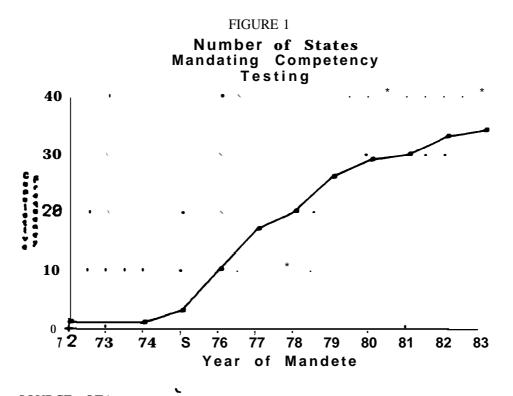
MINIMUM COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAMS

Introduction

The peak growth period for statewide competency testing was 1975-77. As Figure 1 shows, this growth leveled off *in* 1982. Although a few states will be phasing out competency testing, most states are maintaining their current programs with some of these states making changes. Typical changes are adding new skills to be tested or adjusting the cutoff score that students must exceed.

Currently 11 states require high school students to pass competency tests in order to get a diploma. Four additional states have plans to add a competency test requirement for high school graduation. Figure 2 shows the different purposes of competency testing.

As is the case with assessment testing, minimum competency testing programs vary widely from state to state. Nine states reported their minimum competency programs were tied to the state assessment programs. Sixteen states reported responsibility for administering the minimum competency program rests with the state agency. Eighteen states said the program is mandated by the state, but administered by the local districts, often with the local school district defining both the competencies to be measured and the standards to be met. The diversity of these programs is evident by the data in Table 1, a summary of which follows.



SOURCE : OTA.

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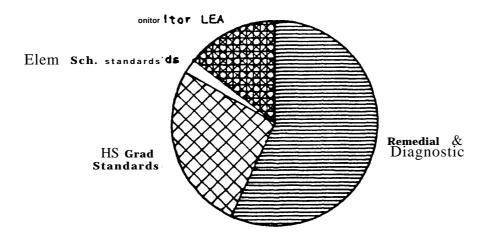
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FIGURE 2 PURPOSES OF STATE MANDATED COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAMS

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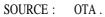


Table I

Characteristics of Programs

Responsibility for administering the minimum competency programs was found to be about evenly split between state education agencies and local education agencies. Broad areas of competence to be measured normally are defined by state education agencies, but responsibility for the specific definition of competencies is about evenly split between the two agencies.

The purposes states give for the competency testing are: remedial/diagnostic (27 states), standards for high school graduation (16 states, plus 4 more to be added in future years), monitoring of local education agencies educational programs (11), elementary graduation standards(1).

More states reported using state-produced tests for their minimum competency program than any other type of test. Seventeen reported using state-approved or prescribed tests, 9 reported that local education agencies were given the option of producing their own tests, and 6 reported that local education agencies were to produce their own tests by state mandate.

Most minimum competency testing is confined to the areas of reading, math, language arts, and writing. The even spread of number of states reporting use of minimum competency tests at each grade level above grade 2 reveals that minimum competency programs have been designed to track student progress over a period of years so that any need for remediation can be identified at intervals along the way. Typically, the tests are administered periodically as in grades 3, 6, 9 and 11 or some similar configuration. In a number of states, tests are administered in every grade within given ranges, and in 2 states, Kentucky and Vermont, they are administered in every grade, K-12.

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Characteristics of Programs Table I

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State Board Rule and Regulation, 1975 In order to be promoted from the 8th grade, students must be dole to read, write and compute at a 6th grade level: prior to graduation from high school, students must be able to read at a 9th grade level: LA's determine what is meant by a 9th grade level.

Law, 1975: All school districts must develop a continuous, uniform evaluation sys for K-12; LEA's had to come up with objectives for reading, writing an math and a means for measuring them (e.g., C.R.T. or N.K.T.), record keeping systems to show whether students have mastered objectives, a parent reporting system, and develop alternat: "e learning plans for students who had not mastered objectives.

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Table I Characteristics of Programs

	des		Other/Notes	Optional, loca decision, State Board pre- scribed reading	lanquage and math in broad, general terms.	Life skills test at loth grade. If failed, student takes course which she/he must pass.	*, Also, grades 3, 5,8 & 10 economic understanding; vriting pro- duction. freading and vriting combined and called communication.
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			State	Delaware		Distr ct of Columbia	F orida

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DE1: In 1979, the State Board wanted to get rid of social promotion and base promotion on specific criteria. LEA's put together their own promotion policies and procedures. The decision was made for LEA's to develop promotion/retention policies.

SSAT1: basic skills in grades J, 5, 8 and 10; a C.R.T.. LEA provides remedial and determines if student has mastered objectives and is ready to go on. The standards are set by SEA, ultimate decision by LA.

application of busic skills; grade 10 only: required to graduat on by State. LEA cannot override decision.

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Minimum Competency

Table I Characteristics of Programs

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Table I Characteristics of Programs

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At Secondary Level Districts have three options: 1. State developed tests, 2. Commercial test upproved by State, and 3. Test developed by self and approved by State

At Elementary Level Districts may use any test

Table I Characteristics of Programs Minimum Competency

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Table I Characteristics of Programs

NE4: Testing is required in reading, math and writing. Other subject areas are at local discretion. Testing begins in fifth grade and continues until passing or graduation. A student has no limit on how many times

s are required to not use test results for promotion or retq

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results do not affect accreditation.

NE3: Choice of instruments is up to LEA. State Department of Education developed a test which is used in about 80 percent of districts.

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Table I Characteristics of Programs

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	The writing by the Stat developed b versions of	g test is ce. State yy State i test sta	The writing test is locally developed. All other sections are developed by the State. State test is a variation of an Adult Performance Test developed by State in 1977. All items are changed each year, with new versions of test statistically linked to previous versions.	reloped. / variation] items av]inked to	All other of an Adu re changed previous	section: It Perfo each ye versions	s are dev srmance T sar, with	developed e Test ith new	NY2:	Gra 9 in ener	таl matl	tes fo taken n and 1	tes for high school diploma taken at any grade in high i and repeated as often as n	choul di rade in as often	Interface the high school diploma > 9 may be taken at any grade in high school after completing course eneral math and repeated as often as needed.	ul afte 1.	r comple	eting cou		
. MM6 :	Test total community r Scores in r writing are Test has 10	score is resources, reading, m scored s subject	Test total score is based on scores in health, consumer economics, community resources, government and law, and occupational knowledge. Scores in reading, math, language arts, social studies, science, and writing are scored separately as subscales, but do not count in tota Test has 10 subject areas (plus writing) with 200 items (plus writin	ores in hu and law, ige arts, i is subscalt writing)	ealth, con and occup social stu es, but do with 200	sumer ec ational dies, sc not cou items (F	conomics, knowledge. sience, and int in tota olus writin	s, edge. and total iting												

N Tests are gi in 10th grade to all student. Retesting is available in 11th and grades. -----

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H	Testing is in reading, math and writing. Three tests are required between 1st and 12th gradesone in grades 1-4, one in grades 5-8, and one in grades 9-12. Other subjects are uptional.	ng, math and ng, math and n gradesone -12. Other g	writing e in grade subjects a	Three ter Three ter es 1-4, one are optiona	ucal opi stsare Eingra	tton. required ides 5-8,		1- X O	Results rates)	Results of tests are not pr tates) on an unnual basis.	ts are nnual	not pr basis.	ovided t SEA eva	o the S luates	tate (ir 1/5 of a	ncludir dis	Results of tests are not provided to the State (includiny pass/fail Lates) on an unnual basis. SEA evaluates 1/5 of all districts each	aí l ach			دست الحا
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Characteristics of Programs

Table I

State proyram is included in "Minimum Standards for Elementary and Secondary Schools." Pupil performance objectives were developed. Texitury is to assess these objectives. Specific objectives and their assessment are a local choice. Performance objectives do give a degree of

rades			Other/Notes	Dhjectives at grades 3,5,8 Established by	committees ncross the State. They determine the	bbjectives and the test built around objective	2 Early warning system to find students having	difficulties in	hath and provi-	program for	those students
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Minimum Competency

Table I Character:stics of Programs

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Texas Assessment of Husic Skills (TAHS) started in 1980 under legislative mandate, testing grades 5 and 9. Grade 3 was added in 1981. Retests are available in grades 10, 11 and 12. Retesting was first available in 1982. It was not mandatory until 1984.

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Table I Characteristics of Programs

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VT1: Students can take test at any time that LEA wishes between kindergarten and graduation. Test and standards are totally at local discretion.