A test designed to indicate which students need further instruction in basic skills will be administered to all public school second graders during next week, according to State Superintendent J. Kelly Nix.

Students who fail to attain the 75 percent score required to pass the Basic Skills Test will either receive additional instruction or be retained in the second grade, Nix said.

“The purpose of this test is not to fail students. Instead, it is an attempt to identify students who are lacking needed basic skills and provide them with remediation,” Nix said.

Betty Cooper, Lafayette Parish School Board Supervisor of Student Services, explained the tests are merely competency tests.

“The tests are given to make sure the students have accomplished the basic skills in reading, mathematics and language arts,” Mrs. Cooper said. “We want to know that the students meet the standards the state has set up.”

Nix estimates that 13 to 17 percent of the current second grade class will not achieve the 75 percent score required to pass the test. He added that the test will play a major role in grade promotion beginning this school year.

However, retention rates may be lower since other factors — grades, attendance, parental and student involvement — are also considered when deciding whether a student will be promoted to the next grade.

The test will be composed of two sections, language arts and mathematics. Second graders must correctly answer 75 percent of the 60 questions on each section of the test.

The Basic Skills Test will be given under normal classroom conditions by the regular classroom teacher. All second graders will be tested during the same week, but testing days will vary among schools.