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ABSTRACT

Every year the state of North Carolina requires an English II writing test as part of the End of Course examinations. The purposes of the English II tests are to assess students' mastery of writing, application of grammatical skills, and achievement in literary analysis. This report contains information about the test performance of students in the Wake County Public Schools (WCPSS). The percentage of English II scores of 3.0 or higher for WCPSS students rose to 69.1% in 1998-99. This is much higher than the 1997-98 scores, and 4.8 percentage points above the statewide average of 57.7%. Three figures contain the writing examination prompts, the results for each school, and results for Wake County and other state school districts. (SLD)

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MEASURING UP

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E&R Report No. 99.29

1998-99 English Writing Test Results

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Wake County Public Schools

Evaluation and Research Department



MEASURING UP

WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

EVALUATION AND RESEARCH DEPARTMENT

1998-99 English II Writing Test Results

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Background

Each year, the state of North Carolina requires an English II writing test as part of the End of Course (EOC) examinations (along with other subject areas which will be reported on later this year). The writing test is administered during the second semester of English II. EOC tests are aligned with the standard Course of Study in each of the areas tested.

The purposes of the English II tests are to assess students' mastery of writing, application of grammatical skills, and achievement in literary analysis. Although four types of writing (argumentative, descriptive, expository, and narrative) are assessed in each English II classroom, students responded to a common prompt and to one of several variable prompts that required them to demonstrate a variety of thinking and communicating skills.

This year, as last, the English II exam was given in three separate administrations (Fall 1998, March 1999, and April 1999) in order to offer traditional and block scheduled schools the opportunity to test according to their respective schedules. Each administration used different prompts (Figure 1) which were scored for content by two independent, trained readers using a six-point, focused holistic scoring method. One trained reader also scored the common prompt essay for conventions using an analytic method which assesses student proficiency in the areas of sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Figure 2 shows a summary of high school students' performance on the common prompt

from the 1998-99 English II test. The column labeled " ≥ 3.0 " represents the percentage of students scoring at a level defined by the NC Department of Public Instruction as indicating "consistent mastery of course subject matter and skills." Students scoring 3.0 or higher are considered to be "well prepared for a more advanced level in the content area."

1998-99 Results Summary

The percentage of English II scores of 3.0 or higher for WCPSS students rose to 69.1% in 1998-99. This is much higher than the 53.1% in 1997-98 and is 4.8 percentage points above the statewide percentage of 57.7%. The state percentage increased by 11 percentage points (from 46.5% in 1997-98), while the WCPSS percentage increased 16 points.

Of the 14 schools included in last year's analysis, six schools increased the percentage of students scoring 3.0 or higher by 20 or more points. Athens Drive High had the highest percentage of scores 3.0 or higher (78.7%) while Wake Forest-Rolesville High showed the largest gain with a 36.9 percentage point increase over 1997-98. Broughton experienced a small decline of 0.2 percentage points. For an in-depth comparison, refer to Figure 3 for 1997-98 percentages by school.

After being scored on a 1 to 6 scale, English II scores are converted into four achievement levels. Level IV scores (4.0 or higher) are indicative of writing "in a superior manner clearly beyond that required to be proficient." In WCPSS in 1998-99, 24% of scores were in Level IV, versus 17% of scores statewide.

Figure 1: 1998-99 English II Writing Exam Prompts

Form	Prompt
Fall 1998 Form B	In many works of literature, an important character may be motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work in which an important character is motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power. Identify the character. Using specific references from the work, explain how the character is motivated by the desire to acquire wealth or power, how the character's life is changed as a result of the desire to acquire wealth or power, and the overall effect of the desire on the work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.
March 1999 Form C	Many works of literature are organized around the theme of cultural change. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work and explain how a character or a society reacts to cultural change, what the consequences are to the character or to the society, and the effect of the change on the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.
April 1999 Form D	Authors often use settings and details to create a dominant mood or atmosphere (overall emotional effect of the piece) in a work of literature. From the novels, short stories, full-length plays, poems, biographies, and autobiographies you have read, choose one work and identify the dominant mood. Using specific references from the work, explain how the setting and details are used to establish and illustrate the mood, the effect of the mood on the characters, and the importance of the mood to the overall work. The work you choose must be from world literature other than British (England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales) literature and American (United States) literature. Give the title and, if you remember, the author of the work.

Figure 2: 1998-99 English II Writing Results

	# Tested	Value		6.0		5.5		5.0		4.5		4.0		3.5		3.0		2.5		2.0		1.5		1.0		0		Off Topic		Blank			
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
State (all)	80,025	46,148	57.7%	149	0.2%	211	0.3%	1246	1.6%	1755	2.2%	10297	12.9%	7930	9.9%	24560	30.7%	9743	12.2%	16519	20.6%	2397	3.0%	4133	5.2%	0	0.0%	889	1.1%	194	0.2%		
Wake (all)	5760	3,978	69.1%	8	0.1%	22	0.4%	137	2.4%	226	3.9%	1000	17.4%	893	15.5%	1692	29.4%	659	11.4%	760	13.2%	137	2.4%	183	3.2%	0	0.0%	32	0.6%	11	0.2%		
High Schools																																	
Apex	527	334	63.4%	0	0.0%	2	0.4%	7	1.3%	18	3.4%	72	13.7%	110	20.9%	125	23.7%	77	14.6%	70	13.3%	13	2.5%	25	4.7%	0	0.0%	7	1.3%	7	1.3%	1	0.2%
Athens	366	288	78.7%	1	0.3%	2	0.5%	13	3.6%	22	6.0%	78	21.3%	70	19.1%	102	27.9%	26	7.1%	35	9.6%	9	2.5%	8	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Broughton	370	223	60.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	14	3.8%	49	13.2%	53	14.3%	105	28.4%	60	16.2%	50	13.5%	14	3.8%	16	4.3%	0	0.0%	6	1.6%	1	0.3%	2	0.5%
Cary	466	338	72.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	3.9%	15	3.2%	77	16.5%	97	20.8%	131	28.1%	49	10.5%	53	11.4%	5	1.1%	17	3.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.4%	9	1.9%	1	0.2%
E. Wake (all)	385	237	61.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	5	1.3%	31	8.1%	68	17.7%	132	34.3%	61	15.8%	61	15.8%	6	1.6%	10	2.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%
Enloe	563	434	77.1%	5	0.9%	8	1.4%	39	6.9%	67	11.9%	128	22.7%	67	11.9%	120	21.3%	38	6.7%	56	9.9%	15	2.7%	19	3.4%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Fuquay (all)	384	239	62.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	1.3%	6	1.6%	54	14.1%	39	10.2%	135	35.2%	49	12.8%	76	19.8%	11	2.9%	9	2.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Garner	437	313	71.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	2	0.5%	3	0.7%	73	16.7%	69	15.8%	165	37.8%	55	12.6%	52	11.9%	10	2.3%	6	1.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%
Leesville	518	387	74.7%	0	0.0%	5	1.0%	19	3.7%	36	6.9%	119	23.0%	92	17.8%	116	22.4%	58	11.2%	55	10.6%	6	1.2%	11	2.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Millbrook	364	259	71.2%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	3	0.8%	7	1.9%	50	13.7%	53	14.6%	145	39.8%	38	10.4%	45	12.4%	3	0.8%	17	4.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	0	0.0%
Sanderson	363	270	74.4%	1	0.3%	2	0.6%	6	1.7%	9	2.5%	73	20.1%	64	17.6%	115	31.7%	39	10.7%	36	9.9%	5	1.4%	11	3.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.3%	1	0.3%	0	0.0%
S.E. Raleigh (all)	590	400	67.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	15	2.5%	10	1.7%	123	20.8%	72	12.2%	180	30.5%	59	10.0%	88	14.9%	23	3.9%	16	2.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.3%	2	0.3%
Wake Forest	374	251	67.1%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	7	1.9%	14	3.7%	73	19.5%	39	10.4%	116	31.0%	48	12.8%	60	16.0%	6	1.6%	9	2.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Alternative School	51	5	9.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	9.8%	2	3.9%	22	43.1%	11	21.6%	8	15.7%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	2	3.9%		
Phillips (all)	51	5	9.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	9.8%	2	3.9%	22	43.1%	11	21.6%	8	15.7%	0	0.0%	1	2.0%	2	3.9%		

Note: The designation (all) means that multiple administrations (block and/or traditional calendar) are combined.

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Figure 3: 1997-98 English II Writing Test Results

Total Tested	Value	>=3.0	6.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.0	0	Off Topic	Blank						
																	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
STATE	79,694	46.5%	37041	0.1%	56	0.0%	30	809	1.0%	0.8%	652	6541	8.1%	5.3%	31.0%	27.7%	4.1%	8.4%	0.0%	1.5%	0.3%	
WAKE	5,482	53.1%	2912	0.0%	3	0.0%	1	100	0.8%	0.8%	654	1811	35.9%	4.3%	35.9%	25.9%	4.1%	7.5%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%	
High Schools:																						
APEX	534	54.7%	292	0.2%	1	0.0%	9	1.7%	0.9%	5	52	33	192	33	19	149	5	19	0.0%	0.6%	0.2%	
ATHENS	409	55.5%	227	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	1.0%	0.2%	1	12.2%	9.5%	32.5%	2.2%	4.4%	23.2%	2.2%	4.4%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	
BROUGHTON	375	60.5%	227	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	2.9%	0.8%	1	13.3%	2.9%	40.5%	2.4%	6.1%	23.5%	2.4%	6.1%	0.0%	0.3%	0.0%	
CARY	470	55.3%	260	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	0.4%	1.1%	3	13.4%	6.2%	34.3%	1.5%	4.5%	25.3%	1.5%	4.5%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	
EAST WAKE	354	41.2%	146	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	0.0%	5	6.3	29	161	7	21	119	7	21	0	1	1	
FUQUAY	339	59.3%	201	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.3%	1.4%	0	8.9%	3.5%	44.4%	3.7%	5.9%	19.9%	3.7%	5.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	
ENLOE	534	75.1%	401	0.2%	1	0.2%	33	6.2%	1.5%	8	23.2%	6.2%	37.6%	6.2%	2.4%	15.5%	0.9%	2.4%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	
GARNER	376	44.9%	169	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.8%	2.7%	10	6.1%	36	97	9.6%	2.7%	25.3%	3.5%	2.7%	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%	
LEESVILLE	509	58.2%	296	0.2%	1	0.0%	21	4.1%	0.8%	4	15.9%	8.3%	28.9%	8.3%	2.9%	25.5%	3.7%	2.9%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	
MILLBROOK	444	45.9%	204	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	1.4%	1.6%	7	9.2%	7.9%	25.9%	7.9%	5.2%	30.2%	3.2%	5.2%	0.0%	0.7%	0.7%	
SANDERSON	424	59.4%	252	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.5%	0.7%	3	10.8%	10.6%	36.8%	10.6%	4.0%	20.5%	2.8%	4.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	
SE RALEIGH	265	43.0%	114	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	4	4.2%	3.4%	35.5%	3.4%	6.1%	27.2%	6.1%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	
WAKE FOREST	368	30.2%	111	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.8%	0.3%	1	2.4%	2.7%	23.9%	2.7%	7.6%	40.5%	6.0%	7.6%	0.0%	0.3%	0.3%	
Alternative School:																						
PHILLIPS	79	15.2%	12	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%	0	2.2%	0.0%	11.4%	0.0%	8.3%	53.6%	8.3%	17.1%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	



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