

**Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG)**  
**Frequently Asked Questions**  
**Spring 2016**

**I read/heard that the State Board of Education (SBOE) threw out the scores for the Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) tests. Is that true?**

No. The SBOE voted to *waive the use of the scores* in promotion and retention decisions for students in grades 3, 5, and 8. The State Board did not vote to ‘throw out’ the scores.

State Board Rule 160-4-2-.11, PROMOTION, PLACEMENT, AND RETENTION, requires that students demonstrate mastery of grade level content and skills in reading in grades 3, 5, and 8 and in mathematics in grades 5 and 8. Students who are not on grade-level are considered candidates for retention.

This action was taken by the SBOE in an abundance of caution given *some* districts and schools experienced *some* interruptions during the online administration of the EOG this spring. Many districts tested without incident.

Please note that this waiver does not preclude school districts from applying local policies and protocols for promotion and retention decisions for individual students.

**What types of interruptions were experienced?**

During this year’s administration of the EOG, some local school districts reported technology-related interruptions with online testing. While some of these events were short-term and quickly resolved with minimal impact to student experiences, others required more extensive technical support.

The online administration of the test requires each student have a persistent connection to the Internet. This connection can be broken for a variety of reasons – such as when the Internet goes down at the school, district, or regional level. Other reasons may be more complicated given the variety of devices students use as well as how the devices connect to the Internet (wireless or wired).

When a student’s connection to the Internet is broken, or not persistent, it can cause the student to be ‘kicked out’ of the test session. Sometimes a student’s test ticket (the information that allows the student to log-in to take their test) must be reset. Many times this can be done by school or district staff, but sometimes the Help Desk must be called to assist. Depending on the circumstances, the student may have to wait a few minutes or longer before he/she can log back into their session.

On the morning of Tuesday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, our state experienced some lags in the performance of the online platform. This lagging prevented students from being able to move forward within their test and caused some students to be kicked out of their test session. The issue causing the delays was identified and corrected mid-morning of the same day.

Additionally, some students experienced delays during the social studies test. Because the social studies test contains a high number of graphics (such as maps, charts, etc.), more capacity (bandwidth) was

necessary to download the items to student machines. Once this issue was understood, item files were compressed and performance improved significantly.

**Were student responses lost when a student experienced an interruption?**

No. The online platform has a mechanism that allows student responses to be cached (or saved). Once the student is able to log back in to the test session, he/she returns to the last test item he/she was working on.

**Given the SBOE waiver and the interruptions, are the results of the EOG meaningful to schools, teachers, and parents?**

Yes. Only the use of the scores for a very specific purpose – promotion and retention in grades 3, 5, and 8 – was waived. Districts, schools, teachers, and parents can (and should) use the results to understand how well their students have mastered the grade-level content standards used in instruction. The results can inform educational planning.

Importantly, Georgia Milestones is *one* measure; it is not the sum total of all the student has learned throughout the school year. Test scores should always be reviewed in concert with other information about student achievement.

**When will schools receive score reports?**

Scores began to post for districts and schools on Thursday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. Receipt of scores is based on when the district and school tested.

Scores for the EOG have been delayed slightly so that a preliminary analysis could be conducted to investigate the potential impact of the online interruptions experienced by some districts and schools. These preliminary analyses did not find a systemic impact.

**When will parents receive score reports?**

Score reports will be printed and shipped to school districts in July. Prior to the shipment of the printed reports, districts and schools receive electronic copies of student scores and may communicate the results to parents through their typical process.