

## Georgia Alternate Assessment

Georgia requires all students to participate in grade level district and statewide assessment programs. For any grade where all students are assessed, students with disabilities must participate in the regular assessment, modified assessment, or the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA). The GAA promotes a vision of enhancing capacities and integrated life opportunities for students who experience significant cognitive disabilities. This assessment program is a portfolio of student work that enables the demonstration of achievement and progress relative to selected skills that are aligned to the Georgia curriculum. The portfolio is used to capture student learning and achievement/progress in four content areas: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Committees of Georgia educators developed the requirements of the portfolio system including the number of required pieces of evidence of student performance of tasks aligned to content standards (i.e., student work samples), types of evidence, and the parameters/timing of the collection of student work samples.

GAA portfolio entries are scored for four discrete dimensions: fidelity to standard, context, achievement/progress, and generalization. A separate score is assigned for each dimension. The focus is on academic content and skills.

- Kindergarten assembles a portfolio in English/Language Arts and Mathematics
- Grades 3-8 and 11 assemble a portfolio in English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

### Portfolio Collection Periods:

1. Achievement/Progress is documented in two collection periods during a school year. The first collection period provides evidence of a student's entry-level performance (initial performance of the skill); the second collection period provides evidence of a student's achievement/progress to date.
2. The collection period window between the first collection period and the second collection period is a minimum of fourteen days to a maximum of five months.

Teachers collect evidence of student performance of tasks aligned to content standards. This evidence shows a student's achievement/progress toward those standards.

As part meeting federal requirements for state standards and assessments systems, the GAA was peer reviewed by a team of external experts in the fields of standards and assessments. This team was convened by the US Department of Education and considered evidence in the following areas: content and academic achievement standards; technical quality; alignment; inclusion; and scoring and reporting. The GAA was found to meet nationally recognized professional and technical standards for alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards.

### High School Retest Opportunities

Beginning in Fall 2011 and in subsequent years, students pursuing a diploma, who are assessed using the GAA and who did not achieve a proficient score on one or more content area(s), will be offered retest opportunities. Three testing windows are offered each year. Students may retest in a content area(s) in which they did not receive a proficient score (i.e., received a proficiency level of Established Progress). Only students who were enrolled in the ninth grade during the 2008-2009 school year and beyond, and who are seeking a regular education diploma, may exercise the option to retest. Students seeking a special education diploma are not required to retest.

If you have a student with a significant cognitive disability who is unable to be successful on state wide assessment even with appropriate supports and accommodations, you should arrange an IEP meeting to discuss your concerns. Be sure to include a Special Education Administrator and your school psychologist. At that meeting, be prepared to review previous test scores, testing accommodations, and overall performance. The team will complete a GAA Participation form to help determine if the student should participate in the GAA.

Each year, special education administrators ask teachers to complete updated roster of student participating in GAA. Training will be provided annually prior to the collection window opening in the fall. Periodic reviews of portfolios will be completed throughout the year by special education administrators.

For information on the GAA see <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/GAA.aspx>.