



A Proposal to Redesign Secondary Assessment

Introduction

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is looking at a proposal to redesign the secondary assessment system by phasing out the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) and modifying the End of Course Test (EOCT) program. The result will be a ***single coherent assessment system*** that will provide measures of student achievement directly following instruction. This assessment system will also serve as the basis for determining diploma eligibility and will satisfy the accountability requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

The plan is intended as an initial ‘high-level’ overview based on preliminary discussions. A comprehensive development and transition plan is forthcoming to address all the critical elements in the full project.

Proposed Assessments

All students will take at least two EOCT in each of four content areas: English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

Figure 1, below, shows the proposed assessments in each content area:

Figure 1: Proposed High School Assessments

English/ Language Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•9th Grade Literature•10th Grade Literature
Mathematics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Math I•Math II
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Biology•Physical Science OR Physics
Social Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•World History•US History & American Government•Economics

This model makes use of existing EOCTs in 9th grade literature, biology, physical science, and economics. The mathematics EOCTs are presently on track for development in 2008-2009.

The plan calls for the 10th grade literature assessment to be revised from the American literature test. Essentially, this test will be modified to be 'neutral' with respect to literary type. Regardless of which literature class a student takes in their 10th grade year (e.g. world literature, British literature, etc.), this assessment will cover the essential knowledge and skills common across these courses.

Finally, new EOCTs will be developed in physics, world history, and U.S. history/ American government.

Instead of testing at a fixed point during high school, administrations would be scheduled at the end of each term (winter, spring, and summer) in order for a student to be tested immediately after completing the required course or courses. Retest opportunities will be provided for those students that do not pass the assessment on the initial attempt.

Accountability

Four performance levels will be established for each assessment:

- Level 1: Below Proficiency
- Level 2: Basic Proficiency
- Level 3: Advanced Proficiency
- Level 4: Honors

A student must achieve a score in Level 2 or "Basic Proficiency" on at least two EOCT in each content area in order to be eligible for a high school diploma.

For NCLB accountability purposes, it is proposed that a student will be counted as *proficient* in ELA if he/she achieves Level 2 on the 10th Grade Literature EOCT. Likewise, for the Math content area, NCLB *proficiency* is achieved by a Level 2 score on the Math II EOCT.

Level 3 or "Advanced Proficiency" can be regarded as the standard for "College/ Work Readiness" under the American Diploma Project (ADP). This standard will describe a level of mastery that would exempt a student from learning support courses in a University System of Georgia (USG) institution.

Finally, Level 4 or "Honors" describes a distinguished level of performance that can be considered for earning an extra point in GPA calculations for HOPE. Alternately, systems may consider this as a criterion for additional honors, such as a diploma with distinction.

Transition Process and Considerations

Successful transition to the assessment plan described above will involve many critical steps. Below are listed the essential elements:

- Substantial stakeholder feedback on the proposed model should be solicited and appropriate changes incorporated.
- Assessment contracts will need to be renegotiated in order to develop new EOCTs. The Assessment division will look to streamline this process by taking advantage of appropriate items from the GHS GT bank, where possible, Nevertheless, it is likely that additional costs will be incurred in the transition years when new EOCTs are being developed while the GHS GT is maintained.
- To maintain legal defensibility, notification will have to be issued at least two years before the first cohort of students are held to new diploma eligibility requirements.
- Changes to SBOE Testing Rule will need to be adopted.
- The new assessment system would have to be resubmitted for peer review by the United States Department of Education (USED).
- A new accountability model under NCLB will have to be approved by USED. Also, substantial reworking of GaDOE's internal AYP processing system will be necessary. The construction of this new system will be another substantial budget item.

Proposed Timeline

For the reasons listed above, it is proposed that the new assessment system be operationalized no sooner than the 2009-2010 academic year.

Students entering high school prior to fall 2009 would take the former GHS GT for purposes of diploma eligibility. The GHS GT would be maintained for any students who started high school under the GHS GT requirement (prior to 2009-2010).

Figure 2, presents a draft timeline for the major development activities necessary to operationalize the new assessment and accountability system.

Figure 2: Assessment Development Timeline

