

Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** System Testing Directors and Coordinators

**FROM:** Jeff Barker, Ph.D.  
Director, Assessment Administration Division

**DATE:** August 1, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Guidance for Special Needs Scholarship Students to Participate in State Assessments

In 2007, the State Legislature passed Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship Program. This program provides students with disabilities the opportunity to attend eligible private schools. The law also allows scholarship students to participate in state assessments. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding how scholarship students attending private schools may participate in state testing for the 2008-2009 school year.

### Location

School systems are not required to test scholarship students at their local facilities. The Georgia Department of Education will assign a testing location and administer the requested assessment(s). This location may be at the GaDOE offices in Atlanta or a regional facility (i.e. RESA or ETTC). The assignment of a testing location will be made at the discretion of the GaDOE based on availability and capacity.

### Applicable Assessments

Scholarship students are eligible to take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in grades one through eight, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) in grade eleven, and the Writing Assessments in grades five, eight, and eleven.

### Notification/ Scheduling

If a student is attending a private school under the scholarship provisions of SB10, then the parents/legal guardians must advise the Assessment Administration Division of the Georgia Department of Education of their desire for the student to be assessed with a state assessment. **This notification should be in writing and provided no less than six weeks prior to the first day of the scheduled state testing window.** A form is provided with this memorandum to submit such requests.

### Transportation

Parents/legal guardians assume responsibility for the transportation of the scholarship student to and from the designated testing location on the scheduled day(s). Parents/legal guardians must make certain that the student arrives punctually for testing.

Accommodations

If testing accommodations are to be provided for the student during the assessment(s), then the parents/legal guardians must provide evidence of the type of accommodations and rationale for such accommodations at the time of the request for testing so that the testing center can make the necessary arrangements. The evidence for the need for accommodations during testing is typically part of a student's IEP. A current IEP from the private school is the preferred documentation. If a current IEP from the private school is not available, the parent is responsible for producing documentation from the student's current school that describes the accommodations that the private school affords the student in instruction and assessment at that school. Documentation should be written on the private school letterhead and signed by the principal. The GaDOE will not honor any accommodations that are not authorized as indicated in the current Student Assessment Handbook and/or Examiners Manual. These documents may be assessed on the GaDOE testing website: [http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_testing.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx).

2008-2009 State Testing Dates

<b>Test</b>	<b>Administration Date(s)</b>	<b>Application Deadline</b>
Grade 8 Writing Assessment	January 21, 2009	December 5, 2008
Georgia High School Writing Test	February 25, 2009	January 9, 2009
Grade 5 Writing Test	March 4, 2009	January 16, 2009
Georgia High School Graduation Tests	March 30-April 3, 2009	February 13, 2009
Criterion Referenced Competency Tests	May 4- May 8, 2009*	March 20, 2009

\*Grades 1-2 will only test on three days from May 4 – 6, 2009.

Please direct inquires regarding this policy to Deborah Houston in the Assessment Administration Division at 404-657-0251 or [dhouston@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dhouston@doe.k12.ga.us).

**cc:** Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools  
Martha Reichrath, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Standards, Instruction and Assessment  
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