



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ALIGNMENT OF GEORGIA'S TESTING PROGRAM TO THE GEORGIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

- **Because the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) will be used to instruct students in certain grades and content areas beginning in the 2005 – 2006 school year, will Georgia's state mandated tests be aligned to the GPS in those grades and content areas?**

Yes. The state's mandated testing program will follow the roll-out schedule for the GPS. During the first year of implementation, when Georgia educators are learning about the new curriculum, test items are written, reviewed and approved by Georgia educators, and field tested. (Please note that field test items do not contribute to a student's score.) Students will be assessed on the GPS only after they have received instruction in the classroom, which is scheduled to occur the second year of implementation. Following the GPS rollout schedule, only tests in certain grades and content areas will be aligned to the GPS during the 2005 – 2006 school year. Tests in other content areas and grades will be aligned to the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC), as it is the curriculum taught in those areas.

- **Will there ever be a period of time during which students are tested on a curriculum other than which they have been taught?**

No. All tests will be aligned in the order shown on the GPS rollout schedule. GPS operational assessments will begin the second year of implementation (the year the GPS is taught in Georgia classrooms). At no time will students have been taught one curriculum and tested on another.

- **What are the first GPS tests to be rolled out?**

The Winter 2005 End of Course Tests (EOCT) in English/language arts (9th Grade Literature and Composition; American Literature and Composition) and science (Biology; Physical Science) will be the first GPS tests to be administered. All subsequent EOCT administrations in these content areas will assess the GPS.

In Spring 2006, the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) will assess the GPS in the following content areas and grades:

- Reading – grades 1 – 8
- English/Language Arts – grades 1 – 8
- Math – grade 6
- Science – grades 6 and 7

All other grades and content areas will be aligned to the QCC.

In Spring 2006, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) will reflect a transitional blueprint in *English/language arts and science* that aligns to both the GPS and the QCC. It is important to remember the GHS GT assesses core content and skills students have had an opportunity to learn throughout their high school careers. Because Georgia does not mandate course sequence, some eleventh-grade students in the spring of 2006 will have received previous instruction on the core concepts/skills assessed based solely on the QCC, while others may be enrolled in English and science courses that are based the GPS. The Georgia Department of Education worked with Georgia educators to identify those core concepts/skills that are common to both curricula and to develop a plan that will ensure students are tested on concepts they will have had an opportunity to learn – whether instruction was provided through the QCC or the GPS. This transitional blueprint will be in effect for two years (2005 – 2006 and 2006 – 2007). A solely GPS aligned GHS GT in English/language arts and science will be implemented in the spring of 2008, at which time all first time test takers (i.e., eleventh graders) will have had only GPS instruction during their high school careers. Administration of retests must be closely monitored; for example, students required to retest in English or science in the Spring of 2006 should continue to take the QCC version.

Georgia's Writing Assessments will be reviewed for alignment to the GPS beginning in the spring of 2005. The Writing and Conventions strands of the GPS follow standard principles for writing – content development and organization, style, sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. These are universal characteristics found in all writing rubrics, including those for the Georgia Writing Assessments. Georgia educators will recommend whether changes are needed based on the new curriculum.

- **What resources will be available to schools to assist with understanding the GPS-aligned assessments?**

More specific details about how the concepts and skills in the GPS are assessed will be available in May of 2005 when Test Content Descriptions are published. Sample items, illustrative of the types students will encounter on the assessments, will also be posted on the Georgia Department of Education's webpage. Finally, in the Fall of 2005, the online item bank will match the content areas implemented in the 2005 – 2006 school year, thus teachers will have access to items that match the curriculum they teach.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

Two resources:

1. Your local System Test Coordinators
2. Melissa Fincher, Assistant Director of Testing, Georgia Department of Education
404.651.9405 / mfincher@doe.k12.ga.us