park East Elementary School

Lawrence McNally, Director of Pupil Services  
North Port - East Port School District

Alan Levinson, Parent  
Eastport

### Program Description

In August 1978, the New York State Basic Competency regulation was issued. It had five dimensions:

1. June, 1979, high school graduates had to pass a reading and math basic competency test.
2. June, 1980, high school graduates had to pass a reading, writing and math basic competency test.
3. June, 1981, high school graduates had to pass a more stringent examination called the Regent's Competency Test in reading, writing and mathematics.
4. As of June, 1981, there was also to be a Preliminary Competency Test which is a variation of the Regent's Competency Test, but only deals with reading and writing. This was introduced to serve as an "early identifier" and will result in remediation for those who need it.
5. Performance in the pupil evaluation program, which is a testing process in the fourth and seventh grades, serves as the basis for deciding who will take the Preliminary Competency Test.

The tests in the pupil evaluation program are available only in English, as were the basic competency tests used for 1979 and 1980 graduates, the Regent's Competency Test, and the Preliminary Competency Test.

M.D. TARACIDO, Attorney  
Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund

Taracido has challenged the New York City minimum competency test. She testified that the test is ineptly constructed, there was inadequate phase-in time and preparation, and there are unanswered questions regarding validation of the MCT.

### Effects on Students

1. In New York City if a child did not pass MCT, there was no remediation available.
2. The MCT was written only in English and therefore did not apply to bilingual students.
3. There was a lack of notice to students that they would have to pass the test in order to graduate from high school.

4. If bilingual children are to be tested for minimum competency, they should be tested on English as a second language, not on the same basis as native English speakers.
5. Students are unfairly required to carry the burden of the schools' performance. Education is a two-way street. Schools are responsible for teaching and students are responsible for learning. When it comes to assessing the effectiveness of education, the child bears the burden because the child's test score is purported to demonstrate the quality of the school. The student is victimized by the MCT.

#### Cross Examination

MCT for Spanish language students would be acceptable if MCT were deemed good. One test as the basis for evaluating a student is wrong. MCT should be used for identification of less effective schools to encourage them to remedy their problems. If the onus is on the student in taking the test, it must also be on the school.

NATHAN QUINONES, Executive Director  
Division of High Schools, New York City Schools

Seven hundred and sixteen students (1.7 percent) of New York City students didn't receive diplomas because they failed the MCT. Students in New York City high schools came from forty different language backgrounds. New York City schools asked for an MCT in each of those languages. Initially, the State Education Department said all students had to pass one examination. Now the state allows alternate testing, but they have not provided an examination for all the language groups. At this time MCT ranges from "the standard test in English and translations of that exam into Spanish and French to native language essays judged by the high school principal."

#### Effects on Students

1. MCT assessment is a very inequitable system. Even the translated tests are not fair because of syntax, cultural and experiential differences.
2. The MCT imposes a major sanction during the terminal grades without sufficient intervention in earlier grades.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Curriculum that is inconsistent with the standards set by the Regents creates serious concerns for the Chancellor, the board of education and teachers.

2. Educators know that they will never be perfect and totally successful, so they can stand criticism and are not afraid of accountability.

### Cross Examination

Failure of the student on the MCT is a comment on the curriculum and instruction, not on the student. Yet the Regents puts the responsibility on the student. That is unfair. It would be fair if there were more tests, and earlier attempts at remediation.

DEBORAH MEIERS, Principal  
Central Park East Elementary School

Central Park East School is located in East Harlem. Seventy-five to eighty percent of the children are on the free lunch program. Fifty percent of the children are black, twenty-five percent Hispanic and about twenty-five percent white. About fifteen percent of the children qualify for special education services for learning handicaps. The school has been cited for its exemplary program.

Deborah Meiers is opposed to MCT. She summarized the reasons for her opposition. The fact that students do well on minimum competency tests is not an indicator of the school's success. Minimum competency tests are aimed at minimal competency levels, so 97% pass. If children can read but can't apply what they read to judge, to analyze and to apply experience, then is there a value to knowing they can read? I.Q. and judgment are the same. Testing as structured information and observation on a sample basis could be useful, but not for all children and not for individual decision making. Children need to develop ways to see and assess their own work. Teachers need to be able to assess children on the basis of a long range view of their school work (anecdotal and sample files). Students know whether they can read before they take a test. The ability of a student to read isn't the same as a student's test score.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Test results are often the least useful pieces of information and may be enormously misleading.
2. Minimum competency testing leads to an acceleration of coaching, not teaching.
3. Minimum competency testing has resulted in leaving the content of teaching reading out and replacing it with teaching test-taking tricks.

Ms. Meiers explained factors that in her view contribute to a good school program.

1. It is important that parents, staff and students think their school is special.
2. Parents play a role in a good elementary education program and have a choice about their child's education that can't be assumed by a test.
3. Parents make demands for test results because they are anxious and want to be able to understand the facts and figures they think will help them understand their child's problems. Good educators can help parents see that observation of their children, not test scores, provides the information that they want.

LAWRENCE McNALLY, Director of Pupil Services  
Northport - Eastport School District

This school district has always awarded diplomas to handicapped students. In 1979 the State of New York instituted an MCT program. Two special education students were denied diplomas even though they had completed their Individualized Educational Programs. The district awarded the diplomas anyway, because it was felt that the MCT was an arbitrary measure for these students.

#### Effects on Students

1. For handicapped special education students the denial of the diploma on the basis of the MCT would have:
  - a. advertised their shortcomings
  - b. failed to recognize their achievements in their own IEPs
  - c. limited their access to employment.
2. From a special educator's point of view, the MCT is:
  - a. harmful to the special education student
  - b. destructive to the student's self-esteem
  - c. labels the student as incompetent
  - d. takes away the incentive to stay in school when the MCT decides whether a diploma will be awarded. The MCT increases the drop out rate for special education students before they have been fully served.

The court ruled, in favor of the students being granted their diplomas on the grounds of lack of due process and adverse impact on the economic futures of the students. The New York State policy hasn't changed, but several districts are continuing to award diplomas to special education students who have completed their IEPs. The standard for their graduation is their IEP.

#### Cross Examination

There is no disagreement from the pro team as to the appropriateness of differential standards for handicapped students. Handicapped students should not get different diplomas because that would discriminate against them.

#### Redirect Examination

The case mentioned was decided in a lower level court and is subject to appeal.

ALAN LEVINSON; Parent  
North Port-East Port Schools.

Mr. Levinson is the parent of three children, one of whom is neurologically impaired and was in special education classes all through school. This student was given the MCT and passed the reading but could not take the math test. Mr. Levinson testified that his daughter cannot successfully take paper and pencil tests. At age 22, she has two jobs, one in a sheltered setting, one outside of a sheltered setting, is socially active, and functions normally in the outside world.

While the Commissioner of Education for New York says his daughter has a counterfeit diploma, he and his daughter maintain that she is entitled to a diploma. She went to school for 14 years and worked twice as hard as her brother and sister. She achieved in school and is entitled to a diploma for her achievement.

NORTH CAROLINA

Michael S. Priddy, Director of  
Research, Planning and Evaluation  
Guilford County School System  
Jamestown

Gloria Ramsey, Teacher  
Jamestown High School, Jamestown

Craig McFadden, Director of  
Psychological Services and Testing  
Goldsboro City School District

Kathleen Gilbert, Teacher  
Hope Valley Elementary School, Durham

Charles Richman, Professor of Psychology  
Wake-Forest College  
Winston-Salem



## Program Description

The North Carolina competency testing program was established in 1977 by the General Assembly. As part of the program the State Board of Education was asked to adopt measures to determine the minimal literacy and ability of high school graduates to perform reasonably in life. There was a competency test commission formed of educators and testing specialists with the responsibility of advising the State Board. The competency test commission recommended tests in reading and mathematics and also made recommendations on minimum standards.

Eleventh grade students in North Carolina are required to take the minimum competency test and pass both parts prior to graduation. If they fail, they receive a certificate of attendance but no diploma.

There is also a commercially available non-referenced test mandated by the State Legislature for use in the spring of the third, sixth and ninth grades. The purpose of the legislation is to assess the education program and help teachers and local school systems identify students' needs in the basic skills.

MICHAEL PRIDDY, Director of Research  
Planning and Evaluation

Guilford County has a population of about 325,000. Two major cities are Greensboro and High Point with three school districts. The county is reasonably well off--it is ranked second in wealth in North Carolina.

The Guilford County School system has approximately 25,000 students with forty-four schools and eight high schools. It is the sixth largest system in North Carolina.

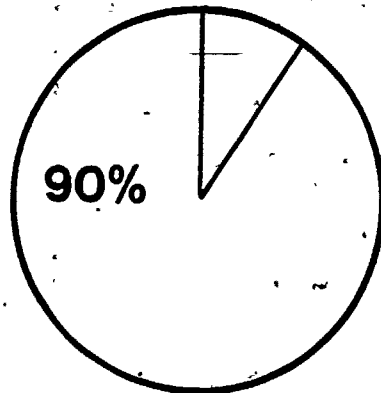
## Effects on Students

1. MCT does improve students' basic skills. There have been definite gains. On the first administration 90% passed reading, 85% passed math. Last administration 98.6% passed reading, 93.3% passed math.
2. There was fear of MCT for those students who were in remedial classes, but there was no fear of MCT on the part of good students.
3. Once the basics were acquired, interest went up in other academic areas.

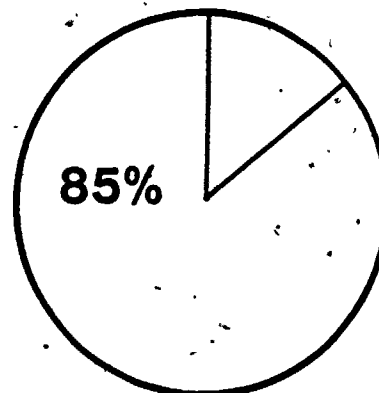
## Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. An implementation of MCT required that staff needs, materials and scheduling issues had to be successfully dealt with.

**PER CENT PASSING  
NORTH CAROLINA MCT  
CLASS OF 1980  
FIRST ADMINISTRATION · 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

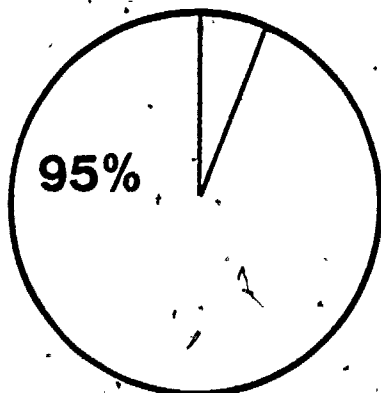


**READING**

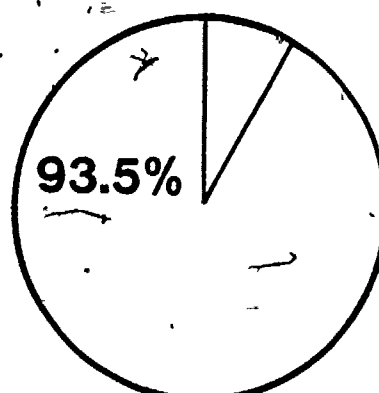


**MATH**

**PER CENT PASSING NORTH CAROLINA MCT  
IN GUILFORD COUNTY  
CLASS OF 1980  
FIRST ADMINISTRATION · 11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**



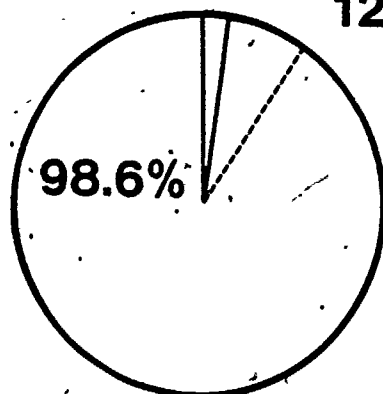
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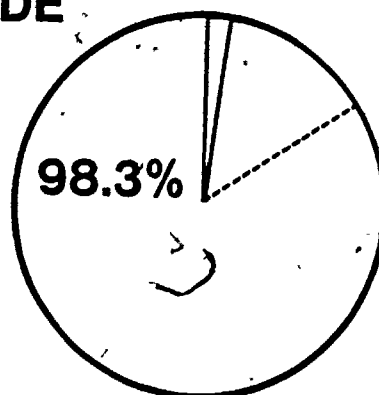
**MATH**

**PER CENT PASSING  
NORTH CAROLINA MCT**

**CLASS OF 1980  
12TH GRADE**



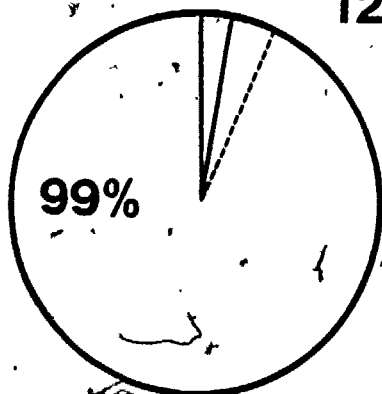
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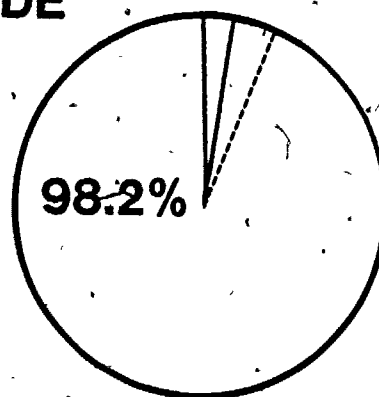
**MATH**

**PER CENT PASSING NORTH CAROLINA MCT  
IN GUILFORD COUNTY**

**CLASS OF 1980  
12TH GRADE**



**READING**



**MATH**

2. There was a need for lead time to identify teachers who would handle remediation, time for planning remedial work, hiring new staff and the like. The focus of MCT was on instructional improvement.
3. More small groups and tutorial work was done in remedial courses than was available in the regular classroom.
4. More evaluation check points were included in all courses so that students would know all along how they were doing.

#### Effects on Public's Perception

1. MCT for North Carolina was carefully selected and this is proven by the fact that there have been a very small number of court cases about MCT.
2. The State of North Carolina uses pre-competency tests, remediation (short and long term), an advisory committee for competency testing that included both professional educators and laymen, and a mass media public relations campaign to involve the public prior to instituting MCT.
3. The State Legislature has put more money into remediation because of MCT.

GLORIA RAMSEY, Teacher  
Lucy Ragsdale High School, Jamestown

Ragsdale High School is located in an upper middle class community. The school has 1,050 students -- 75% white, 25% black. Gloria Ramsey is the math remediation coordinator and a teacher for the North Carolina competency program at Ragsdale High School.

#### Effects on Students

1. The MCT is "the best thing that has ever happened to students in the school."
2. Minority students now feel a part of the school.
3. Students volunteer to help each other.
4. Academic standards have been high all along, but some students at the lower level felt left out. Now the

state MCT has mandated attention for those students and they feel more a part of the school.

5. When students fail they feel bad, but teachers give them the confidence that they can do it and help them to succeed.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Staff at all levels are pleased with the MCT. They had time to prepare for its introduction into the school system.
2. Closer relationships with administrators, regional school personnel and each other has resulted from the MCT.
3. Teachers now have ways to help students that are specific and they are pleased that they are now more accountable.
4. The curriculum is still broad. Students are learning lots more than the basics. Ragsdale High School first got access to computers for student use because of MCT. At first they could only be used by remedial students--this made the remedial students feel special and gave them an edge in the area of computer use. Only later were other students--even the gifted and talented--allowed to use them. The remedial students were the experts for the first time and the other students came to them for help.

CRAIG MCFADDEN, Director of Psychological Services and Testing  
Goldsboro City School District

Goldsboro City Schools serve a small community in eastern North Carolina of about 35,000. The city district--the school district itself--has many of the problems of larger inner-city school systems. The system has about 70% black and 30% white students.

#### Effects on Students

1. Seventh and eighth grade students were given achievement tests and those who showed they might have difficulty with MCT were given remediation.
2. In North Carolina, MCT is called Mastery of Basic Skills. Students' scores between 11th and 12th grade

improved; in 1978, 14% failed reading and 25% failed math. Among the same group of students in grade 12, 2% failed reading and 2% failed math.

3. Students placed in "success labs" because of failing MCT often experienced the first school success they had had.
4. Once students had passed the basic skills, they were better able to handle other courses.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Regular teachers are not affected at all.
2. Remedial curricula are totally from the tests. Each student has an individualized educational program.
3. The minimum standards of the MCT are not the maximum expectations for students. The Greensboro schools still have the state's original curriculum which is broader than basic skills.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

Manufacturers and employers now assume that students have skills and their attitude toward MCT is positive.

#### Cross Examination

1. The picture is not all positive for MCT. There have been problems with setting cut-off scores, administering the test and the time allotment for testing, but the benefits exceed the costs. Students get survival skills and that is what is important.
2. Students cannot receive a diploma unless they have passed the MCT. American Psychological Association standards say that more than one method should be used to make decisions on student promotion and graduation. McFadden says that the North Carolina MCT is not out of line with that APA provision because there is more than one chance for a student to take the test and there is remediation available to students who are having difficulty.
3. It is true that students who fail the MCT may be labeled because they failed, but the truth is that they were probably labeled long before the test.

KATHLEEN GILBERT, Teacher  
Hope Valley Elementary School, Durham

#### Effects on Students

1. Retention on the basis of MCT test performance is inappropriate because retesting on other instruments show different results than the MCT.
2. Scores are up but students are not better educated. They are just better "coached" for the MCT.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The test becomes a framework for the curriculum.
2. Books are selected for classroom use based on which suit the test and not the best books.
3. Research regarding student learning is ignored and subverted. MCT is the only thing that matters.
4. The focus of the curriculum is on basics and higher level skills are ignored.

#### Cross Examination

1. Decisions on promotion should be made by teachers, principals, and parents based on multiple indicators including tests.
2. The issue of primary concern is using MCT as the sole criterion for decision-making on student promotion. No law says that MCT has to be used as the sole criterion for making decisions on student promotion, but there is a tendency to use the scores that way.

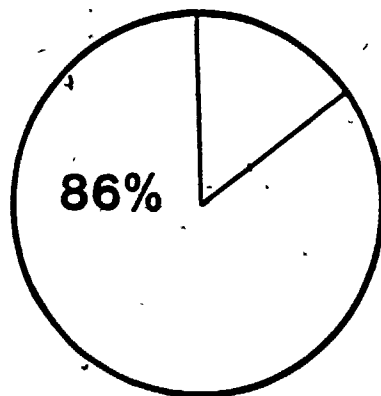
CHARLES RICHMAN, Professor of Psychology  
Wake Forest College, Winston-Salem

Richman conducted a study of the effect of the North Carolina minimum competency testing program on fifty-four high school pupils in Greensboro schools. He based his testimony on that study. The fifty-four students in the study were in two groups: high risk MCT and low risk.

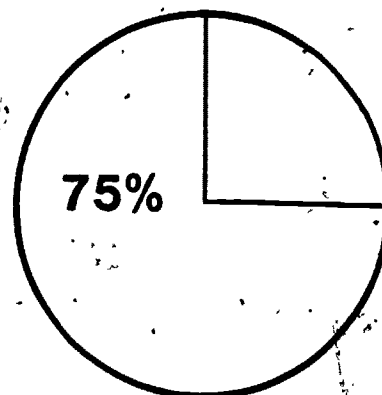


**PER CENT PASSING NORTH CAROLINA MCT  
IN GOLDSBORO CITY SCHOOLS**

**CLASS OF 1980  
11<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**



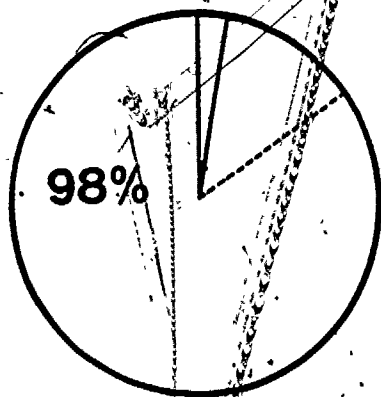
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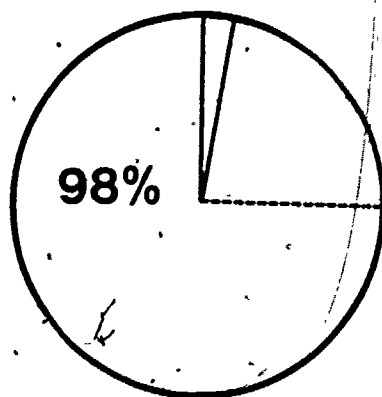
**PER CENT PASSING NORTH CAROLINA MCT  
IN GOLDSBORO CITY SCHOOLS**

**CLASS OF 1980  
12<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**



**READING**

133



**MATH**

### Effects on Students

1. There were no differences between the two groups before the competency test was given. All results emerged after the actual test.
2. High risk students who failed the MCT had an increased tendency toward alienation, anxiety, neuroticism, and schizophrenia. None of these students reached the 70% level on this instrument, which means that none of them reached the level of being really sick. High risk students who passed the MCT did not show an increase in these tendencies.
3. High risk students who passed the MCT changed in a negative direction after passing. They showed a decrease in conscientious behavior in relation to school. They seemed to be saying "I've passed the last hurdle, now I don't need to worry anymore. All I need is to stay alive for another year to graduate."
4. The finding suggests that the North Carolina MCT penalized both the passers and non-passers.

### Cross Examination

1. Tests are inappropriate for helping guide decisions and should not be used alone to make decisions about students.
2. The study was really about subjects' knowledge of the MCT score, not the effects of taking the test.
3. This is a preliminary report and that suggests that further work must be done to confirm these results.
4. Subjects took a special course about the MCT but Richman says this didn't affect the test results.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Joseph Murray, Former State Legislator  
Charleston

Paul Sandifer, Director of Research  
South Carolina Department of Education  
Columbia

Gary Leonard, Principal  
Mt. Pleasant Academy, Elementary School  
Charleston

Doris Hedgepath, Chairman of English Department  
Conway High School

Ann Long, Parent  
Batesburg

Maria Reed, Parent and Teacher's Aide  
Utopia Elementary School  
Leesville

### Program Description

The major objectives of the South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program are to provide students with appropriate help to overcome deficiencies. The program focuses on reading, writing, and mathematic skills. Students are tested with an individually administered readiness test and reference test in reading and mathematics at the end of grades 1, 2 and 3 and with a criterion referenced test in reading at the end of grades 6, 8, and 11. The 11th grade test will be administered for the first time in the spring of 1982. The program was initiated in 1979 with the first administration of a readiness test, which was to affect the graduating class of 1991 in terms of a diploma sanction. Students who do not meet standards as reflected by test scores, receive remedial instruction.

The program in South Carolina was developed by having the curriculum objectives submitted by schools; reviewed by educational committees and experts; distributed back to the schools; reviewed by the public at special meetings, the Basic Skills Advisory Committee and the State Board of Education; and finally submitted to the Legislature for approval.

JOSEPH MURRAY

Former South Carolina Legislator, Charleston

Mr. Murray, a contributing architect of the legislation, testified about the factors that led to the legislation.

In 1977 interviews conducted by Murray and others at various schools indicated problems:

1. Students could not do basic skills.
2. Social promotion was practiced.
3. Graduates of high school could not fill out job applications.
4. People had lost confidence in school systems where no one had any idea how to change the situation.

Murray stated that a primary function of the South Carolina program is to identify educational problems as early as possible.

PAUL SANDIFER, Director of the Office of Research  
State Department of Education, Columbia

#### Effects on Students

1. The readiness instrument has increased the number of students identified as needing help.
2. Minority students were identified as needing help slightly more often than other students.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program helped to:
  - a. clarify instructional intent--instruction has improved because the program has clearly defined the skills and objectives of education at different levels;
  - b. provide appropriate educational resources--by identifying weakness early in the educational process, it is possible to provide appropriate instruction early before problems multiply;
  - c. prompt requests for workshops on Basic Skills Assessment Program.

#### Effect on the Public's Perception

1. The Basic Skills Assessment Program involves the public by utilizing the Basic Skills Advisory Commission. This twenty-five member commission bridges the gap between the public and the policy makers by having as its members educators, parents, and other members of the community. They have been very supportive and their reaction has been positive.
2. The overall appraisal of public reaction is that the Basic Skills Assessment Program is a good program with a high potential to affect kids positively in South Carolina.
3. The press has been very supportive of the program.
4. Principals have voiced some resistance, not to the concept, but to some of the administrative issues surrounding the program.

## Cross Examination

When asked if the Basic Skills Assessment Program is used to determine promotion or retention, Sandifer answered no. Nor is the test the sole determiner of the need for remediation. When asked whether the scores had changed between the first and second year of testing, Dr. Sandifer replied that superintendents had reported on their impressions on this subject. Eighteen of the 19 said they believed scores had gone up 10%, but none of them gave data-based evidence. The one superintendent that did give data-based evidence showed that there were no real score changes from year one to year two.

GARY LEONARD, Principal  
Mt. Pleasant Academy, Elementary School, Charleston

Mt. Pleasant Elementary Academy is a public school with grades kindergarten through grade 5. The racial makeup is 70% white and 30% black. It is a neighborhood school in a socio-economic area that goes from public assistance housing to homes that are valued at \$200,000.

## Effects on Students

Leonard found that students who have the basics can then expand to higher level skills. The basic skills build a foundation from which students can broaden their educational experience.

## Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Initially change brought apprehension. It took a while for teachers to be convinced that the program was not an accountability measure of teachers.
2. MCT helps teachers focus on local and state expectations, not just compliance to state objectives.
3. Teacher "time on task" is more concentrated and focused.
4. Teachers teach to life, not to the test. They teach sixteen basic skills, not the test.

## Effect on the Public's Perception

1. The public is kept informed through open houses, meetings, and seeking parents' input on some test items.

2. Parents are involved as tutors to help with vocabulary.
3. Parents are given information that clarifies what they can expect from the schools, which leads to parents' understanding the school better.
4. Principals are instructional leaders of the schools and minimum competency tests help them to work with the community and the teachers.

### Cross Examination

Leonard testified that the readiness test in South Carolina is not a paper and pencil test and not group administered. He stated that a single test score is not used to decide on promotion or retention.

DORIS HEDGEPAATH, Chairperson, English Department  
Conway High School, Conway

The student population is 1,970 based on average daily attendance. Ethnic makeup of the students is 65% white and 35% black. Sixty-five percent of the student body is bused in from outside the city limits (rural). Conway has a population of 15,000. It is an agrarian community and is a very popular tourism area near Myrtle Beach.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. The teachers make better lesson plans, because they have clearer objectives.
2. There is increased efficiency in classroom teaching. Teachers tend to use less time teaching things that are their particular interests.
3. There is a clarification of target skills.
4. The kind of objectives that have been created for math and reading through the Basic Skills Assessment Program serve as models for teacher-developed social studies and science programs.
5. The curriculum has been expanded to include both basic objectives and preferred objectives that are based on much higher levels or skills. Teachers compromise neither academic freedom nor creativity in teaching within the Basic Skills Assessment Program.



6. In short, the Basic Skills Assessment Program has had a positive impact on education in South Carolina.

#### Cross Examination

A question was asked about the likelihood that the Basic Skills Assessment Program is working well at Conway because the school district began minimum competency testing in the early 1970's before the State Department of Education said to do it. Hedgepath responded, "Yes our school district did start minimum competency testing before it was mandated by the state."

ANNA LONG, Parent  
Batesburg Elementary School, Batesburg

Characteristics of the school district were not presented by the witness.

#### Effects on Students

1. Readiness test showed her son was borderline in terms of readiness. This alerted his parents and the school (administrators and teacher) about potential extra efforts needed.
2. The teacher noticed problems and recommended to the parents ways they could help their son.
3. The principal, by knowing about the child's problems, was able to advise the parents that a tutor might help.
4. Parents and teacher consulted and decided the child might be able to learn better in a remedial program. The child was eventually retained in first grade.
5. The child's progress could be gauged better because specific skills were identified through the Basic Skills Assessment Program.
6. The child was happier in school because he knew what was expected of him and could feel successful as an identified skill was acquired.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Parents feel they know what their children are getting out of school.

2. Parents feel they know how their children are progressing and understand what things a child must be able to do.
3. Parents feel that they are better able to communicate with teachers because they understand the objectives the teacher is trying to help their children achieve.

### Cross Examination

The child was not retained in first grade because of his test score. He was kept back after parents, teacher and principal consulted and decided that was best for the child. A child should not be held back without consulting the parents. The test is important because the teacher will recognize the child's problems and attempt to help the child.

MARIE REED, Parent and Teacher's Aide  
Utopia Elementary School, Leesville

The witness did not present characteristics of the school district.

### Effects on Students

1. MCT brought a big improvement in student performance.
2. Attitudes of students toward school are more positive. They are more comfortable in class.
3. Students don't see test results as pass or fail, rather as tests that identify areas in which they need help.
4. Students do not see themselves as labeled.
5. Students learn to transfer learning to other situations by:
  - a. teaching parents, brothers and sisters what they learn in school;
  - b. sharing home experiences with other students.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Before minimum competency testing, aides had no plans, guides or objectives. Now with minimum competency tests, things are much clearer. With clearly defined

skills it is possible to work step by step with individuals.

2. Teachers have equipment specifically to work with students toward achieving objectives. Compensatory educational funds are provided by the state.

#### Effects on the Public's Perception

1. Parents know what is going on at school. Children bring home work sheets and school calendars of the instructional program.
2. Parent meetings are held to explain which basic skills their children are learning.

#### Cross Examination

The teacher spends thirty to forty-five minutes in individual assessment. The Readiness Test for first grade is not a paper and pencil test, and is not group administered.

TEXAS

Hilda Mireles, Teacher  
Harlingen School District  
Santa Rosa

### Description of Program

The Texas Assessment of Basic Skills Program includes an annual assessment of student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics. It is designed to provide information which can be used in planning instruction in these curriculum areas. Students are tested in grades 3, 5, and 9. State compensatory education funds have been allowed to provide compensatory instructional services.

HILDA MIRELES, Math Teacher  
Harlingen School District, Santa Rosa

The Harlingen School District has a student population that is Mexican-American. The socio-economic level of the community is low. The community is basically Mexican American.

In addition to the state program, the Harlingen District has its own MCT program in mathematics. Students are tested in grade 6.

### Effects on Students

1. Students do better on the state basic skills test the longer they stay in the system.
2. Students' reaction to MCT is good as evidenced by:
  - a. higher self esteem,
  - b. better achievement,
  - c. greater willingness to attack higher skills.
3. Since Mireles' district is primarily Mexican-American, the students:
  - a. need to build a foundation to be able to compete with non-minority people;
  - b. they should pass the test in English because they are in the USA;
  - c. gain a more positive attitude about themselves from taking the tests.
4. Students have a clear sense of direction of their education since MCT.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Teachers get a clear direction of their responsibilities to students.
2. Teachers are supportive of the MCT.
3. MCT has resulted in the school working to lay down basic skills in the curriculum and then expanding to the teaching of higher skills.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

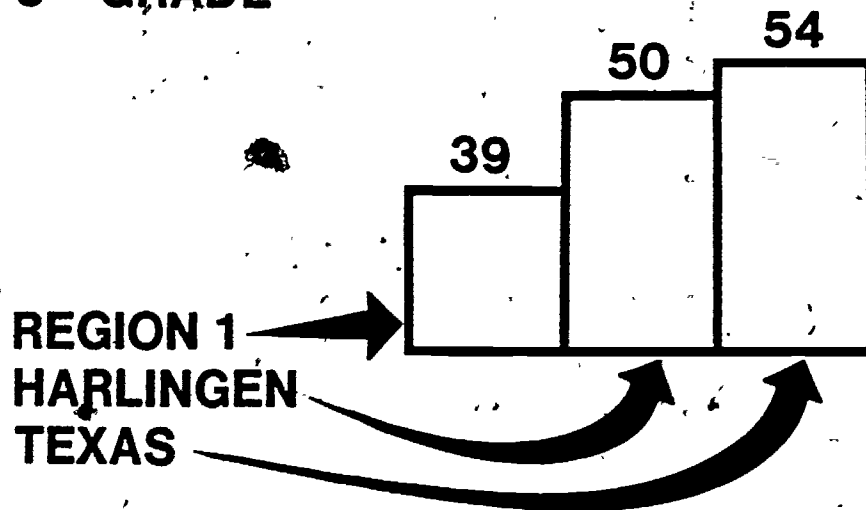
1. MCT has resulted in two conferences per year with parents to explain what is expected of a student and why.
2. The program developed at the local level is accepted better than state or federal programs.
3. The community benefits by having a better educational system.

### Cross Examination

1. Students can get diplomas now without passing. In two years they will not get a diploma unless they pass the MCT.
2. Schools have improved because MCT has given educators a clearer path to follow.

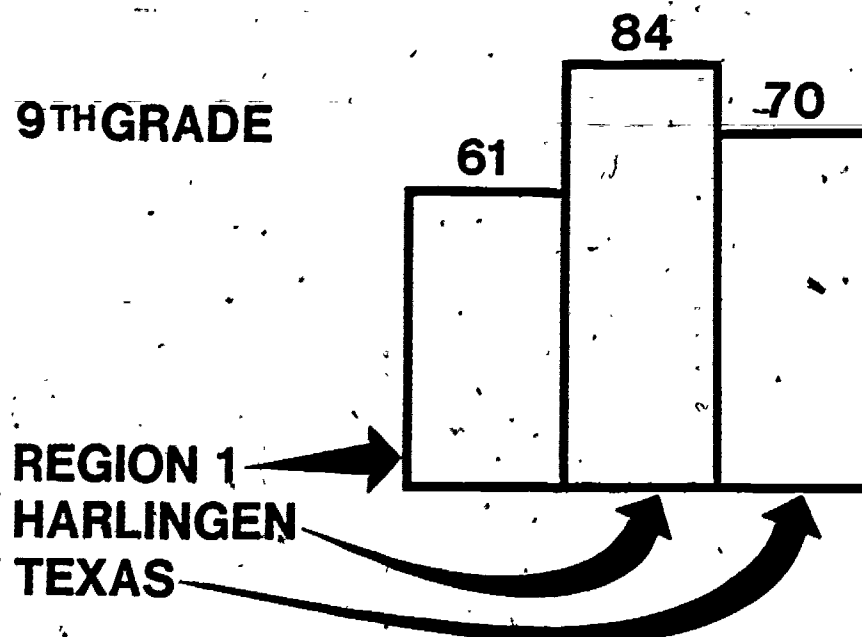
## COMPARISON OF MATH SCORES ON TABS TEST

5TH GRADE



## COMPARISON OF MATH SCORES ON TABS TEST

9TH GRADE





VIRGINIA

Gerald Bracey, Director of Research, Evaluation and Testing  
State Department of Education  
Richmond

Laurie Collier, Supervisor of Business Education  
Newport News Public Schools

Fannie King, Assistant Principal for Instruction  
Fergusson High School, Newport News

Helen Stiff, former Assistant Principal  
Prince Edward County High, Farmville

## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

In 1978 the Virginia Assembly mandated that beginning in 1981 students graduating from high school would have to demonstrate minimum competencies in reading, math, citizenship, and for further education or employment. Students do not necessarily have to pass a test, but it must be certified that they had certain competencies by the time they graduate.

The state provided the 100 item math test and 60 item reading test and the localities devise their own means of certifying for citizenship and for further education or employment. Students must pass the four competency areas in order to receive a high school diploma. If they have earned their 18 credits (passed all their required courses), but have not passed the competencies, they can receive a certificate.

GERALD BRACEY, Director of Research, Evaluation and Testing  
State Department of Education, Richmond

Minimum competency testing is unneeded because ACT, SAT, and national assessments, as well as other tests, exist to determine how students are doing. The Virginia MCT correlates highly with the performance of students on the SRA achievement battery, which is already routinely given.

The question of what are the basics and what are survival skills is unanswerable in a society that is moving from industrial to informational. Basic skills of the future will be computer usage, not the 3 R's. There is no evidence that passing the MCT increases one's ability to survive. One test cannot measure survival skills, teaching, students or schools. MCT focuses on a narrow range of skills late in the student's school career and is given the power to affect the awarding of the diploma. MCT should be used to diagnose, predict and monitor student progress. MCT may even be used effectively as one datum in the promotion decision, but not as the only one.

The diploma never has had a specific meaning. If it does, the focus is on cognitive excellence. MCT does not restore excellence. It is dealing with the minimum acceptable. The diploma deals with the maximum possible. Tests measure small truncated skills and life requires more. Performing on a test is not like other situations in life. A multiple choice test isn't real. In real life the issue is to determine the alternatives and to choose the best, not just to choose one out of four given choices.

### Effects on Students

1. There is a "ceiling effect" in an examination in which most students get most items right.

2. The drop out rate for students has increased since the introduction of the MCT.
3. Those who fail the MCT have their self-esteem lowered even further when the press and other students say the test is easy.

#### Effect on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Issues of pedagogy take a back seat to politics and economics. Enough students have to fail the MCT to show that it worked in identifying the incompetent. At the same time, enough students have to pass so that havoc doesn't break out in the schools.
2. MCT measures discrete skills, not general ones. Therefore, instructors must target their teaching to narrow skills, not broad ones.
3. Testing and remediation usually come late in the student's schooling (tenth grade) when the student already has negative feelings about himself and his school.

#### Cross Examination

1. Bracey's office is responsible for developing new tests for each administration of the MCT. Though he doesn't approve of the MCT, he is responsible for it. He was asked why changes have not been made to reflect concerns. The first MCT was developed in a short period of time. Bracey was not involved. The skills measured were identified by Virginia educators and the State Board of Education agreed to the areas to be tested. The areas to be tested by MCT cannot be changed until the Board reviews them.
2. The drop out rate went up and then leveled off. It is Bracey's educated guess that it is the MCT that is responsible.

LAURIE COLLIER, Supervisor for Business Education  
Newport News School District

The city of Newport News has a population that is approximately 50% black and 50% white. The socio-economic range is from very wealthy to very poor.

### Effects on Students

1. MCT shows students areas they need to work on to succeed.
2. As a school administrator Collier is seeing better students who have basic skills and are better prepared to acquire higher skills.
3. Students are easier to place in the business world when they have improved skill levels.
4. MCT resulted in more focused instruction.
5. Students feel better prepared to go into the business world because of MCT.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Minimum competency testing is the culminating activity to the criterion referenced testing offered locally.
2. Minimum competency testing establishes objectives. Then it is possible to identify the educational tools required to teach those skills.
3. MCT has refocused education back "on task," teaching students what they need to know yet allowing time for what is "nice to know."

### Effects on the Public's Perceptions

1. Employers in the business community are more willing to hire students who have basic skills.
2. There are better school-employer relationships.

FANNIE KING, Assistant Principal for Instruction  
Fergusson High School, Newport News

Fergusson High School is an urban school with a population of 1400 to 1900 students. It has approximately a 50% white and a 50% black student body, though there are other minorities in the school. The socio-economic range of the students is from wealthy to very poor.

### Effects on Students

1. Better students get a surprise when they miss a question. This points up their weak spots.

2. The MCT pinpoints needs of lower level students and provides focused help.
3. Student responses of those who pass may be that the test is easy. The students who have struggled to pass express relief. Those who fail may be hurt and disappointed, but are committed to work harder to learn and to pass the test.
4. Tests help students, teachers and parents in diagnosing and meeting needs.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. Most teachers are happy to know the skills they are expected to teach and to see results in student progress.
2. Some administrators feel that the paper work and time used in testing take away from teaching.
3. The curriculum has changed only in that there is increased emphasis on teaching skills -- basic and remedial. For the better students advanced courses exist.
4. There is an increased clarity of the curriculum.
5. Teachers put more "time on task" since they get a printout of where each student needs help. Consequently each student gets more focus on the tasks they need.
6. Virginia MCT gives diagnostic information on specific individual skills.

#### Cross Examination

1. MCT creates awareness of fundamental needs of students and gives the students an incentive for improvement.
2. Newport News has other tests at all levels of the school system, but teachers do not see the MCT as a duplication of what they already do.
3. Most teachers do not see the test as an evaluation of them.

HELEN STAFF; former Assistant Principal  
Prince Edward County High School, Farmville

Prince Edward County High School has approximately 800 students. 75% are black; about 25% are white. Many of the students come from low income families. The community is very rural. Farmville is a small town. Many students' parents are involved in agricultural employment; a few are involved in light industry, and some of the parents of the high school students work for the two colleges located in the town (Longwood College and Hampton Sidney College).

#### Effect on Students

1. MCT identifies weak students and allows the provision of remediation.
2. MCT results in better students.
3. MCT increases self-esteem.
4. Students are more concerned about their education.
5. Most students pass the test.
6. It is a way to be sure that weak students are not being overlooked.
7. When students fail the first time they are disappointed but they are helped to see that the test has identified their weaknesses and they are shown how to improve. Students feel a real sense of accomplishment when they pass the test after they take it a second time.

#### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

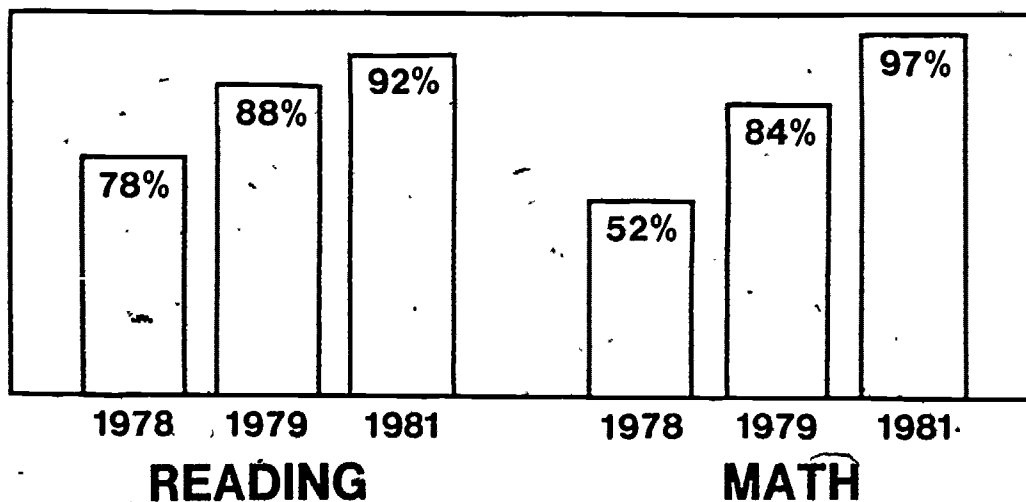
1. Once tests are taken and teachers are assured that students have basic skills, teachers feel free to teach even more than before MCT.
2. Teachers review competencies that represent the objectives of the MCT; then all other subjects are taught.
3. Teachers feel that instruction is more directed than before.
4. Teachers feel they are "getting more done."
5. Teachers don't overstress the basics.

6. Locally-made diagnostic tests are given in the 8th, 9th, and 10th grades. They take the state MCT.

Effects on the Public's Perception

1. MCT has helped to rebuild confidence in public education.
2. MCT tells the public that education is quality education and that students can do things.

**PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY  
PER CENT PASSING  
VIRGINIA GRADUATION COMPETENCY TESTS  
ON FIRST ADMINISTRATION**





WISCONSIN

Position of the Wisconsin Education Council  
Morris Andrews, Executive Director

MORRIS ANDREWS, Executive Secretary  
Wisconsin Education Council, Madison

At the time of the hearing in July, 1981, a bill was pending in the Wisconsin Legislature requiring a student to pass a minimum competency test in order to receive a diploma award. The Wisconsin Educational Council has supported MCT. Their support rests on the MCT program meeting specified criteria. The Council is composed of 44,000 members and is an affiliate of the National Education Association. The Wisconsin Education Council supports minimum competency testing if the test is developed at the local level, is referenced based, and if teachers play a large role in test development to affect policy in the early stages, rather than having decisions imposed on teachers after the fact.

1. An element of MCT must be linked to remedial programs, with the addition of needed resources to meet remediation needs.
2. By initiating MCT with teachers playing a large role in test development and remediation, there would be many ways they could influence the nature of the test and incorporate positive features of MCT into it.
3. MCT should start in early grades with multiple testing opportunities at all levels.
4. MCT would serve as one of several criteria for graduation from high school.
5. MCT standards and tests would be developed at the local level to reflect the local education program.
6. The test must not be used to evaluate teachers.
7. The program would include the basic skill areas of reading, writing, and mathematics.

If these conditions are met, positive effects can be anticipated.

#### Effects on Students

MCT can create meaningful educational dialogue between students, parents, administrators and teachers-- dialogue focused on student needs and how to best serve those needs, rather than the administrative aspects of education.

### Effects on the Public's Perception

MCT policy developed and implemented at the local level maintains local control of education.

### Cross Examination

There should be a diploma requirement (MCT) as well as other criteria (e.g., number of credits, completion of required courses) in order to approve a student's graduation from high school. The educational history of the State of Wisconsin is strongly supportive of local control. That is why a statewide MCT would not be good. There has always been disparity between districts within the state. Therefore, a common MCT for all districts with a single standard for passing would be inappropriate. The Wisconsin bill doesn't require the evaluation of teachers, but does require a student to pass the MCT in order to be awarded a diploma.

ALTERNATIVES

TO

MCT

Gilbert Austin, Co-Director  
Center for Educational Research  
University of Maryland  
Baltimore County

GILBERT AUSTIN, Co-Director, Center for Educational Research  
University of Maryland, Baltimore County

Austin has conducted extensive research to identify and characterize effective schools. Effective schools are those that perform better than expected given students' socioeconomic status. These schools are not just schools of the upper class. Rather, they are inner-city and predominately black. Effective schools are characterized by:

1. local focus on students, teachers and parents;
2. identification of its own purpose and being in control of itself;
3. principals having high expectations for themselves and all others involved in the school community;
4. principals having had experience as teachers and having demonstrated their teaching ability in an academic area (e.g., reading or math);
5. teachers having high expectations of students and adapting their roles to instructional leadership rather than toward administrative roles;
6. parents deeply involved in the school;
7. students being involved as "mediating structures," because what they think about themselves is what adults tell them. They benefit in an effective school because they are told they are a success and have better self-images. Children in effective schools say that hard work, not luck, brings success.

#### Effects of MCT

Minimum competency tests do not support effective schools because they are usually external and do not rely on local self-determination. Schools should not use minimum competency tests for making decisions on promotion because the key to effective schools is local control. Standards for schools should be high and positive and set at the local level.

✓

TECHNICAL ISSUES

Robert Calfee, Professor of Education  
Stanford University  
Palo Alto, California

Robert Ebel, Professor of Education  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, Michigan

Robert Linn, Chairperson  
Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

ROBERT CALFEE, Professor of Education  
Stanford University, Palo Alto, California

Calfee is an educational psychologist specializing in cognitive psychology (helping people think). Most of his work is in the area of reading and reading instruction. His particular interest is the relationship between testing and teaching.

#### Technical Testimony on Testing

1. Reliance on group paper and pencil testing is questionable since these tests focus on choosing the right answer, not on thinking and generating alternatives.
2. There is no validity in tests. There are three factors that must be considered. The degree of overlap between these factors is unknown:
  - (a) school learning--what is actually taught in the classroom that go into MCTs;
  - (b) life needs--what a person needs to be able to do to "succeed" in life;
  - (c) test measure--what is tested (the content)
3. The key questions to be answered about MCT are:
  - a. What should be tested?

It is possible to define basic skills and test them. It is harder and perhaps impossible for life skills to be defined and tested.
  - b. How will the test be administered?
    1. Group multiple choice tests (paper and pencil tests) are easy to administer, but since they do not require a student to think, the test does not measure that basic skill.
    2. Good education goes from general to specific objectives. A multiple choice test measures only the specifics. The bias of the developer influences the specifics included in the test.
    3. The physical environment in which tests are administered is often less than good.

c. What should be done with test results?

1. The test should be used only to infer student needs in the specific areas tested. It is not appropriate to measure basic skills and infer life success.
2. Achievement tests were designed to be indicators of achievement, not the sole basis of decisions. MCT makes an achievement test score the sole basis of an "all or nothing decision."

d. What is wrong with MCT?

1. It doesn't ask students to produce; only to respond.
2. Test writers write questions that are too simplistic or employ trickery in the format.
3. Students can't ask questions about the format or directions during the administration of the test.
4. Invalid items that are inappropriate can trip up a student. If she/he misses one item and falls one point below passing, she/he could end up unnecessarily in remedial classes.

### Effects on Students

Students are counseled into tracks. Any given question will favor one track or another. Tests favor students in college preparation tracks, not auto mechanics tracks.

### Effects on Curriculum and Teaching

1. MCT will lower the quality of high school education by reducing the diversity of curricula in junior and senior high schools.
2. It may be possible to define basic skills in the elementary level, but not at the secondary level.
3. In the long run MCT will not have good effects on teaching. Districts will restrict the curriculum to the test. Teachers will teach the test.



## Conclusions

1. There is a need for standards in schools. There are alternatives to testing. The California law says "standards," not tests will assess minimum competencies.
2. There is a place for tests in schools in screening and monitoring students' progress.
3. The balance of quality and equality is the task of the high school. There is not balance of standards with preparation for life.
4. A test is never totally valid. There is always a need to use multiple indicators.
5. The basic flaw in MCT is that basic skills for all can't be defined. There is too much variety and too many individual differences for there to be one set of basic skills.

## Cross Examination

Tests can be validated to measure what they do, but it is also important to look at other alternatives to measuring and keeping standards. Tests are misused and stand as a barrier to diploma seekers. There is more than one factor that should be involved in the decision to grant or withhold a diploma. A professor makes decisions regarding grades on the basis of numbers, but in the university it's better than lay persons on judging this issue. Most experts say no to the MCT. MCT as it is being used today is a corruption of testing and is misleading.

Teaching to the test has bad educational consequences. One of these is a decline of professionalism in teaching.

ROBERT EBEL, Professor of Education  
Michigan State University, East Lansing

Dr. Ebel is generally regarded as one of the nation's foremost experts on testing. He has been a professor for 18 years and has authored numerous books and articles on the subject of educational testing.

## Technical Testimony on Testing

1. The purpose of tests is to measure achievement in learning.

2. There are errors in all types of measures.
3. It is possible, given an array of achievement, to differentiate between students based on tests.
4. There is good reason to give great weight to testing, provided the instrument is reliable and relevant.
5. Multiple takings of a test improves the chance of success and each failure leads to further study and hence greater competence when finally passed.
6. Concerning multiple choice tests:
  - a. They are widely useful (at the top of Ebel's scale of excellence of instruments) and provide for making choices.
  - b. Success in life involves making choices from multiple alternatives. The purpose of instruction is to teach people how to make appropriate choices.
  - c. Performance has a high relationship with competence, and research shows these tests are appropriate.
  - d. It is absurd to say that multiple choice tests are never appropriate.
7. What you know can be measured. For this reason there is a strong probability that a high test score is related to high performance.
8. It is possible to set defensible passing scores, though there is no way to avoid informed judgment. All schemes to determine passing scores are based on some judgment. Even if they are said to be set mechanically, that is usually done to mask the real issue of judgment.
9. A test of achievement, interpreted with reasonable allowance for testing error and judgment, tells how well a person can perform on a task.
10. Test bias is a result of inferences being made beyond what the test measures.
11. Current attempts to remove bias from tests may succeed in removing all means of discrimination between levels of achievement. All people get the same score on such a test.

12. If you want excellence in education, you must recognize and reward those who achieve. Testing provides a means for doing so.
13. MCT is a useful educational tool. Inadequacy exists in what is done with the scores, and that can be controlled.

### Effects on Students

Failure on MCT will only harm a person "if they choose to let it." Many professions have MCT and many fail, but the net effect doesn't label a person for life.

### Cross Examination

There is a reason to caution against over-generalizing from the test results. It could be generalized that an individual who did not achieve satisfactorily on the MCT does not have a grasp of basic skills. If no one ever fails, MCT shouldn't be used. Tests can predict job performance, but this should not mean that tests should be the only factor in making a job performance decision. MCT is a subset of larger groups of tests. They have many characteristics in common with norm referenced tests. Information from MCT is not already available because the MCT is used in a different context and for a different purpose. Scores should be determined by the test developers. They should have a rationale for their cut scores. There is not one good score. It depends on the results of a field test, as well as on the contents and plans for its use.

ROBERT LINN, Chairperson, Department of Educational Psychology  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Linn is a specialist in educational psychological measurement. He is a proponent of testing but is strongly opposed to the use of MCT for graduation, promotion or classification. Tests, he feels, are well used as a source of independent information provided there is honesty on the part of the administrators and interpreters. MCT should not be used to determine promotion because tests have limitations. Using them for such critical decisions is an over reliance on the MCT.

Three primary concerns were discussed:

1. the arbitrary nature of standard setting
2. error in measurement
3. item bias.

### Standard Setting

The cut score of 70% is strictly arbitrary. Even when systematic procedures are used, the decisions are still arbitrary. The results of two studies on standard setting were presented. Results showed:

- a. the cut score will vary depending on what method is used;
- b. given the same method, the cut score will vary depending upon who sets it (this variance may be as great as 24 points);
- c. the number of students passing/failing will vary with variance in the cut score.

Linn concludes that whether students receive a diploma may not be a factor of differences in skills levels as much as it is a factor of who sets the cut score or what method is used.

### Error in Measurement

The precision of any test is limited because it represents only a sample of all the questions that could be asked. A student's score may vary several points up or down from his/her "true" score on any given testing. This variance may mean passing or failing for some students.

### Item Bias

Studies show that eliminating 1, 2, or 3 items on a test can have a tremendous effect on how many students pass. This is particularly important when one considers that many items may be biased against minorities. (19 items on the Florida test were judged by experts to be biased against blacks. Of those 8 were also found to be statistically biased by Linn.)

### Conclusions

Tests are not accurate enough to be the basis of decisions about individuals. Other input is needed to help correct for measurement error and arbitrariness.

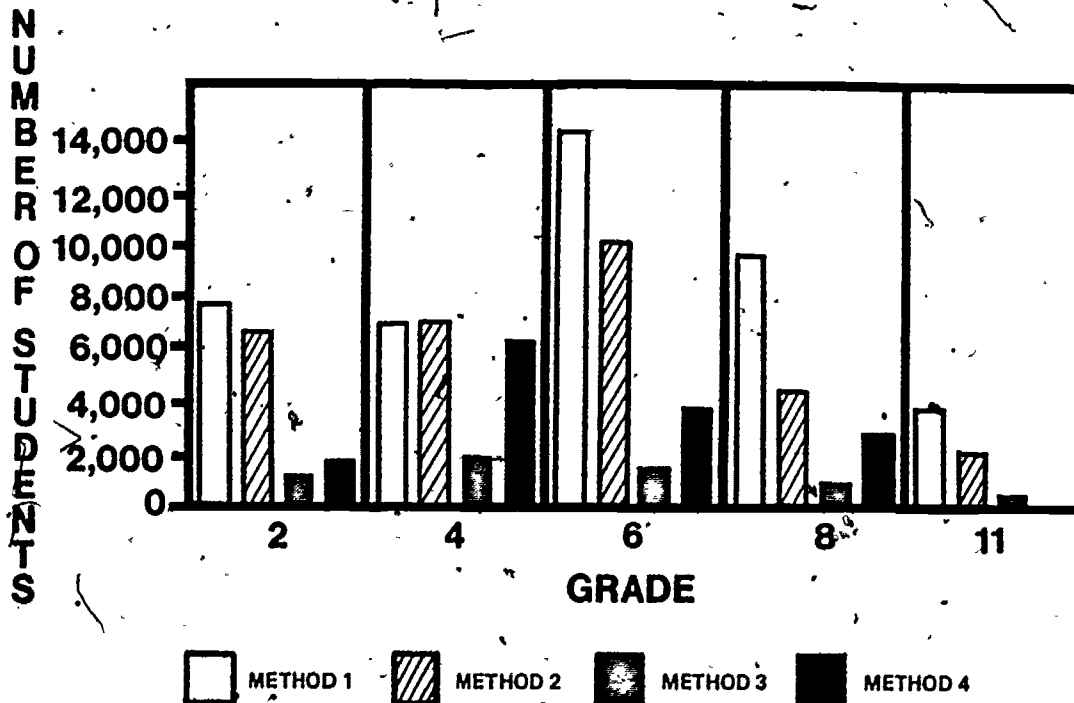
### Cross Examination

1. There is nothing wrong with setting standards as long as procedures for setting the standards are good. A target standard is acceptable, but an absolute standard

upon which decisions are based is not. There is room for much improvement in setting standards.

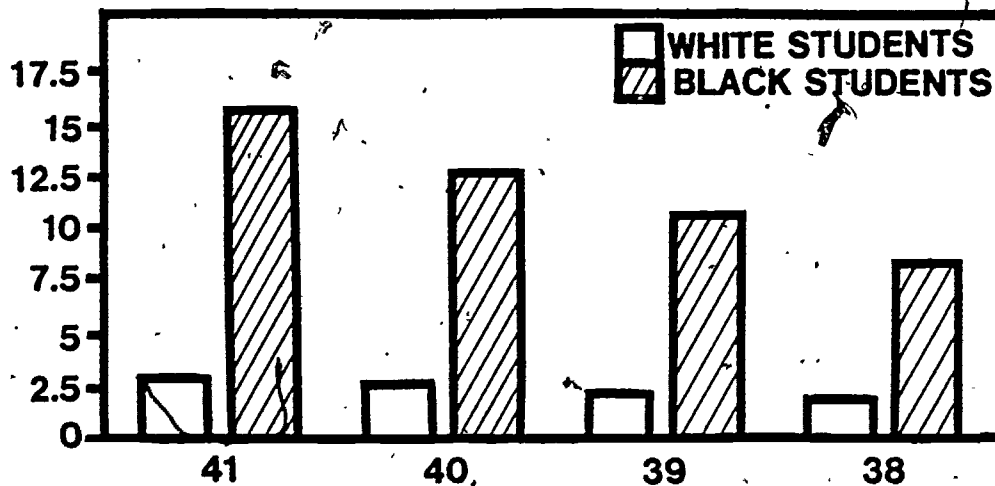
2. The amount of impact on students of MCT depends on the standards set. This is difficult to judge since the standards are arbitrary.
3. If the items that are problems to minority students are taken out of the exam, minority students will do better on the exam.
4. In MCT we are dealing with a fallible instrument and shouldn't put undue emphasis on that instrument.
5. A legitimate alternative to the MCT is for the test to be one measure used by experts in consultation with parents and by using other data to make decisions.
6. It is no better to rely on a teacher than it is to rely on a test.

## FAILURES WITH DIFFERENT STANDARD SETTING METHODS. READING TESTS



# **PERCENTAGE FAILING USING ALTERNATIVE PASSING SCORES 1977 COMMUNICATIONS TEST**

PERCENT OF STUDENTS



NUMBER OF RIGHT ANSWERS REQUIRED TO PASS

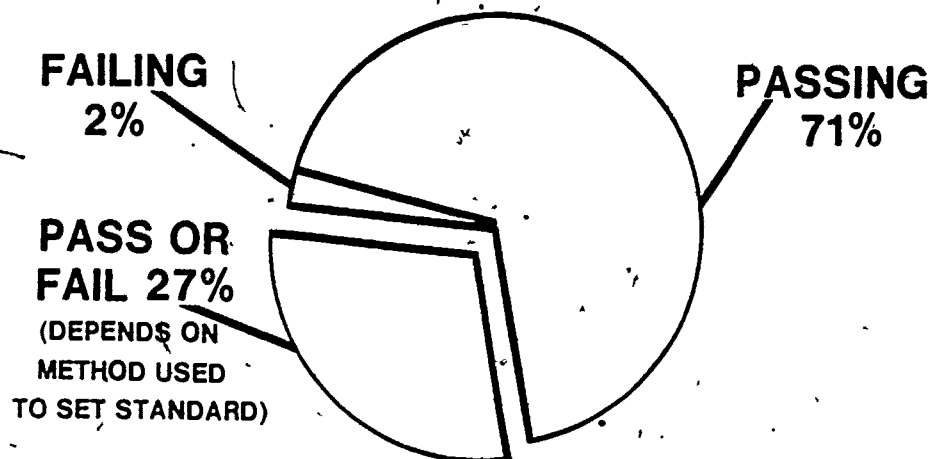
## **PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS FAILING TO MEET 70% STANDARD 1977 COMMUNICATIONS TEST**

PERCENT OF STUDENTS

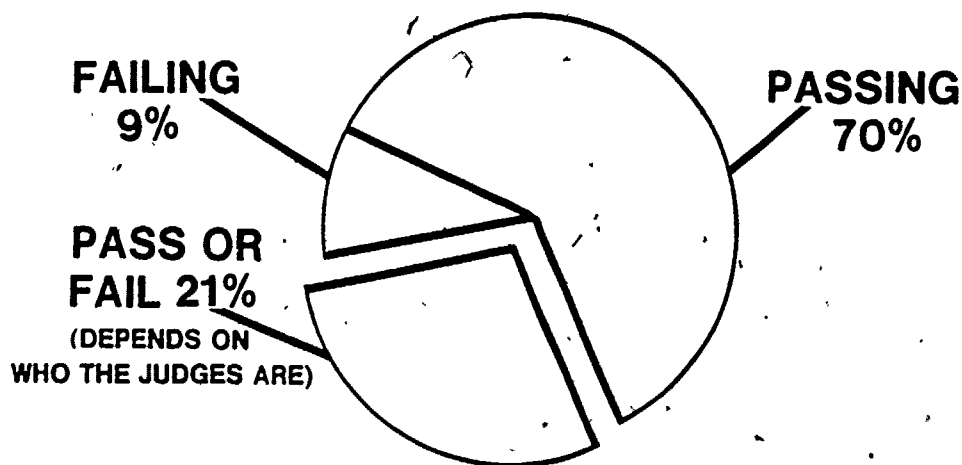


NUMBER OF 'BIASED' ITEMS DELETED FROM TEST

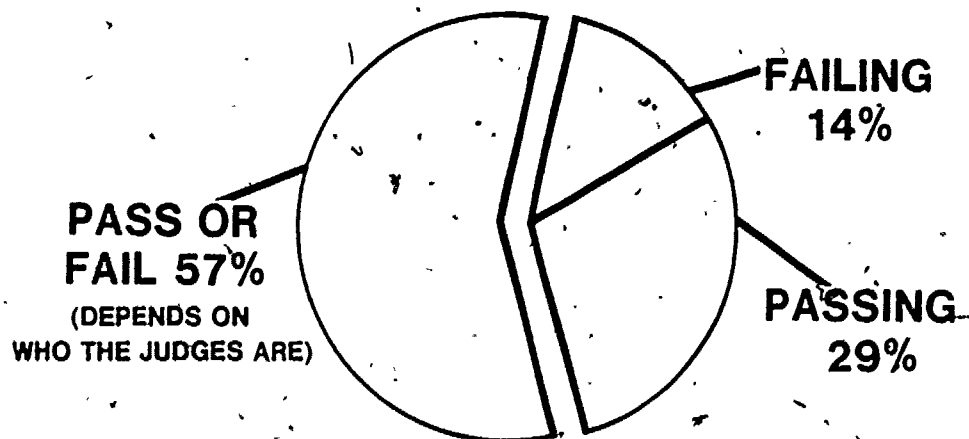
# EFFECT OF STANDARD SETTING METHOD ON FAILURE RATE GRADE 8 READING TEST



# EFFECT OF CATEGORY OF JUDGE ON FAILURE RATE READING TEST



# EFFECT OF CATEGORY OF JUDGE ON FAILURE RATE MATH TEST



## VII

### RESOURCE GUIDE AND INDEX

This section provides a guide to additional resources for further examination of issues related to MCT. The section contains the following:

- o A subject index for the User's Guide
- o An index for locating witness testimony in the User's Guide, the video tapes and the transcript
- o A list of graphics used in the presentation of testimony at the hearing
- o A list of sources or references for documentary evidence presented in support of testimony
- o A bibliography of reference materials developed by NIE for use by the teams in the development of their cases



# Witness Index

Witness	Team	User's Guide	Transcript	Complete Hearing Tapes
Morris Andrews Executive Secretary, Wisconsin Educational Council Madison, Wisconsin	Pro	123-124	Vol. II 366-377	Day 2 Tape 2
Gilbert Austin Co-Director Center for Educational Research University of Maryland Baltimore, Maryland	Con	125	Vol. I 217-229	Day 1 Tape 7
Robert Benton Superintendent of Public Instruction Iowa Department of Public Instruction Des Moines, Iowa	Con	85-86	Vol. I 261-275	Day 1 Tape 8
Mary Berry Commissioner and Vice- Chairman U.S. Commission of Civil Rights Washington, D.C.	Con	44-45	Vol. II 442-455	Day 2 Tape 4
Gerald Bracey Director of Research, Evaluation and Testing Virginia State Department of Education	Con	117-118	Vol. III 722-738	Day 3 Tape 4
Robert Calfee Professor of Educational Psychology Stanford University Palo Alto, California	Con	126-128	Vol. II 455-479	Day 2 Tape 5
The Honorable Shirley Chisholm U.S. House of Representatives	Con	45-46	Vol. II 312-328	Day Tape 1

Witness	Team	User's Guide	Transcript	Complete Hearing Tapes
Laurie Collier Supervisor for Business Education Newport News, Virginia	Pro	118-119	Vol. I 130-138	Day 1 Tape 4
Joseph Cronin President Massachusetts Higher Education Assistance Corporation Former Chief State School Officer, Illinois	Con	79-80	Vol. I 275-288	Day 1 Tape 8
Susan Dyer Proficiency Test Coordinator Mumford High School Detroit, Michigan	Pro	73-74	Vol. III 693-701	Day 3 Tape 3
Robert Ebel Professor, College of Education Michigan State University East Lansing, Michigan	Pro	128-130	Vol. II 437-442	Day 2 Tape 4
Roger Farr Director, Lester Smith Center for Research in Education Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana	Con	46-48	Vol. II 516-535	Day 2 Tape 6
Rev. W. W. Finlator Pullen Baptist Church Raleigh, North Carolina	Con		Vol. III 189-826	Day 3 Tape 6
Kathleen B. Gilbert Teacher Hope Valley Elementary School Durham, North Carolina	Con	104	Vol. II 556-563	Day 2 Tape 7

Witness	Team	User's Guide	Transcript	Complete Hearings Tapes
Mel Hall Assistant Professor Department of Psychology Sangamon State University Springfield, Illinois	Con	80-82	Vol. II 535-550	Day 2 Tape 7
Doris Hedgepath Chairman, English Department Conway High School Conway, South Carolina	Pro	110-111	Vol. I. 96-106	Day 1 Tape 3
Arthur Jefferson General Superintendent Detroit Public Schools Detroit, Michigan	Pro	67-68	Vol. III 654-667	Day 3 Tape 2
Zodie Johnson Region 5 Superintendent Mumford High School Detroit, Michigan	Pro	71-72	Vol. III 682-693	Day 3 Tape 3
Fannie King Assistant Principal for Instruction Fergusson High School Newport News, Virginia	Pro	119-120	Vol. I 118-130	Day 1 Tape 4
Esther Lee Title I Coordinator Washington Township New Jersey	Con	90-91	Vol. III 800-812	Day 3 Tape 6
Gary Leonard Principal, Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School Charleston, South Carolina	Pro	109-110	Vol. I 84-96	Day 1 Tape 2
Alan Levinson Parent Eastport, New York	Con	97	Vol. III 785-789	Day 3 Tape 6

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Robert Linn Chairperson Department of Educational Psychology College of Education University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Urbana, Illinois	Con	130-134	Vol. III 479-506	Day 2 Tape 6
Anna Long Parent Batesburg, South Carolina	Pro	111-112	Vol. I 108-113	Day 1 Tape 4
Craig McFadden Director of Psychological Services and Testing Goldsboro, North Carolina	Pro	102-103	Vol. III 643-653	Day 3 Tape 2
Lawrence McNally Director of Pupil Services Northport-Eastport School District Northport, New York	Con	96-97	Vol. III 772-785	Day 3 Tape 5 ~
Deborah Meiers Principal Central Park East School City Schools of New York	Con	95-96	Vol. I 241-261	Day 2 Tape 7,8
Hilda Mireles Teacher Harlingen Public School District Santa Rosa, Texas	Pro	114-116	Vol. II 407-414	Day 2 Tape 3
Joseph Murray Former Representative South Carolina Legislature Charleston, South Carolina	Pro	107	Vol. I 55-66	Day 1 Tape 2

Witness	Team	User's Guide	Transcript	Complete Hearings Tapes
John Myrick, Counselor Winter Haven High School (Florida) President, Florida Teaching Profession/National Education Association	Con	76-77	Vol. II 579-590	Day 2 Tape 8
Ralph Nader Center for Responsive Law Washington, D.C.	Con	48-50	Vol. I 154-178	Day 2 Tape 5
Frederico Pena Attorney and State Legislator Denver, Colorado	Con	65-66	Vol. III 753-763	Day 3 Tape 5
Michael Priddy Director for Research, Planning and Evaluation Guilford County School System, Jamestown, North Carolina	Pro	98-99	Vol. III 622-637	Day 3 Tape 1
Nathan Quinones Executive Director Division of High Schools New York City Board of Education	Con	94-95	Vol. II 507-516	Day 2 Tape 6
Gloria Ramsey Teacher, Lucy Ragsdale High School Jamestown, North Carolina	Pro	101-102	Vol. III 637-643	Day 2 Tape 3
Stuart Rankin Director, Office of Research, Planning and Evaluation Detroit Public Schools Detroit, Michigan	Pro	69-70	Vol. III 667-682	Day 3 Tape 3
William Raspberry Columnist, <u>The Washington Post</u> Washington, D.C.	Pro	50-52	Vol. III	Day 3 Tape 1

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Marie Reed Parent and Teacher's Aide Leesville, South Carolina	Pro	112-113	Vol. I 112-118	Day 1 Tape 4
Charles R. Richman Professor Department of Psychology Wake Forest University Winston-Salem, North Carolina	Con	104-106	Vol. III 763-772	Day 3 Tape 5
Clara Rutherford Central School Board Member for Detroit Public Schools Detroit, Michigan	Pro	70-71	Vol. III 707-718	Day 3 Tape 4
Paul Sandifer Director of the Office of Research South Carolina Department of Education Columbia, South Carolina	Pro	108-109	Vol. I 66-84	Day 1 Tape 2
Robert Schilling Assistant Superintendent Hacienda La Puente School District La Puente, California	Pro	61-63	Vol. II 377-395	Day 2 Tapes 1 and 2
Lorenza Cálvillo Schmidt Member, Board of Regents California Board of Regents	Con	59-60	Vol. III 738-753	Day 3 Tape 5
Sharon Schneider Teacher, Richwoods High School Peoria, Illinois	Pro	81-83	Vol. II 414-422	Day 2 Tape 3
Michael Scriven Director of the Evaluation Institute University of San Francisco San Francisco, California	Pro	52-54	Vol. I 42-55 145-153	Day 1 Tapes 2 and 5

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Patricia Shea Parent Peoria, Illinois	Con	83-84	Vol. I 550-556	Day 2 Tape 7
William Shine Superintendent Cherry Hill School District New Jersey	Con	89-90	Vol. III 790-800	Day 3 Tape 6
Linda Spight Proficiency Test Coordinator Henry Ford High School Detroit, Michigan	Pro	74	Vol. III 701-709	Day 3 Tape 3
Claire Sullivan Former Assistant Superintendent Pinellas County, Florida President, Florida Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development	Con	77-78	Vol. II 563-579	Day 2 Tape 7
Henry Stevens Teacher Camden, New Jersey	Con	91-92	Vol. III 812-819	Day 3 Tape 6
Helen Stiff Former Assistant Principal Prince Edward County High School Farmville, Virginia	Pro	121-122	Vol. I 138-145	Day 1 Tape 4
M. D. Taracido Attorney at Law New York City Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund	Con	93-94	Vol. I 288-301	Day 1 Tapes 8 and 9
Ralph Turlington Commissioner of Education Department of Education State of Florida Tallahassee, Florida	Pro	75-76	Vol. II 331-366	Day 2 Tapes 1 and 2

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Anthony Trujillo Superintendent, Mt. Tamalpais Union High School District Larkspur, California	Pro	63-64	Vol. II 396-407	Day 2 Tape 2
Ralph Tyler Consultant Science Research Associates Chicago, Illinois	Con	55-56	Vol. I 196-216	Day 2 Tape 6
Richard Wallace Superintendent Pittsburgh Public Schools Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Con	87-88	Vol. I 229-241	Day 1 Tape 7
Arthur E. Wise Senior Social Scientist Rand Corporation Washington, D.C.	Con	56-58	Vol. I 178-196	Day 1 Tape 6



# LIST OF GRAPHICS BY WITNESS

Witness	Title
Farr, Roger Indiana University Bloomington	Changes in 9 Year Olds' Reading Performance, 1971-80 (based on data from National Assessment of Educational Progress)
	Changes in 13 Year Olds' Reading Performance, 1970-79 (based on data from National Assessment of Educational Progress)
	Changes in 17 Year Olds' Reading Performance, 1971-80 (based on data from National Assessment of Educational Progress)
Schilling, Robert Hacienda La Puente School District La Puente, California	Per Cent Passing Hacienda La Puente MCT, Class of 1981, First Administration, 9th Grade
	Per Cent Passing Hacienda La Puente MCT, Class of 1981, March 1981
	12th Grade CAP Score Improvement, 1979/1980- 1980/1981
Schneider, Sharon Richwoods High School Peoria, Illinois	Per Cent Passing Peoria MCT, Class of 1980, First Administration
	Per Cent Passing Peoria MCT, Class of 1980, Fifth Administration
Wallace, Richard Pittsburgh Public Schools Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	Monitoring Achievement in Pittsburgh (MAP)

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Priddy, Michael Guilford County School System Jamestown, North Carolina	Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT, Class of 1980, First Administration, 11th Grade  Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT in Guilford County, Class of 1980, First Administration, 11th Grade  Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT, Class of 1980, 12th Grade  Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT in Guilford County, Class of 1980, 12th Grade
McFadden, Craig Goldsboro City Schools Goldsboro, North Carolina	Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT in Goldsboro City Schools, Class of 1980, 11th Grade  Per Cent Passing North Carolina MCT in Goldsboro City Schools, Class of 1980, 12th Grade
Mireles, Hilda Harlingen Public Schools District Santa Rosa, Texas	Comparison of Math Scores on TABS Test, 5th Grade  Comparison of Math Scores on TABS Test, 9th Grade
Stiff, Helen Prince Edward County High School Farmville, Virginia	Prince Edward County Per Cent Passing Virginia Graduation Competency Tests on First Administration

LIST OF GRAPHICS BY WITNESS

Witness	Title
Linn, Robert University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Failures With Different Standard Setting Methods, Reading Tests (based on data from the State of Kansas)
	Effect of Standard Setting Method on Failure Rate, Grade 8 Reading Test (based on data from the State of Kansas)
	Effect of Category of Judge on Failure Rate, Reading Test (based on data from the State of North Carolina)
	Effect of Category of Judge on Failure Rate, Math Test (based on data from the State of North Carolina)
	Percentage Failing Using Alternative Passing Scores, 1977 Communications Test (based on data from the State of Florida)
	Percentage of Students Failing to Meet 70% Standard, 1977 Communications Test (based on data from the State of Florida)

# LIST OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY WITNESS

PRO TEAM

Witness	Document or Source
Jefferson, Arthur Detroit Public Schools Detroit, Michigan	Summary report of pupil performance on Detroit High School Proficiency exam and state assessment test, including initial and current passing rates for current seniors
Johnson, Zodie Detroit Public Schools Detroit, Michigan	Passing rates for the Detroit High School Proficiency Program
Leonard, Gary Mt. Pleasant Academy Elementary School Charleston, South Carolina	Renze, T.J. Principal's Opinions about minimum competency testing. <u>Phi Delta Kappan</u> , May 1981.
McFadden, Craig Goldsboro City Schools Goldsboro, North Carolina	Passing rates and attendance records for Goldsboro City Schools, North Carolina
Mireles, Hilda Harlingen Public School District Santa Rosa, Texas	Recent test data for the Texas Assessment of Basic Skills math exam
Priddy, Michael Guilford County School System Jamestown, North Carolina	Student performance data for Guilford County School System, Jamestown, North Carolina
	Summary of South Carolina Basic Skills Assessment Program
Sandifer, Paul South Carolina Department of Education Charleston, South Carolina	<u>Basic Skills Assessment in South Carolina: How Progressive an Approach to Minimum Competency Testing?</u> Staff Circular #8, from the National Consortium on Testing. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Huron Institute, 1981.

Witness

Document or Source

Schilling, Robert  
Hacienda La Puente  
School District  
La Puente, California

CAP test score improvement for seniors of the Hacienda La Puente Unified School District and the median district in California, illustrating the greater improvement for La Puente school system.

District drop out rates, which show a decrease since the beginning of the competency requirement.

Schneider, Sharon  
Richwoods High School  
Peoria, Illinois

Passing rates extracted from:

Dugger, C.W. "An Overview of the Minimum Competency Testing Program in Peoria - District 150." Illinois School Research and Development, Fall 1980.

Stiff, Helen  
Prince Edward County  
High School  
Farmville, Virginia

Prince Edward County High School test results, showing student mastery of skills.

Trujillo, Anthony  
Mt. Tamalpais Union  
High School District  
Larkspur, California

Passing percentages of students in the Mt. Tamalpais School District in California

Turlington, Ralph  
Florida Department of  
Education  
Tallahassee, Florida

Summary report of student performance on the Florida Statewide Assessment Program.

# LIST OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE BY WITNESS

CON TEAM

Witness	Document or Source
Austin, Gilbert University of Maryland Baltimore County, Maryland	Austin, Gilbert. <u>Process Evaluation: A Comprehensive Study of Outliers</u> . A report to the Maryland State Department of Education. Baltimore, Maryland, Center of Educational Research and Development, May 1978.
	Austin, Gilbert (Ed.) <u>The Rise and Fall of National Test Scores</u> . New York: Academy Press, 1981, in press.
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	Committee on Testing and Basic Skills. <u>Improving Educational Achievement: A Report on Testing and Basic Skills</u> . Washington, DC: National Academy of Education, 1978.
Farr, Roger Indiana University Bloomington, Indiana	Farr, R. and Fay L. "Reading Trend Data in the United States: A Mandate for Caution and Caveats." In G. Austin (Ed.), <u>The Rise and Fall of National Test Scores</u> . New York: Academic Press, 1981, in press.
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