


Student Testing in Georgia

 **The Georgia Milestones Assessment System** (Georgia Milestones) is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 will take an end-of-grade assessment in each content area, while high school students will take an end-of-course assessment for each of the eight courses designated by the State Board of Education.

Features the Georgia Milestone Assessment System include:

- **open-ended** (constructed-response) items in language arts and mathematics (all grades and courses);
- **a writing component** (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the language arts assessment;
- **norm-referenced** items in all content areas and courses, to complement the criterion-referenced information and to provide a national comparison; and
- **transition to online** administration over time, with online administration considered the primary mode of administration and paper-pencil as back-up until the transition is complete.

The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) is a key component of the Georgia Student Assessment Program. An essential tenet of both the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), is the fact that states must ensure that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to a general curriculum that encompasses challenging academic standards. States must also ensure that all students are assessed for their progress toward meeting academic standards.

In order to accomplish this, states must have curricular standards that include all students and then must assess those students with statewide tests of achievement or develop an alternate assessment. Students with significant cognitive disabilities may be assessed via an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The US Department of Education (USDOE) defines an alternate achievement standard as one that "sets an expectation of performance that differs in complexity from a grade-level achievement standard." Alternate achievement standards must be aligned to state academic content standards, although they may reflect prerequisite or entry-level skills.

The GAA 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. This assessment program promotes a vision of enhancing capacities and integrated life opportunities for students who experience significant cognitive disabilities. 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.

Georgia educators also informed the development of the rubrics by which the student work samples are evaluated. The 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.

Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS)

The Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) is a year-long, performance-based assessment aligned to the state mandated content standards. The goal of the assessment program is to provide teachers with information about the level of instructional support needed by individual students

entering kindergarten and first grade. GKIDS will allow teachers to assess student performance during instruction, record student performance in an on-line database, and generate reports for instructional planning, progress reports, report cards, SST, and/or parent conferences. Throughout the year, teachers may assess students and record GKIDS data based on their system's curriculum map or report card schedule. At the end of the year, summary reports and individual student reports will be generated based on the data the teacher has entered throughout the year.

The primary purpose of GKIDS is to provide ongoing diagnostic information about kindergarten students' developing skills in English Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, Personal/Social Development, and Approaches to Learning. GKIDS will also provide a summary of student performance in English Language Arts and Mathematics at the end of the kindergarten school year. GKIDS should serve as one indicator of first grade readiness. GKIDS will serve both a formative and summative role in assessing kindergarten students. There are seven areas or domains of learning that are assessed as part of GKIDS:

- English Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Social Studies (optional)
- Science (optional)
- Approaches to Learning
- Personal and Social Development
- Motor Skills (optional)

ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science standards will be assessed using two to five performance levels for each element.:

- Not Yet Demonstrated
- Emerging
- Progressing
- Meets the Standard
- Exceeds the Standard

There are three non-academic areas that can be assessed using GKIDS: Approaches to Learning, Personal and Social Development, and Motor Skills. The Motor Skills domain is optional. Teachers may choose to record motor skills data only for students that demonstrate an area of concern. Students are assessed using the following performance levels:

- Area of Concern
- Developing
- Consistently Demonstrating

The Approaches to Learning domain of GKIDS includes the following three general categories:

- Curiosity and Initiative/Creativity/Problem Solving
- Attention/Engagement/Persistence

Personal Development

- Demonstrates self confidence/positive attitude
- Adjusts well to changes in routines and environments
- Expresses emotions and needs through appropriate words and actions

Social Development

- Treats others with respect in words and actions
- Shows caring for others
- Follows directions and school rules
- Respects the property of others
- Works cooperatively with others

Motor Skills

Statements of observable student behaviors related to fine and gross motor skills are assessed in this category.

ACCESS for ELLs (English Language Learners)

ACCESS for ELLs is administered, annually, to all English learners in Georgia. ACCESS for ELLs is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure English learners' social and academic proficiency in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context

across the four language domains. ACCESS for ELLs meets the federal requirements that mandates require states to evaluate EL students in grades K through 12 on their progress in learning to speak English. ACCESS for ELLs is used to determine the English language proficiency levels and progress of ELLs in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. ACCESS for ELLs serves five main purposes. These include:

- determining the English language proficiency level of students;
- providing districts with information that will help them evaluate the effectiveness of their ESOL programs;
- providing information that enhances instruction and learning in programs for English language learners;
- assessing annual English language proficiency gains using a standards-based assessment instrument;
- providing data for meeting federal and state requirements with respect to student assessment.

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is a newly developed, individually administered test. It is intended **only for English learners with significant cognitive disabilities that are severe enough to prevent meaningful participation in the ACCESS for ELLs assessment**. Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is not intended for ELLs who can be served with special education accommodations on ACCESS for ELLs. Decisions regarding a student's participation must be made by an IEP team. The test is available for the 1-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12 grade clusters.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

For more than 40 years, information on what American students know and can do has been generated by the [National Assessment of Educational Progress \(NAEP\)](#). It is the first ongoing effort to obtain comprehensive and dependable achievement data on a national basis in a uniform and scientific manner. Commonly known as the "Nation's Report Card", NAEP is a congressionally mandated project of the U.S. Department of Education's [National Center for Education Statistics \(NCES\)](#). NCES is responsible, by law, for administering the NAEP project through competitive awards to qualified organizations. [The National Assessment Governing Board \(NAGB\)](#), appointed by the Secretary of Education but independent of the Department of Education, governs and sets policy for NAEP. The primary goals of NAEP are to measure the current status of the educational attainments of young Americans and to report changes and long-term trends in those attainments. Follow this link for further testing information:
<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>