

December 3, 2021  
The Honorable Miguel Cardona  
Secretary of Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

Pursuant to 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4), the Georgia Department of Education is requesting a one-year waiver from the alternate assessment 1.0 percent participation cap placed on states under the *Every Student Succeeds Act*. Georgia requested, and was granted, a similar waiver for 2020-2021. As detailed in this waiver request, Georgia utilized the time granted by the waiver to plan and implement a number of changes that support the State's objective of being at or below the cap. Receiving a one-year waiver extension will afford Georgia the time necessary to continue to review, revise, and implement State guidelines and LEA supports to address the percentage of students who are administered the State's alternate assessment.

The Georgia Department of Education is committed to ensuring that the State's alternate assessment is administered to only those students for whom it is intended. Within this waiver request, you will find updated alternate assessment data, documentation of changes to policies and guidelines, and details on State supports to LEAs. Additionally, all waiver submission requirements have been provided along with a plan and timeline for continuing the State's alternate assessment cap efforts during the 2021-2022 school year.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this waiver request. Should you have questions, please feel free to contact Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, by phone at 470-579-6353 or email at [atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Woods  
Georgia's School Superintendent

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Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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**ESSA ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT 1.0 PERCENT CAP  
WAIVER REQUEST FOR 2021-2022**

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## 1. ESSA's 1.0 Percent Cap and Georgia's Alternate Assessment

Section 1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I) of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)* places a state-level 1.0 percent cap on the number of students who can be assessed using a State's alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-AAAS) in each subject area. Assessment participation data from the 2020-2021 school year reveal that Georgia was above the 1.0 percent cap, having utilized the State's alternate assessment to assess greater than 1.0 percent of students across each of the four content areas. GaDOE anticipates that Georgia will exceed the 1.0 percent cap in 2021-2022. Therefore, the State is seeking a one-year waiver from the requirement as detailed in 34 CFR §200.6(c)(3). Georgia is seeking this waiver for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Receiving the waiver will provide the requisite time to further review, revise, and implement the guidelines and local educational agency (LEA) supports developed during the previous waiver. Under *ESSA* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* of 2004, states must ensure that all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to a general curriculum that encompasses challenging academic standards and are assessed in their progress toward meeting the academic standards. The Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0) is the State-provided AA-AAAS for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the general statewide assessment program, even with maximum allowable accommodations.

The GAA was initially developed in 2007 as a portfolio of student work that demonstrated progress and achievement on selected skills aligned to the State's curriculum. The assessment was redesigned significantly during 2017-2018, and the GAA 2.0 was implemented for the first time during the 2018-2019 school year. The GAA 2.0 includes standardized tasks with multiple levels of complexity, and it was designed to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to State academic content standards and are given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the knowledge, concepts, and skills inherent in the standards. The assessment was administered in 2018-2019 to all eligible students in grades K, 3-8, and 11 for English language arts and mathematics and in grades 5, 8, and 11 in science and social studies. If testing had occurred in the 2019-2020 school year it would have been administered as in the 2018-2019 school year. Due to recent changes in practice and in state law, the GAA 2.0 assessment is no longer administered in grade K and in grade 5 social studies. Those changes include the adaptation of the GKIDS 2.0 assessment to meet the needs of all learners, including those with the most severe cognitive development, thus eliminating the need for kindergarten students to take the GAA 2.0, and the discontinuation of the state grade 5 social studies EOG. The assessment was administered in 2020-2021 to all eligible students in grades 3-8 and 11 for English language arts and mathematics and in grades 5, 8, and 11 in science and grades 8 and 11 in social studies.

## 2. Waiver Submission Requirements

### 2.1 Ninety-day Requirement

States are required (34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)i) to submit the alternate assessment waiver at least 90 days prior to the start of the relevant subject testing windows. The 2021-2022 testing window for GAA 2.0 is March 21 through April 29, 2022. In submitting this waiver on December 3, 2021, the State has met this requirement.

### 2.2 Data Requirements

States are required (34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)ii) to provide the number and percentage of student subgroups defined in section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), and (D) who were assessed using the AA-AAAS. (Appendix A.1). States are also required to provide data showing that 95 percent of all students and the Students with

Disabilities subgroup, as identified in section 1111(c)(2)(C), were administered a State assessment. Appendix A.3 and A.4 provide the number and percentage for both of these student subgroups for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for the 2020-2021 school year and the 2018-2019 school year. Appendix A.2 provides the percentage of LEAs exceeding the 1.0 percent cap by student subgroup for the 2020-2021 school year and the 2018-2019 school year for English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

The percentage of students assessed via the GAA 2.0 in 2020-2021 was 1.4 for English language arts, mathematics and science and 1.8 for social studies. The estimated percentage of students who will be assessed via the GAA 2.0 in 2021-2022 is 1.3 for English language arts, mathematics, and science (Appendix A.5). With the changes in EOC testing under SB 367, a credible estimate for social studies could not be determined.

Historically, Georgia has tested over 95% of students on state assessments. However, the requirement that 95 percent of all students and Students with Disabilities be assessed was not met for all content areas by grade level in 2020-2021 due to COVID 19 learning disruptions. The pandemic greatly impacted schools, causing them to pivot and provide online instruction for many students. Guidance was issued to districts, in line with federal guidance, that virtual students should not be required to come into school buildings solely for the purpose of taking assessments if they were uncomfortable doing so due to the pandemic. The Assessment and Accountability Division explored the possibility of providing remote state assessments online but decided against it due to assessment equity and assessment security concerns. For the 2021-2022 school year, all LEAs have returned to providing in-person instruction, and online instruction is minimal. It is anticipated that testing levels will return to their pre-pandemic rates.

In 2020-2021, English language arts and mathematics assessments were required for students in grades 3 through 8 and in American Literature and Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra in high school courses. Science was assessed in grades 5 and 8 and in the Biology and Physical Science (only 8<sup>th</sup> grade) high school courses, and social studies in grade 8 and the U.S. History high school course.

Appendix A provides the number enrolled, number tested, and percentage of enrolled students who were assessed using Georgia Milestones and GAA for each of the required end-of-grade (A.3) and end-of-course (A.4) subjects for the 2020-2021 school year. Data are provided for all students and Students with Disabilities subgroup. State level 2020-2021 participation files by content area, grade level, and subject area will be published on the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) website. It is important to note that there are no major discrepancies in the participation rates of the all students group and the participation rates of the Students with Disabilities subgroup (Appendix A.3 and Appendix A.4).

### 3. Implementation and 2021 Plan

During 2018-2019, GaDOE developed a plan to address the 1.0 percent cap and began implementing the guidelines and supports designed to ensure that the State's alternate assessment, based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAAS), is administered to only those students for whom it is intended. Activities continued in the 2019-2020 and the 2020-2021 school years. This section details completed, ongoing, and newly-planned waiver-related work by the State since the submission of the initial waiver. These efforts include an overhaul of the participation guidelines provided to LEAs, technical assistance and supports to LEAs, and ensuring that any disproportionality issues in alternate assessment administration are addressed. Most recently, the monitoring of this work has been integrated into Cross Functional Monitoring and implementing planned technical assistance for districts based on their data. Unfortunately, COVID-19 disrupted this work in schools, but efforts continue.

### 3.1 Improving the Implementation of State Guidelines

As required by 34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)(iv)(A), the State improved its guidelines to ensure that all regulations included in §200.6(d) (State guidelines for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities) have been adequately addressed. The new guidelines ensure that the State has established, consistent with section 612(a)(16)(C) of the IDEA, clear and appropriate guidelines for IEP teams to apply when making participation determinations and monitoring the implementation of these guidelines.

*3.1.1 State Eligibility Criteria:* The State reviewed and revised the eligibility criteria for the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAAS). In developing eligibility criteria for the administration of GAA 2.0, GaDOE completed a significant overhaul of the participation guidelines made available to districts. The *Participation Guidelines for the Georgia Alternate Assessment* were revised through an iterative process with educators and were finalized for publication as the *Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0* in November of 2018 for the 2018-2019 school year. It was expected at that time that Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams would utilize the previous participation guidelines if teams had met and established participation in the alternate assessment prior to November of 2018 until the IEP team met next. Those students whose IEP teams met following November of 2018 were required to utilize the revised eligibility criteria. Any subsequent meetings to establish participation on the GAA 2.0 would be required for all IEP teams considering assessment options for students with cognitive disabilities utilizing only the revised eligibility criteria as published in the *Student Assessment Handbook* the following 2019-2020 school year. Simply stated, since the guidelines were published in November 2018, most IEP decisions for 2018-2019 were already made and would not have been changed based on the new guidelines. Therefore, the new guidelines would have been first used statewide in spring 2019 and would impact placement decisions for the 2019-2020 school year and subsequently, in the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 school years.

The Georgia Department of Education Special Education Division and Assessment Division provided several training sessions intended to inform IEP teams of the usage of the new eligibility criteria and provided information regarding data sources and rationale for making evidence-based decisions.

In previous years, participation guidelines were provided as a flowchart. The revised eligibility criteria accompanying GAA 2.0 (Appendix B.1) involve a two-step process. First, the IEP team must review and answer the four eligibility criteria listed below.

- 1) Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings?** The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to ensure that he or she can learn, retain information, and transfer skills to other settings.
- 2) Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?** A significant cognitive disability is determined by the IEP team and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team. The significant cognitive disability must affect the student's intellectual functioning and be documented as such in the student's individualized education program (IEP).
- 3) Does the student require specialized supports to access and participate in the grade-level Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) that require modifications based on the student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)?** Access to the grade-level curriculum is mandated by the federal government. A student with a significant cognitive disability requires access to the GSEs through prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.

- 4) Does the student require specialized supports to demonstrate age-appropriate adaptive behavior?** A student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized support throughout the day in areas such as expressing his or her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.

For a student to be eligible to participate in the GAA 2.0, the IEP team must answer “yes” to all four questions. Additionally, IEP teams are expected to document sources of evidence and justifications for each criterion marked with a “yes”.

Step two of the determination process requires the IEP team to provide an assurance that each member of the team received training and guidance regarding student participation in State mandated assessments. The assurances include the following:

Under 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 300.320(a)(6) and [O.C.G.A § 20-2-281], if the IEP team determines that the student will take the GAA, the IEP team may provide additional summary statements of why the student cannot participate in the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, with or without allowable accommodations, and why the alternate assessment is appropriate for the student, including that all of the eligibility criteria are met.

The decision to administer GAA is based on multiple sources of measurable, objective evidence, including, but not limited to, current IEP PLAAFP statements, goals and/or objectives, report cards, progress reports, work samples, teacher observations, Full and Individual Evaluations (FIE), standardized achievement test results, and classroom, district, and statewide assessment results. This decision is not based solely on the student’s previous performance on statewide assessments.

The decision to administer GAA is made by the IEP team, not administratively based on federal accountability requirements, which limit the number of students taking an alternate assessment in the state. Although GAA is intended for a small number of students, the participation cap does not limit the number of students receiving special education services who may take the alternate assessment.

The decision to administer GAA is made by the IEP team based on the student’s educational needs and the instruction the student is receiving. This decision is not based solely on the student’s disability category and is not based on the student’s racial or economic background, excessive or extended absences, or amount of time or location of service delivery.

*3.1.2 Definition of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities:* The State’s definition of intellectual disability is provided in Appendix B.2. GaDOE reviewed this definition and determined that no revisions were required, as the current definition sufficiently ensures that:

The identification of a student as having a particular disability or as an English learner does not determine whether a student is a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities §200.6(d)(1)(i);

A student with the most significant cognitive disabilities is not identified solely on the basis of the student’s previous low academic achievement, or the student’s previous need for accommodations to participate in the general State or districtwide assessments §200.6(d)(1)(ii); and

A student is identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards §200.6(d)(1)(iii).

Additionally, GaDOE has emphasized with LEAs that participation on the State's alternate assessment should only occur when all eligibility criteria have been met and a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines that the student cannot meaningfully access the general statewide assessments, even with the maximum appropriate accommodations. IEP teams are required to follow the revised guidelines, and participation decisions shall not be based on any of the following:

- Disability category or label
- Expectation of poor performance on the Georgia Milestones assessment
- Accommodation requirements to participate in assessment process
- Previous poor performance
- Instructional setting or percent of time receiving special education services
- Attendance issues
- Anticipated emotional distress
- Anticipated disruptive behavior
- Native language or English learner status
- Economically disadvantaged status
- Impact of student scores on an accountability system
- Administrator or parent request

With the goal of reducing the state to at or below the 1.0 percent cap and ensuring that the State's alternate assessment is administered to only those students for whom it is intended, the State realizes that the work must start with kindergarten students. To that end, GaDOE has partnered with LEAs and school staff to identify the instructional supports necessary to help students in kindergarten through second grades better access the Georgia Standards of Excellence and the associated general assessment. With the understanding that once IEP teams have made the decision to place students on the GAA 2.0, it is difficult for them to reconsider their original decision, the following steps were taken to reduce the number of students in grades 3-8 and high school who are participating in the alternate assessment and to provide inclusive and accessible assessment resources for kindergarten students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

## **GKIDS 2.0**

### **Phase 1 – Focus Groups and Training**

- Implemented a series of educator focus groups and development meetings with kindergarten educators, specialists, district personnel, etc. with expertise with students with the most significant cognitive disabilities to identify the key needs of these students in accessing the state's kindergarten assessment resource (GKIDS).
- Through training and expanded teacher resources informed by the partnership with educators and school and district partners, increased awareness of supports in place and available to serve students being assessed on GKIDS with maximum access to content in the learning progressions.
- In training and communication with district and school leaders, increased focus on aligning assessment practices to instruction in that students instructed on the general content standards with support must be assessed on the general assessment with support.

### **Phase 2 – Development**

- Developed fully integrated comprehensive supports, guidance, and resources to extend access to GKIDS 2.0 learning progression content without separating out students who need additional support. The resources and guidance for using the learning progressions for Georgia's existing kindergarten assessment were expanded to allow teachers of students with the most significant

cognitive disabilities to assess a student's current skill level with comprehensive supports when necessary, and in doing so, preserve valuable information regarding the student's current support needs. In addition to best serving these students, a goal/intended outcome is to reduce the number of students tested using GAA 2.0 in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, by preventing overidentification in early grades, and providing teachers guidance on assessing students who require additional support on the general assessment given appropriate support.

- Developed an enhanced reporting process for GKIDS 2.0 that focuses on adding descriptive information (about the level of supports needed) as opposed to reducing or qualifying information (conditionalizing a score).

Estimates for alternate assessment participation in grade 3 based on Pre-ID records dropped by 15% between Fall 2018 and Fall 2019 based on pre-identification (Pre-ID) counts, and this decrease appears to be moderately maintained as this cohort rises, with a 6% decrease in grade 4 based on Fall 2020 Pre-ID as compared to grade 4 rates in Fall 2019 and a 2% decrease in grade 5 based on Fall 2021 Pre-ID as compared to grade 5 rates in Fall 2019. As this decrease is not observed across all upper grades, this may be interpreted to be the result of the efforts in place to reduce early overidentification for alternate participation. Additionally, we see sustained low rates in lower grades, with grade 3 students in Fall 2021 Pre-ID representing a 15% decrease from 2019 actuals. While actual test rates for Spring 2020 are unavailable due to the cancelation of spring testing, when comparing the Spring 2019 and Spring 2021 actual test rates, we see this drop maintained in the lower grades, with a 16% decrease in grade 3 testers across the two administrations of this assessment. Tracking a comparable cohort from grade 3 Spring 2019 to grade 5 Spring 2021, we see an 18% reduction in total testers. Although this must be taken into consideration with pandemic-related disruptions, this decrease, in conjunction with the ongoing efforts in place to reduce overidentification in early grades, is expected to continue to roll up, such that the decrease in the current lower grades is maintained in subsequent years, as that decrease continues for future cohorts entering grade 3. Importantly, a decrease of 14% is observed in students with mild intellectual disability documented as their primary disability placed on this assessment, when comparing Fall 2021 Pre-ID to Fall 2020 Pre-ID. This represents the impact of extensive training efforts in the past two years to support the placement of only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities on this assessment.

**3.1.3 LEA Assurances and Certifications:** In completing the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) mandatory GAA Participation Application, LEAs are required to provide assurances to the following statements.

- *A review of local policies, procedures, and practices has been conducted to assure they support appropriate identification of students for GAA 2.0 participation in accordance with State guidelines.*
- *The LEA has provided training and support to Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to ensure that IEP teams are adhering to eligibility guidelines for GAA 2.0*
- *A review of local GAA 2.0 participation will occur to ensure the LEA will identify and address, if necessary, any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup participating in the GAA 2.0*

Any LEAs failing to answer in the affirmative for all three assurances are identified to receive targeted technical assistance and supports. In October 2021, there were only two districts that failed to answer in the affirmative for all three statements regarding the 2021-2022 school year administration.

### **3.2 Support and Oversight of LEA Implementation**

In addition to updating State guidelines, GaDOE developed technical assistance and supports, as required by 34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)(iv)(B), to promote proper implementation of the guidelines among LEAs. GaDOE has devised a three-tier approach to technical assistance and supports. The intensity of services provided to each LEA is determined by the division of Special Education Services and Supports following an analysis of district-level GAA (2017-2018) and GAA 2.0 (2018-2019 and 2020-2021) participation data.

It should be noted that GaDOE staff members from the Division of Special Education and Supports, as well as the Division of Assessment and Accountability, have regularly participated since 2018 in the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) Community of Practice for the 1% Participation Threshold and the NCEO Peer Learning Groups (Digging into Your Data: Building a 1% Data Analysis and Use Plan; Guiding and Evaluating District Justifications IEP Team Decision Making)(B.3). GaDOE will continue to actively participate in similar sessions in order to learn from peers how best to support implementation of the 1.0 percent participation threshold for AA-AAAS participation by providing technical assistance.

#### *3.2.1 Universal Technical Assistance and Supports:*

GaDOE began providing universal technical assistance and supports to LEAs in 2017-2018 and continues to do so. These supports include guidelines, resources, and training to assist LEA administrators and local IEP team members during the GAA eligibility determination process. All LEAs were provided the GAA 2.0 eligibility criteria in 2018-2019. GaDOE has provided numerous resources and training opportunities to ensure LEAs and IEP teams understand and follow the updated criteria.

There were numerous conference presentations and webinars provided to special education directors, coordinators, and teachers, as well as parents, between January 2021 and November 2021, with more than a dozen more planned for December 2021 – March 2022. (B.4 Educational GAA 2.0 Support Jan 2021-March 2022). Additional conference sessions were planned but were canceled due to COVID-19. Other resources and supports include the 2021-2022 Student Assessment Handbook; 2021-2022 Accessibility & Accommodations Manual; monthly Assessment Update newsletters; GAA 2.0 Spring Test Administration Manual (B.5); GAA 2.0 resources including eligibility criteria forms, GAA 2.0 Pre and Post Administration Checklist, scoring, reporting, and teacher resources, and GAA 2.0 trainings (B.6); GAA 2.0 Parent Flyer (B.7); and GAA 2.0 development and training plan aimed at reducing placement of early learners on the alternate assessment pathway (B.8).

GaDOE has provided district level reports to assist LEAs in examining data and determining potential areas where additional scrutiny is warranted. LEAs have also received face-to-face, virtual and on-line instructions on how to access this data on-demand at the LEA level. The State is utilizing components of the District Dialogue Guide from NCEO to assist all districts in this process.

The State has presented sessions addressing the participation rate at conferences for the Georgia Council of Special Education Administrators (GCASE) and Georgia Compensatory Educational Leaders (GCEL). Consistent with the emphasis on instruction, a session on Specially Designed Instruction was presented during the November 2021 GCASE Conference.

During 2018-2019 and continuing in 2019-2020, face to face, “make and take” day-long professional learning opportunities were available to teachers in LEAs. By the end of the 2020 school year, ten of these sessions had occurred in regional locations. With the state hiatus of face-to-face meetings, regional

opportunities continued on a limited basis. There were at least seven in-person “make and take” sessions and two virtual sessions conducted by the regionally-based Georgia Learning Resource System. Webinars addressing instructional concerns were developed and posted on the State website during 2020-2021 and 2021-2022, along with multiple adaptive books, complete lessons and materials that are available on the Teacher Resource Link. Additional trainings in the planning process are face-to-face “make and take” opportunities, as soon as GaDOE-sponsored face-to-face meetings are reinstated.

A social media group targeted to educators who work with students with significant cognitive disabilities is planned to begin in 2021-2022 to share best practices and instructional resources.

As part of the cross-functional monitoring process, LEA participation rates in the alternate assessment are discussed and direct technical assistance is provided to support district efforts. Other needs for support are based on responses on the annual GAA Participation Application, LEA corrective action plans, GAA 2.0 participation data analysis, and field data collected by the Division of Special Education Services and Supports. Additionally, Georgia Learning Resources directors and district liaisons to each LEA were trained in eligibility criteria, instructional strategies, and examining district participation data to increase capacity to provide support and technical assistance to districts.

Since the GAA 2.0 was a new assessment for the 2018-2019 school year, webinar and in-person sessions regarding score interpretation included pointers for using score reports for potential indicators of participation appropriateness. GaDOE staff continues to provide support to districts and assist in identifying potential “red flags” that may warrant additional investigation.

GAA 2.0 now yields an achievement score that can be compared year to year. Once districts have more data points, they can examine trends in sustained proficiency. Additionally, the State is exploring ways to assist districts in utilizing data from the Learning Characteristics Inventory (new with the advent of the GAA 2.0) to include in the decision-making process.

### *3.2.2 Targeted Technical Assistance and Supports:*

Since many students with the most significant cognitive disabilities presented unique instructional challenges when learning shifted to a virtual format, GaDOE reframed support to districts during 2020-2021. Emphasis on instructional resources continued, with GaDOE developing webinars focusing on instruction in both virtual and in-person formats. A discrete webpage for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, which consolidated resources across the special education division in one place, was established.

With the implementation of the State Defined Alternate Diploma, new opportunities to assist districts in the decision-making process emerged. In addition to assisting districts in examining their decision-making process, GaDOE began renewed emphasis on instructional implications in addition to examining the percentage of students who participated in the alternate assessment.

With LEAs focusing on understanding which students would be appropriate for this credential, GaDOE developed a series of six, hour-long sessions addressing the characteristics of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. The series began with a back-to-basics “Who are the Students?” and progressed through the series discretely addressing the cognitive, adaptive behavior, communication and technology needs of students for whom alternate content standards are appropriate.

To further support a shift in emphasis, the terminology for the data element in the GaDOE Student Record data collection that designates a student as a participant in the alternate assessment was changed from “Georgia Alternate Assessment”(GAA) to “Alternate Content Standards” (ACS).

In collaboration with GaDOE’s Special Education Department, the Assessment Administration Division developed a series of accessibility and accommodations training courses to help LEAs make instructional and assessment decisions for Students with Disabilities. The Accessibility and Accommodations series included Understanding Key Concepts of the Accessibility and Accommodations Framework, Review of Accessibility and Accommodations Charts, Using Best Practices and Effective Decision Making, and Monitoring the Assignment of Assessment Accommodations. These courses were developed based on LEAs’ feedback to the Allowable Accommodations Charts: Ease of Use Survey published in the March and April 2021 Assessment Update Newsletters.

GaDOE has developed the targeted technical assistance and supports that are provided to LEAs above 1.0 percent, and the State is focusing currently on building staff capacity for this work. To broaden the capacity of GaDOE to provide more comprehensive supports and to assure that these supports were cohesive, a team representing the assessment, assistive technology, results-driven accountability, transition, and communication teams began meeting monthly to determine additional support needs. Determinations for support are based on responses on the annual GAA Participation Application, LEA corrective action plans, GAA 2.0 participation data analysis, and field data collected by the Division of Special Education Services and Supports. These services will include, but not be limited to, the following improvement targets:

- LEA capacity for gathering and analyzing district and school data pertaining to GAA participation rates;
- LEA capacity for gathering and analyzing data on the characteristics of students participating in the GAA;
- LEA capacity to address communication, adaptive behavior and technology needs of GAA participants;
- LEA capacity to provide and evaluate instructional and assessment accommodations;
- LEA capacity to provide professional development to IEP team members and other local educators on the nature of the GAA and who should participate; and
- capacity of parents of Students with Disabilities to participate in the IEP decision-making process.

### *3.2.3 Intensive Technical Assistance and Supports:*

The State is continuing to develop and improve the intensive technical assistance and supports to appropriate districts. This includes LEA-specific, one-on-one services for those LEAs demonstrating significant needs that cannot be addressed sufficiently through targeted services. Additionally, modules to support LEA staff training and consistent understanding of participation guidelines is being developed in conjunction with resources developed by the NCEO Peer Learning Groups and Community of Practice. In 2019, Jennifer White, a national consultant, conducted training at GaDOE. As a result, a group was formed to connect professionals who instruct students with significant cognitive disabilities. The Georgia Brigade was established as a monthly community of practice (CoP) open to professionals across the state to share resources and promote best practices for students with significant cognitive disabilities. To augment this CoP, additional resources to support technology use, promote enhanced communication skills development, and improve transition practices were developed and made available on the Significant Cognitive Disabilities (SCD) webpage. There is also a monthly webinar series that targets

specific aspects of providing instructional supports to students with significant cognitive disabilities. GaDOE is continuing to provide layers of support that are targeted to meet the discrete needs of classroom teachers who are instructing students and who are most likely the individuals who are providing direct input to IEP Teams as alternate content standards/alternate assessment decisions are being made.

Likewise, the State expanded the availability of parent information. A *Frequently Asked Questions* document (FAQ) for parents addressing the State Defined Alternate Diploma was developed and posted on the website in both English and Spanish. Through Parent Mentor Partnership and other outlets, live and recorded presentations continue to be available to be sure parents have adequate information to guide their participation in the process. Information on the State Defined Alternate Diploma was presented during the September 2021 Parent Mentor Kickoff meeting. More parent resources are planned to support parent understanding of the State-Defined Alternate Diploma and the impact of students receiving instruction using alternate content standards.

### 3.3 Disproportionality

The State began addressing student subgroup disproportionality in GAA participation through an LEA assurance included in the GAA Participation Application. During 2018-2019 and 2019-2020, additional State disproportionality work includes an annual analysis of risk ratios and the incorporation of disproportionality into universal and targeted technical assistance and supports.

*3.3.1 Assurance from Districts:* In Fall 2021, GaDOE administered its annual GAA Participation Application. All LEAs administering the GAA to one or more students under 34 CFR §200.2(a)(1) in 2020-2021 were required to provide assurances that the LEA adhered to State guidelines and that disproportionality issues were addressed. The GAA Participation Application contained an item addressing potential disproportionality among student subgroups. LEAs were required to provide assurance that any disproportionality in GAA participation among student subgroups listed under section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), or (D) of ESSA was addressed. LEAs provided that assurance by answering affirmatively to the following statement:

**“A review of local GAA participation will occur to ensure the LEA will identify and address, if necessary, any disproportionality in the percentage of students in any subgroup participating in the GAA.”**

Among the LEAs that anticipated administering the GAA, two responded “No” to the assurance. LEAs that responded “No” were identified for additional follow-up by the Division of Special Education Services and Supports.

*3.3.2 Disproportionality Data and Technical Assistance and Supports:* GaDOE is working to address any disproportionality issues, as required by 34 CFR §200.6(c)(4)(iv)(C). In January 2019 (for school year 2017-2018) and in October 2019 (for school year 2018-2019), LEAs were provided with relative risk ratios (RRR) for all student subgroups included in 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), and (D) of ESSA for all four content areas. Comparable data for school year 2019-2020 could not be calculated and provided to LEAs due to the cancellation of all spring 2020 state testing (Georgia Milestones and GAA 2.0). The ratios for 2020-2021 are currently being calculated by GaDOE utilizing the following formulas.

$$\text{Relative risk ratio} = \frac{\text{subgroup risk}}{\text{comparison group risk}}$$

$$\text{Subgroup risk} = \frac{\# \text{ students in subgroup assessed via the GAA}}{\# \text{ students in subgroup assessed via Georgia Milestones}}$$

$$\text{Comparison group risk} = \frac{\# \text{ students } \mathbf{not} \text{ in subgroup assessed via the GAA}}{\# \text{ students } \mathbf{not} \text{ in subgroup assessed via Georgia Milestones}}$$

These ratios are calculated annually and provided to LEAs to support local disproportionality efforts. Following the analysis of disproportionality data, GaDOE will determine what guidelines, if any, the State needs to provide to LEAs. Additionally, disproportionality resources will be included in the universal and targeted technical assistance and supports. Additional assistance and supports will be provided to LEAs as deemed appropriate and based on State-level personnel capacity.

#### 4. Data and Reporting

##### 4.1 LEA Reporting to State

The annual GAA Participation Application serves as the State's primary collection tool for projected GAA participation data<sup>1</sup>, assurances, justifications, and other information pertaining to local GAA administration. Additionally, the projected participation data submitted by LEAs provides the State with approximate counts of the districts that require the targeted and intensive assistance and supports outlined in 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 In September 2021, LEAs completed the GAA Application with information regarding 2021-2022, including projected GAA participation data<sup>2</sup>, assurances, justifications, and other information pertaining to local GAA administration participation.

##### 4.2 LEA Reporting to Parents

LEAs and IEP teams are required (34 CFR §200.6(d)(3)) to ensure that parents of students being considered for participation in the GAA are informed, consistent with 34 CFR §200.2(e), that the student's achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards. IEP teams are also expected to provide guidance to parents regarding the impact of participation on high school graduation and graduation requirements. The State's Division of Special Education Services and Supports continues to work with LEAs to ensure this requirement is met by all LEAs.

##### 4.3 LEA Reporting to the State and the Public

Justifications will be publicly posted by February 2022 for those LEAs with a districtwide participation rate of greater than 1.0 percent for the 2020-2021 school year (34 CFR §200.6(c)(3)(ii)). Justifications will be collected for those LEAs that exceed a districtwide participation rate greater than 1.0 percent for the 2021-2022 school year as part of the GAA survey in the fall of 2022. These justifications will be publicly posted (34 CFR §200.6(c)(3)(ii)) by February 2023.

##### 4.4 State Reporting to LEAs

GaDOE generated 2020-2021 district-level GAA Participation Data Reports that included the percentage of each student subgroup assessed via the GAA by content area. These reports were provided to LEAs in

<sup>1</sup> Actual participation data were obtained from the assessment vendors after the testing window closed.

<sup>2</sup> Actual participation data were obtained from the assessment vendors after the testing window closed.

November 2021 to assist LEAs in examining data and determining potential areas where additional scrutiny is warranted.

In addition to participation rate reports, the State began generating annual district-level disproportionality reports in January 2019 based on 2017-2018 participation data and continued the practice in October 2019, providing 2018-2019 data. As previously stated, 2019-2020 disproportionality reports could not be calculated and disseminated to districts due to the cancellation of all state testing in the spring of 2020. Disproportionality reports for 2020-2021 will be generated and provided to LEAs to assist in local efforts to ensure that alternate assessment administration is reserved for only those students for whom the GAA is intended. Additionally, these reports will continue to be provided to the Division of Special Education Services and Supports to assist in the provision of technical assistance and supports to LEAs, including those detailed within this waiver request.

## 5. Timeline and Activities

### 5.1 General Calendar of Waiver Activities for 2017-2022

| Activity  | 2019 Waiver                       | 2020 Waiver                       | 2021 Waiver                      | 2022 Waiver      |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|
| Public comment period (Appendix C)  | Oct – Dec 2018                    | Oct – Dec 2019                    | Oct – Dec 2020                   | Oct – Nov 2021   |
| Review of public comments, revision of waiver (Appendix D)  | Oct – Dec 2018                    | Oct – Dec 2019                    | Oct – Dec 2020                   | Nov 2021         |
| Submission of waiver  | Oct – Dec 2018                    | Oct – Dec 2019                    | Oct – Dec 2020                   | Dec 2021         |
| GAA Participation Application   | Oct – Dec 2018<br>Jan – Mar 2019  | Oct – Dec 2019                    | Oct – Dec 2020                   | Sept 2021        |
| GAA assessment window   | Jan – Mar 2019<br>Apr – Jun 2019  | Jan – Mar 2020<br>Apr – Jun 2020  | Jan – Mar 2021<br>Apr – Jun 2021 | Mar-Apr 2022     |
| GAA participation data analysis   | Jul – Sept 2019                   | Jul – Sept 2020                   | NA*                              | Jul-Sept 2022    |
| State GAA Participation Data Reports for LEAs   | Jul – Sept 2019<br>Oct – Dec 2019 | Jul – Sept 2020<br>Oct – Dec 2020 | NA*                              | Oct-Dec 2022     |
| State GAA Participation Report for Public   | Oct – Dec 2019                    | Oct – Dec 2020                    | NA*                              | Oct – Dec 2022   |
| LEA justifications posted   | Jan – Mar 2020                    | Jan – Mar 2021                    | Jan – Mar 2022                   | Jan – Mar 2023   |
| GAA disproportionality data calculation, dissemination, analysis  | Jul – Sept 2019                   | Jul – Sept 2020                   | NA*                              | July – Sept 2022 |
| * Activities could not be completed due to cancellation of all spring 2020 state testing (Ga Milestones and GAA 2.0) due to COVID-19. |                                   |                                   |                                  |                  |

### 5.2 Training and Activities 2017-2022

#### October - December 2017

- GAA Participation Application (a.k.a. Survey)
- Development of eligibility criteria for the GAA 2.0

#### January - March 2018

- 2017-2018 GAA assessment window
- State guidelines revised
- 2016-2017 GAA Participation Data Reports provided to LEAs

- Development of eligibility criteria for the GAA 2.0 continued

***April - June 2018***

- 2017-2018 GAA assessment window, continued
- Meeting: State Advisory Panel for Special Education– presentation on GAA 2.0 covered eligibility criteria
- Development of eligibility criteria for the GAA 2.0 continued

***July - September 2018***

- 2017 GAA Participation Data Reports provided to LEAs
- GaDOE explored possible technical assistance from U.S. Department of Education
- Development of eligibility criteria for the GAA 2.0 continued
- Eligibility criteria for the GAA 2.0 released
- Training: Special Education Services and Supports – General Supervision and Implementation Training
- Training: Special Education Director’s Webinar

***October - December 2018***

- Training: GAA 2.0 fall training webinar: Orientation to new assessment / deeper look at test design
- Training: GAA 2.0 Administration Procedures Training
- Training: Orientation to new assessment / deeper look at test design
- Training: GAA 2.0 G-CASE Conference presentation
- Training: Instructional Support for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- 2018 GAA Participation Data Reports provided to LEAs
- 2019 GAA Participation Application

***January - March 2019***

- 2019 GAA Participation Application continued
- Creation and dissemination of 2018 GAA 2.0 Participation Disproportionality Reports
- Meeting: State Advisory Panel for Special Education
- Posting of 2018 LEA justifications for administering the GAA to greater than 1.0 percent of assessed students
- Training: GAA 2.0 Pre-Assessment Training webinar: Final test set-up/preparation
- GAA 2.0 assessment window

***April - June 2019***

- GAA 2.0 assessment window continued
- 2019 GAA 2.0 participation rates calculated

***July - September 2019***

- 2019 GAA Participation Data Reports provided to LEAs
- 2019 GAA 2.0 Participation Disproportionality Report calculated and shared with Special Education
- Training: GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures – Part 1

***October - December 2019***

- 2020 GAA Participation Application
- Training on the Eligibility Criteria for the Intervention District Study. Reducing the number of students participating in the alternate assessment
- Training: GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures – Part 2

***January - March 2020***

- Instructional Training on Effective Instruction for Teachers of Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- Posting of 2019 LEA justifications for administering the GAA to greater than 1.0 percent of assessed students

- Training at the Georgia Compensatory Educational Leaders, Inc. (G-CEL) - A Deeper Look at the 1% CAP for the Alternate Assessment
- GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training
- GAA 2.0 Pre-Administration Training
- GAA 2.0 GAA 2.0 Test Setup and review of Nextera Online Platform
- GAA 2.0 assessment window
- Instructional Support for Teachers of Significant Cognitive Disabilities “Choice Making” webinar
- Distance Learning Support for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar

**April - June 2020**

- GAA 2.0 assessment window continued
- GAA 2.0 Eligibility Criteria Updated to include both elements of the Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) and eligibility to earn a state-defined alternate diploma (SBOE 160-4-2-48)
- 2020 GAA 2.0 estimated participation rates calculated
- Training: GAA 2.0 Eligibility Criteria Presentation
- Training: Instruction for the GAA 2.0
- Training: Distance Learning Support

**July - September 2020**

- 2020 GAA Participation Data Reports provided to LEAs
- 2020 GAA 2.0 Participation Disproportionality Report calculated and shared with Special Education
- Training for District Liaisons in alternate assessment participation criteria
- Training for District Liaisons in instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities
- Training for District Liaisons in understanding LEA data
- Training: GKIDS 2.0 Pre-Administration/Readiness Check Training Part 1
- Training: GKIDS 2.0 Pre-Administration/Readiness Check Training Part 2
- Training for GLRS and District Liaisons: A Deeper Look at the 1% Threshold for the Alternate Assessment
- Training: Curricular support for students with cognitive disability: Providing Access to GSE Science Standards for Students with SCDs
- Training for District Liaisons: GAA 2.0 Eligibility Criteria, Assessment Handbook (SAH) Accessibility and Accommodations Manual
- Webinar: Classroom Management Promotes Home and School Instruction

**October - December 2020**

2021 GAA Participation Application

- Preparation to post 2020 LEA justifications for administering the GAA to greater than 1.0 percent of assessed students
- Training: GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures
- Training: GKIDS 2.0 and Readiness Check Reporting – Part 3
- Special Education Directors’ Webinar: Addition of LCI as evidence to GAA eligibility criteria
- Training: Instructional Access to Science for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
- Training: Support for Teachers who teach Social Studies to Students with SCDs
- Training: Supports for Teachers who teach Math to Students with SCDs

**January – March 2021**

- Training: GAA Nextera platform Training
- Training: GAA 2.0 Pre-Administration Webinar
- Training: GKIDS 2.0 Mid-year Reporting – Part 4
- Virtual “Make and Take” teacher support
- Directors’ Webinar: State Defined Alternate Diploma
- ASES Winter Meeting

- State-Defined Alternate Diploma Session 1: Who are the students
- State-Defined Alternate Diploma Session 2: Why is communication and assistive technology essential
- State-Defined Alternate Diploma Session 3: What is the role of adaptive behavior
- State-Defined Alternate Diploma Session 4: What is the State-Defined Alternate Diploma

State-Defined Alternate Diploma Session 5: What are best practices for transition to life

***April – June 2021***

- Training: GKIDS 2.0 End-of-Year Reporting – Part 5
- GAA 2.0 Bi-weekly meetings
- State-Defined Alternate Diploma Bonus Session: FAQ- Understanding the State-Defined Alternate Diploma

***July – September 2021***

- GAA 2.0 Bi-weekly meetings
- Georgia Alternate Assessment Presentation
- Fall Assessment Conference (GAA 2.0)
- Accessibility and Accommodations Part 3: Implementation Scenarios
- Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting (August)
- Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting (September)
- The Georgia Brigade- Community of Practice
- Supporting Student with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Webinar: The importance of an appropriate communication system
- Presentation to Parent Mentor Partnership Annual Kickoff Conference on State Defined Alternate Diploma (September)

***October – December 2021***

- 2022 GAA Participation Application
- GAA 2.0 Bi-weekly meetings
- Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meetings
- Supporting Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar: The difference between CBI and WBL
- Supporting Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar: Teaching Strategies
- GAA 2.0 Math Test Design and Expectations
- GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility Meeting
- The Georgia Brigade- Community of Practice
- CCSSO Conference- Assessment, Standards and Education for Students with Disabilities

***January - March 2022***

- Supporting Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar: Including student in elementary, middle and high school classrooms
- Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting
- The Georgia Brigade- Community of Practice
- GAA 2.0 Bi-weekly meetings

**5.3 34 CFR §200.6(d) Regulations**

|  | 2019-2020<br>Status                       | 2020-2021<br>Status                        | 2021-2022                                  |
|--|---|--|--|
| (d) State guidelines for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. If a State adopts alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and administers an alternate assessment aligned with those standards, the State must -  |   |  |  |
| (1) Establish, consistent with section 612(a)(16)(C) of the IDEA, and monitor implementation of clear and appropriate guidelines for IEP teams to apply in determining, on a case-by-case basis, which students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will be assessed based on alternate academic achievement standards. Such guidelines must include a State definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” that addresses factors related to cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior, such that -   | Completed<br>with monitoring work ongoing | Completed;<br>with monitoring work ongoing | Completed;<br>with monitoring work ongoing |
| (i) The identification of a student as having a particular disability as defined in the IDEA or as an English learner does not determine whether a student is a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities;  | Completed                                 | Completed                                  | Completed                                  |
| (ii) A student with the most significant cognitive disabilities is not identified solely on the basis of the student's previous low academic achievement, or the student's previous need for accommodations to participate in general State or districtwide assessments; and   | Completed                                 | Completed                                  | Completed                                  |
| (iii) A student is identified as having the most significant cognitive disabilities because the student requires extensive, direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains on the challenging State academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled;   | Completed                                 | Completed                                  | Completed                                  |
| (2) Provide to IEP teams a clear explanation of the differences between assessments based on grade-level academic achievement standards and those based on alternate academic achievement standards, including any effects of State and local policies on a student's education resulting from taking an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards, such as how participation in such assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma; | Completed                                 | Completed                                  | Completed                                  |

|   | 2019-2020<br>Status | 2020-2021<br>Status | 2021-2022 |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| (3) Ensure that parents of students selected to be assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards under the State's guidelines in §200.6(d) of this section are informed, consistent with §200.2(e), that their child's achievement will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards, and how participation in such assessments may delay or otherwise affect the student from completing the requirements for a regular high school diploma; | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |
| (4) Not preclude a student with the most significant cognitive disabilities who takes an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards from attempting to complete the requirements for a regular high school diploma;   | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |
| (5) Promote, consistent with requirements under the IDEA, the involvement and progress of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the general education curriculum that is based on the State's academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled;   | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |
| (6) Incorporate the principles of universal design for learning, to the extent feasible, in any alternate assessments aligned with alternate academic achievement standards that the State administers consistent with §200.2(b)(2)(ii); and  | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |
| (7) Develop, disseminate information on, and promote the use of appropriate accommodations consistent with §200.2(b) of this section to ensure that a student with significant cognitive disabilities who does not meet the criteria in §200.2(a)(1)(ii) of this section -  |                     |                     |           |
| (i) Participates in academic instruction and assessments for the grade in which the student is enrolled; and  | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |
| (ii) Is assessed based on challenging State academic standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.  | Completed           | Completed           | Completed |

#### 5.4 Implementation Status for Recommended Strategies

GaDOE has incorporated into its work the strategies for meeting the cap from the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO).<sup>3</sup> Each strategy is provided below, along with the State's current implementation status.

| Strategy  | 2019-2020 Status | 2020-2021 Status | 2021-2022 Status |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Gather district and school data on current participation rates in the alternate assessment.   | Ongoing          | Ongoing          | Ongoing          |
| Gather data on the characteristics of students participating in the alternate assessment.   | Ongoing          | Ongoing          | Ongoing          |
| Create or examine a state definition of “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” and revise guidelines, as needed, for determining whether a student should participate in the alternate assessment. | Completed        | Completed        | Ongoing          |
| Provide professional development for IEP team members and other educators on the nature of the alternate assessment and who should participate in it.   | Ongoing          | Ongoing          | Ongoing          |
| Provide information sessions for parents of Students with Disabilities so that they can participate in the IEP decision-making process about the assessment in which their child participates.                          | Ongoing          | Ongoing          | Ongoing          |

<sup>3</sup> <https://nceo.umn.edu/docs/OnlinePubs/NCEOBrief12OnePercentCap.pdf>

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Assessment Participation Data

- A.1 Count and Percentage of Students Assessed via Georgia Alternate Assessment
- A.2 Count and Percentage of LEAs Exceeding 1.0 Percent Participation by Student Subgroups
- A.3 Participation Rates for Elementary and Middle School GAA Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments
- A.4 Participation Rates for High School GAA Assessments and End-of-Course Assessments
- A.5 Estimated Count and Percentage of Students Assessed via Georgia Alternate Assessment

### Appendix B: Guidelines, Resources, and Training

- B.1 Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA)
- B.2 State Board Rule Intellectual Disability Definition
- B.3 NCEO CoP and PLG Participation
- B.4 Educational Support GAA January 2021- March 2022
- B.5 Assessment Manuals, Handbooks, and Newsletters
- B.6 GAA 2.0 Resources and Training Calendar
- B.7 GAA 2.0 Parent Flyer Year
- B.8 Development and Training Plan – Supporting Reduced Alternate Assessment Placement for Early Learners

### Appendix C: Public Notice

- Public Notice Document
- Website Location
- Emails Announcing Public Notice

### Appendix D: Public Comments Received

A.1: Count and Percentage of Students Assessed via Georgia Alternate Assessment

|                                  |         | 2021  |       |         |        |
|----------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
|                                  |         | ELA   | Math  | Science | Social |
| All Students                     | Count   | 9,323 | 9,299 | 4,033   | 2,641  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.4%  | 1.4%  | 1.4%    | 1.8%   |
| American Indian / Alaskan Native | Count   | 16    | 16    | 14      | 2      |
|                                  | Percent | 1.4%  | 1.4%  | 0.8%    | 0.8%   |
| Asian / Pacific Islander         | Count   | 300   | 300   | 105     | 55     |
|                                  | Percent | 1.1%  | 1.0%  | 0.8%    | 1.2%   |
| Black                            | Count   | 3,835 | 3,815 | 1,673   | 1,068  |
|                                  | Percent | 2.0%  | 2.0%  | 2.0%    | 2.5%   |
| Hispanic                         | Count   | 1425  | 1422  | 579     | 375    |
|                                  | Percent | 1.2%  | 1.1%  | 1.1%    | 1.4%   |
| Multi-racial                     | Count   | 362   | 361   | 145     | 88     |
|                                  | Percent | 1.3%  | 1.3%  | 1.3%    | 1.7%   |
| White                            | Count   | 3394  | 3394  | 1,533   | 1,058  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.2%  | 1.2%  | 1.3%    | 1.6%   |
| Economically Disadvantaged       | Count   | 6,921 | 6,903 | 2,934   | 1,848  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.7%  | 1.6%  | 1.7%    | 2.0%   |
| English Learners                 | Count   | 897   | 895   | 346     | 211    |
|                                  | Percent | 1.1%  | 1.1%  | 1.1%    | 2.0%   |

|                                  |         | 2019   |        |         |        |
|----------------------------------|---------|--------|--------|---------|--------|
|                                  |         | ELA    | Math   | Science | Social |
| All Students                     | Count   | 12,539 | 12,519 | 5,440   | 5,432  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.3    | 1.3    | 1.3     | 1.4    |
| American Indian / Alaskan Native | Count   | 23     | 22     | 11      | 11     |
|                                  | Percent | 1.3    | 1.2    | 1.3     | 1.4    |
| Asian / Pacific Islander         | Count   | 392    | 393    | 176     | 176    |
|                                  | Percent | 0.9    | 0.9    | 0.8     | 1.0    |
| Black                            | Count   | 5,851  | 5,834  | 2,498   | 2,491  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.7    | 1.7    | 1.6     | 1.7    |
| Hispanic                         | Count   | 1,690  | 1,689  | 678     | 675    |
|                                  | Percent | 1.1    | 1.0    | 0.9     | 1.1    |
| Multi-racial                     | Count   | 425    | 427    | 162     | 163    |
|                                  | Percent | 1.2    | 1.2    | 1.0     | 1.2    |
| White                            | Count   | 4,167  | 4,162  | 1,919   | 1,919  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.2    | 1.1    | 1.1     | 1.3    |
| Economically Disadvantaged       | Count   | 9,601  | 9,581  | 4,074   | 4,065  |
|                                  | Percent | 1.6    | 1.5    | 1.5     | 1.7    |
| English Learners                 | Count   | 961    | 964    | 349     | 346    |
|                                  | Percent | 0.9    | 0.9    | 0.9     | 1.0    |

A.2: Count and Percentage of LEAs Exceeding 1.0 Percent Participation by Student Subgroups

|                                     |         | 2021  |       |         |        |
|-------------------------------------|---------|-------|-------|---------|--------|
|                                     |         | ELA   | Math  | Science | Social |
| All Students                        | Count   | 156   | 154   | 140     | 149    |
|                                     | Percent | 70.6% | 69.7% | 64.8%   | 71.3%  |
| American Indian /<br>Alaskan Native | Count   | 12    | 12    | 4       | 2      |
|                                     | Percent | 9.0%  | 9.0%  | 3.7%    | 2.3%   |
| Asian / Pacific Islander            | Count   | 44    | 44    | 27      | 23     |
|                                     | Percent | 23.3% | 23.7% | 15.5%   | 14.3%  |
| Black                               | Count   | 164   | 163   | 130     | 127    |
|                                     | Percent | 74.5% | 73.8% | 60.5%   | 61.1%  |
| Hispanic                            | Count   | 98    | 95    | 80      | 83     |
|                                     | Percent | 46.4% | 44.8% | 38.8%   | 42.3%  |
| Multi-racial                        | Count   | 82    | 81    | 64      | 52     |
|                                     | Percent | 39.2% | 38.8% | 31.5%   | 27.7%  |
| White                               | Count   | 130   | 128   | 113     | 123    |
|                                     | Percent | 62.8% | 61.8% | 55.4%   | 61.8%  |
| Economically<br>Disadvantaged       | Count   | 165   | 162   | 146     | 147    |
|                                     | Percent | 77.5% | 76.1% | 69.9%   | 72.1%  |
| English Learners                    | Count   | 69    | 67    | 63      | 57     |
|                                     | Percent | 35.2% | 34.4% | 33.9%   | 32.6%  |

|                                     |         | 2019 |      |         |        |
|-------------------------------------|---------|------|------|---------|--------|
|                                     |         | ELA  | Math | Science | Social |
| All Students                        | Count   | 151  | 146  | 148     | 158    |
|                                     | Percent | 70.9 | 68.5 | 69.5    | 74.2   |
| American Indian /<br>Alaskan Native | Count   | 16   | 16   | 9       | 9      |
|                                     | Percent | 7.5  | 7.5  | 4.2     | 4.2    |
| Asian / Pacific Islander            | Count   | 39   | 39   | 28      | 28     |
|                                     | Percent | 18.3 | 18.3 | 13.1    | 13.1   |
| Black                               | Count   | 161  | 161  | 149     | 152    |
|                                     | Percent | 75.6 | 75.6 | 28.2    | 31.5   |
| Hispanic                            | Count   | 82   | 81   | 60      | 67     |
|                                     | Percent | 38.5 | 38.0 | 28.2    | 31.5   |
| Multi-racial                        | Count   | 82   | 79   | 51      | 55     |
|                                     | Percent | 38.5 | 37.1 | 23.9    | 25.8   |
| White                               | Count   | 121  | 121  | 113     | 116    |
|                                     | Percent | 56.8 | 56.8 | 53.1    | 54.5   |
| Economically<br>Disadvantaged       | Count   | 168  | 166  | 158     | 162    |
|                                     | Percent | 78.9 | 77.9 | 74.2    | 76.1   |
| English Learners                    | Count   | 60   | 60   | 51      | 52     |
|                                     | Percent | 28.2 | 28.2 | 23.9    | 24.4   |

A.3: Participation Rates for Elementary and Middle School GAA Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments

| 2021 Georgia Alternate Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|   | Grade 3    | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Total   |         |
| <b>English Language Arts</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | 124,477 | 126,190 | 129,083 | 133,887 | 137,612 | 138,904 | 790,153 |
|   | # Tested   | 98,268  | 98,034  | 98,475  | 93,124  | 90,382  | 84,953  | 563,236 |
|   | % Tested   | 78.94   | 77.69   | 76.29   | 69.55   | 65.68   | 61.16   | 71.28   |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | 17,439  | 18,547  | 19,451  | 19,736  | 19,889  | 19,533  | 114,595 |
|   | # Tested   | 13,811  | 14,555  | 14,894  | 13,742  | 13,327  | 12,528  | 82,857  |
|   | % Tested   | 79.20   | 78.48   | 76.57   | 69.63   | 67.01   | 64.14   | 72.30   |
| <b>Mathematics</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | 124,464 | 126,184 | 129,067 | 133,882 | 137,604 | 138,886 | 790,087 |
|   | # Tested   | 97,652  | 97,330  | 97,878  | 92,091  | 89,171  | 82,257  | 556,379 |
|   | % Tested   | 78.46   | 77.13   | 75.84   | 68.79   | 64.80   | 59.23   | 70.42   |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | 17,436  | 18,545  | 19,447  | 19,735  | 19,886  | 19,527  | 114,576 |
|   | # Tested   | 13,723  | 14,452  | 14,791  | 13,548  | 13,135  | 12,278  | 81,927  |
|   | % Tested   | 78.70   | 77.93   | 76.06   | 68.65   | 66.05   | 62.88   | 71.50   |
| <b>Science</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 130674  | NA      | NA      | 140,874 | 271,548 |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 98856   | NA      | NA      | 84,640  | 183,496 |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 75.65   | NA      | NA      | 60.08   | 67.57   |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 21055   | NA      | NA      | 21,331  | 42,386  |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 16098   | NA      | NA      | 13,612  | 29,710  |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 76.46   | NA      | NA      | 63.81   | 70.09   |
| <b>Social Studies</b>   |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 138,894 | 138,894 |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 82,445  | 82,445  |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 59.36   | 59.36   |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 19,527  | 19,527  |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 12,102  | 12,102  |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | NA      | 61.98   | 61.98   |

| 2019 Georgia Alternate Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|---|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|   | Grade 3    | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Grade 8 | Total   |         |
| <b>English Language Arts</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | 130,121 | 134,649 | 137,921 | 137,915 | 134,664 | 126,149 | 801,419 |
|   | # Tested   | 129,523 | 134,028 | 137,266 | 137,268 | 133,888 | 125,471 | 797,444 |
|   | % Tested   | 99.6    | 99.5    | 99.5    | 99.5    | 99.4    | 99.5    | 99.5    |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | 18,571  | 19,785  | 20,586  | 19,576  | 18,770  | 17,713  | 115,001 |
|   | # Tested   | 18,299  | 19,512  | 20,327  | 19,341  | 18,507  | 17,498  | 113,484 |
|   | % Tested   | 98.5    | 98.6    | 98.7    | 98.8    | 98.6    | 98.8    | 98.7    |
| <b>Mathematics</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | 130,112 | 134,645 | 137,913 | 137,896 | 134,246 | 104,951 | 779,763 |
|   | # Tested   | 129,469 | 133,936 | 137,217 | 137,143 | 133,348 | 104,169 | 775,282 |
|   | % Tested   | 99.5    | 99.5    | 99.5    | 99.5    | 99.3    | 99.3    | 99.4    |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | 18,568  | 19,785  | 20,582  | 19,576  | 18,759  | 17,302  | 114,572 |
|   | # Tested   | 18,277  | 19,495  | 20,311  | 19,315  | 18,465  | 17,062  | 112,925 |
|   | % Tested   | 98.4    | 98.5    | 98.7    | 98.7    | 98.4    | 98.6    | 98.6    |
| <b>Science</b>  |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 137,899 | NA      | NA      | 96,595  | 234,494 |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 137,075 | NA      | NA      | 95,580  | 232,655 |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 99.4    | NA      | NA      | 99.0    | 99.2    |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 20,579  | NA      | NA      | 15,803  | 36,382  |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 20,282  | NA      | NA      | 15,504  | 35,786  |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 98.6    | NA      | NA      | 98.1    | 98.4    |
| <b>Social Studies</b>   |            |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| All   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 137,887 | NA      | NA      | 132,227 | 270,114 |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 137,004 | NA      | NA      | 130,955 | 267,959 |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 99.3    | NA      | NA      | 99.0    | 99.2    |
| SWD   | # Enrolled | NA      | NA      | 20,575  | NA      | NA      | 17,773  | 38,348  |
|   | # Tested   | NA      | NA      | 20,257  | NA      | NA      | 17,423  | 37,680  |
|   | % Tested   | NA      | NA      | 98.5    | NA      | NA      | 98.0    | 98.3    |

A.4: Participation Rates for High School GAA Assessments and End-of-Course Assessments

|     |          | 2021 Georgia Alternate Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments* |                                |         |              |
|-----|----------|--|--------------------------------|---------|--------------|
|     |          | American Literature  | Algebra I / Coordinate Algebra | Biology | U.S. History |
| All | #        | 108,357  | 120,816                        | 139,183 | 100,793      |
|     | # Tested | 66,326   | 75,767                         | 85,732  | 60,217       |
|     | %        | 61.21  | 62.71                          | 61.60   | 59.74        |
| SWD | #        | 14,359   | 18,858                         | 17,313  | 14,303       |
|     | # Tested | 9,072  | 11,535                         | 10,875  | 8,866        |
|     | %        | 63.18  | 61.17                          | 62.81   | 61.99        |

\* Ga had a reduction in EOCs to one per content area based on SB367

|     |          | 2019 Georgia Alternate Assessments and Georgia Milestones Assessments |                     |                                |                              |         |                  |              |           |
|-----|----------|---|---------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------|------------------|--------------|-----------|
|     |          | 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Literature                                      | American Literature | Algebra I / Coordinate Algebra | Geometry / Analytic Geometry | Biology | Physical Science | U.S. History | Economics |
| All | #        | 141,003   | 123,534             | 161,756                        | 130,886                      | 132,474 | 118,517          | 117,146      | 108,929   |
|     | # Tested | 139,597   | 122,265             | 159,767                        | 129,103                      | 130,594 | 117,406          | 115,696      | 108,066   |
|     | %        | 99.0  | 99.0                | 99.0                           | 98.6                         | 98.6    | 99.0             | 98.8         | 99.2      |
| SWD | #        | 15,419  | 13,417              | 15,669                         | 14,529                       | 15,437  | 10,297           | 13,212       | 9,983     |
|     | # Tested | 15,093  | 13,149              | 15,194                         | 13,979                       | 15,071  | 10,046           | 12,906       | 9,773     |
|     | %        | 97.9  | 98.0                | 97.0                           | 96.2                         | 97.6    | 97.6             | 97.7         | 97.9      |

A.5: Estimated Count and Percentage of Students Assessed via the Georgia Alternate Assessment

| Group                              | Line                         | Estimated 2021-2022 |         |         |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|---------|---------|
|                                    |                              | ELA                 | Math    | Science |
| All Students                       | Alternate Assessment Count   | 12,449              | 12,449  | 5,609   |
| All Students                       | Student Count *              | 941,271             | 965,894 | 433,859 |
| All Students                       | Percent                      | 1.3                 | 1.3     | 1.3     |
| American Indian/<br>Alaskan Native | Alternate Assessment Count   | 23                  | 23      | TFS     |
| American Indian/<br>Alaskan Native | Student Count *              | 1,772               | 1,800   | TFS     |
| American Indian/<br>Alaskan Native | Percent                      | 1.3                 | 1.3     | TFS     |
| Asian/Pacific Islander             | Alternate Assessment Count   | 508                 | 508     | 223     |
| Asian/Pacific Islander             | Student Count*               | 41,421              | 44,370  | 21,267  |
| Asian/Pacific Islander             | Percent                      | 1.2                 | 1.1     | 1.0     |
| Black                              | Alternate Assessment Count   | 5,675               | 5,675   | 2,558   |
| Black                              | Student Count*               | 347,999             | 353,466 | 155,472 |
| Black                              | Percent                      | 1.6                 | 1.6     | 1.6     |
| Hispanic                           | Alternate Assessment Count   | 1,856               | 1,856   | 764     |
| Hispanic                           | Student Count*               | 156,898             | 161,591 | 72,074  |
| Hispanic                           | Percent                      | 1.2                 | 1.1     | 1.1     |
| Multi-racial                       | Alternate Assessment Count   | 484                 | 484     | 214     |
| Multi-racial                       | Student Count*               | 35,694              | 36,743  | 15,811  |
| Multi-racial                       | Percent                      | 1.4                 | 1.3     | 1.4     |
| White                              | Alternate Assessment Count   | 3,903               | 3,903   | 1,840   |
| White                              | Student Count*               | 358,896             | 369,258 | 168,899 |
| White                              | Percent                      | 1.1                 | 1.1     | 1.1     |
| Economically<br>Disadvantaged      | Alternate Assessment Count** | NA                  | NA      | NA      |
| Economically<br>Disadvantaged      | Student Count*               | 608,829             | 620,201 | 267,909 |
| Economically<br>Disadvantaged      | Percent                      | NA                  | NA      | NA      |
| English Learners                   | Alternate Assessment Count   | 844                 | 844     | 313     |
| English Learners                   | Student Count*               | 107,955             | 109,391 | 38,175  |
| English Learners                   | Percent                      | 0.8                 | 0.8     | 0.8     |

\* Student Count is the count of students in 2018-2019 who completed assessments.

\*\* The US Department of Agriculture is providing all students with free breakfast and lunch for the 2021-2022 school year and therefore no free/reduced lunch applications were required to be collected from families. Currently, the GaDOE does not have the needed information to identify students in this subgroup.

## Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA)

### Step I: Review the Eligibility Criteria for GAA

Prior to reviewing the eligibility criteria for GAA, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice.

According to O.C.G.A § 20-2-281, school districts are required to follow the procedures specified in the applicable test administration materials. As a result, the IEP team must use this form to document its assessment decisions.

If GAA is being considered, the IEP team must review the four criteria below and select **Yes** or **No** if applicable to the student. To be eligible to participate in GAA, the answer to all four of the questions below must be **Yes**. If the answer to any of the questions is **No**, the student is not eligible to participate in GAA and must participate in the Georgia Milestones Assessment System. Each **Yes** answer requires a justification that contains evidence that the student meets the criteria.

| Student Name  |           | Grade   |  |               |
|---|-----------|---|--|---------------|
| Eligibility Criteria  |           | Sources of Evidence (check if used)   |  | Justification |
| 1. Does the student require intensive, individualized instruction in a variety of instructional settings?<br><br>The student needs specialized academic instruction and techniques over a period of time to ensure that he or she can learn, retain information, and transfer skills to other settings.   | Yes<br>No | <input type="checkbox"/> Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance<br><input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal Notes and Observations<br><input type="checkbox"/> Benchmark Data<br><input type="checkbox"/> Progress Monitoring Data<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |  |               |
| 2. Does the student have a significant cognitive disability?<br><br>A significant cognitive disability is determined by the IEP team and must be based on evaluation information performed by a qualified evaluation team. The significant cognitive disability must affect the student's intellectual functioning and be documented as such in the student's individualized education program (IEP). | Yes<br>No | <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test<br><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |  |               |

**Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA)**

| Student Name  | Grade             | Justification   |  |
|---|-------------------|---|--|
| Eligibility Criteria  |                   | Sources of Evidence (check if used)   |  |
| <p><b>3. Does the student require specialized supports to access and participate in the grade-level Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) that require modifications based on the student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)?</b></p> <p>Access to the grade-level curriculum is mandated by the federal government. A student with a significant cognitive disability requires access to the GSEs through prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum.</p> | <p>Yes<br/>No</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test<br><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal Notes and Observations<br><input type="checkbox"/> Benchmark Data<br><input type="checkbox"/> Progress Monitoring Data<br><input type="checkbox"/> Results of language assessments including English Learner (EL) assessments, if applicable<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |  |
| <p><b>4. Does the student require specialized supports to demonstrate age-appropriate adaptive behavior?</b></p> <p>A student with a significant cognitive disability needs specialized support throughout the day in areas such as expressing his or her needs, getting from place to place, eating lunch, negotiating social situations, and/or taking care of personal needs.</p>  | <p>Yes<br/>No</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Results of Individual Cognitive Ability Test<br><input type="checkbox"/> Results of Adaptive Behavior Skills Assessment<br><input type="checkbox"/> Other _____  |  |

**Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA)**

**Step II: Assurances**

The IEP team has participated in training and guidance regarding student participation in state mandated assessments that includes the information below:

Under 34 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 300.320(a)(6) and [O.C.G.A § 20-2-281], if the IEP team determines that the student will take GAA, the IEP team may provide additional summary statements of why the student cannot participate in the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, with or without allowable accommodations, and why the alternate assessment is appropriate for the student, including that all of the eligibility criteria are met.

Additional Summary Statements (if necessary):

The decision to administer GAA is based on multiple sources of measurable, objective evidence, including, but not limited to current IEP PLAAFP statements, goals and/or objectives, report cards, progress reports, work samples, teacher observations, Full and Individual Evaluations (FIE), standardized achievement test results, and classroom, district, and statewide assessment results. This decision is not based solely on the student's previous performance on statewide assessment.

The decision to administer GAA is made by the IEP team, not administratively based on federal accountability requirements which limit the number of students taking an alternate assessment who can be counted as proficient in CCRPI performance calculations. Although GAA is intended for a small number of students, the proficiency cap does not limit the number of students receiving special education services who may take the alternate assessment.

The decision to administer GAA is based on the student's educational needs and the instruction the student is receiving. This decision is not based solely on the student's disability category and is not based on the student's racial or economic background, excessive or extended absences, or amount of time or location of service delivery.

B.2: State Board Rule Intellectual Disability Definition

160-4-7-05-24 ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION AND CATEGORIES OF ELIGIBILITY

**Definition.**

Intellectual disabilities refer to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning which exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affects educational performance and originates before age 18. [34 C.F.R § 300.8(c)(6)] Intellectual disability does not include conditions primarily due to a sensory or physical impairment, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders, severe multiple impairments, cultural influences or a history of inconsistent and/or inadequate educational programming.

(a) Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning is defined as approximately 70 IQ or below as measured by a qualified psychological examiner on individually administered, nationally normed standardized measures of intelligence.

(1) All IQ scores defining eligibility for children with intellectual disabilities shall be interpreted as a range of scores encompassed by not more than one standard error of measurement below and above the obtained score. The standard error of measurement for a test may be found in the technical data section of the test manual.

(2) Any final determination of the level of intellectual functioning shall be based on multiple sources of information and shall include more than one formal measure of intelligence administered by a qualified psychological examiner. There may be children with IQ scores below 70 who do not need special education. Interpretation of results should take into account factors that may affect test performance such as socioeconomic status, native language, and cultural background and associated disabilities in communication, sensory or motor areas.

(i) Significantly subaverage intellectual functioning must be verified through a written summary of at least one structured observation that demonstrates the child's inability to progress in a typical, age appropriate manner and with consideration for culturally relevant information, medical and education history.

(b) Deficits in adaptive behavior are defined as significant limitations in a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment.

(1) The child demonstrates significantly subaverage adaptive behavior in school and home, and, if appropriate, community environments. These limitations in adaptive behavior shall be established through the use of standardized adaptive behavior measures normed on the general population, including people with disabilities and people without disabilities. On these standardized measures, significant limitations in adaptive behavior are operationally defined as performance that is at least two standard deviations below the mean of either (a) one of the following three types of adaptive behavior: conceptual, social, or practical, or (b) an overall (composite) score on a standardized measure of conceptual, social, and practical skills. Documentation must include information from at least two sources. The first source shall be someone from the local school who knows the child and the second source shall be someone who

knows the child outside of the school environment such as a parent, guardian, or person acting as a parent.

(i). Interpretation of results should consider the child's cultural background, socioeconomic status and any associated disabilities that may limit or impact the results of the adaptive behavior measures.

(c) Deficits in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior must have existed prior to age 18.

(d) A child must not be determined to be a child with an Intellectual Disability if the determinant factor for that determination is:

1. Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction;
2. Lack of appropriate instruction in math;
3. Lack of appropriate instruction in written expression;
4. Limited English proficiency;
5. Visual, hearing or motor disability;
6. Emotional disturbances;
7. Cultural factors;
8. Environmental or economic disadvantage; or
9. Atypical educational history (multiple school attendance, lack of attendance, etc.).

**Eligibility and Placement.**

A child may be classified as having an intellectual disability (at one of the levels listed below) when a comprehensive evaluation indicates deficits in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior shall be considered equally in any determination that a child is eligible for services in the area of intellectual disability. A comprehensive educational evaluation shall be administered to determine present levels of academic functioning. The report shall be prepared for each child to provide an adequate description of the data collected and explicit pre-referral interventions prior to evaluation and to explain why the child is eligible for services in a program for children with intellectual disabilities. In situations where discrepancies exist between test score results from intellectual functioning, adaptive behavior and academic achievement, the eligibility report must contain a statement of specific factors considered which resulted in the decision of the eligibility team. Eligibility teams must establish that any limits in performance are not primarily due to the exclusionary factors and must document this in the eligibility report:

A child may be classified as having an intellectual disability at one of the levels listed below.

**Mild intellectual disability (MID).**

(1) Intellectual functioning ranging between an upper limit of approximately 70 to a lower limit of approximately 55; and

(2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment.

**Moderate intellectual disability (MOID).**

- (1) Intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 55 to a lower limit of approximately 40; and
- (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group as determined by clinical judgment.

**Severe intellectual disability (SID).**

- (1) Intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 40 to a lower limit of approximately 25; and
- (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group as determined by clinical judgment.

**Profound intellectual disability (PID).**

- (1) Intellectual functioning below approximately 25; and
- (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the child's age-level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment.

B. 3: NCEO CoP and PLG Participation

- A. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Department of Special Education and Supports participates in The National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) **Community of Practice** for the 1% Participation Threshold. The group meets every two weeks. The Special Education Department has had someone participate in the majority of the sessions.

*Participants: Program Manager for Special Education Services and Support*  
November 1, 2018- Present

- B. GADOE staff members participate in **National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) 1% Participation Threshold Peer Learning Groups**

- 1) Digging into Your Data: Building a 1% Data Analysis and Use Plan

*Participant: Program Manager for Special Education Services and Support and Director of Assessment Administration*

The purpose of this group is to have the participants work collaboratively to examine data related to the 1% Threshold to determine ways to approach the provision of technical assistance to districts.

February 13, 2019  
February 27, 2019  
March 13, 2019  
March 27, 2019  
April 10, 2019  
April 24, 2019

- 2) Guiding and Evaluating District Justifications

*Participants: Program Manager and/or Program Specialist for Special Education Services and Support*

The purpose of this peer group is to have states work with each other to identify what should be required in district justifications for exceeding the 1% threshold; how to evaluate justifications that the state receives; and how to act on the evaluations. We discussed how NCEO will support the CoP in developing student profiles to use for training LEAs. We also shared with the group Georgia's resources for training educators and provided parent resources.

May 30, 2019  
June 13, 2019  
June 19, 2019  
July 25, 2019  
July 31, 2019  
August 8, 2019  
September 5, 2019  
September 19, 2019

**3) IEP Team Decision Making**

*Participants: Program Manager Specialist for Special Education Services and Support*

B.4 Educational Support GAA January 2021- March 2022

| Dates                                 | JANUARY 2021  | Target Audience                          |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>1/12/21</b>                        | Directors' Webinar  | LEA Directors                            |
|                                       | <b>FEBRUARY 2021</b>  |  |
| <b>2/18 and</b>                       | NCEO 1% CoP Meeting   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
| <b>2/23- 2/25</b>                     | ASES Winter Meeting   | National Conference                      |
|                                       | <b>MARCH 2021</b>   |  |
| <b>3/3, 3/10, 3/17<br/>3/24, 3/31</b> | Webinar Series: Understanding the State-Defined Alternate Diploma (5-part series) | Administrators and Teachers              |
| <b>3/4, 3/18 and<br/>3/31</b>         | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
|                                       | <b>APRIL 2021</b>   |  |
| <b>4/1, 4/15, 4/29</b>                | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
| <b>4/6, 4/20</b>                      | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel |
| <b>4/21</b>                           | Webinar Series: Understand the State-Defined Alternate Diploma (Bonus Session)    | Administrators and Teachers              |
|                                       | <b>MAY 2021</b>   |  |
| <b>5/13, 5/27</b>                     | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
| <b>5/4, 5/18</b>                      | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel |
|                                       | <b>JUNE 2021</b>  |  |
| <b>6/10, 6/24</b>                     | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
| <b>6/1, 6/29</b>                      | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel |
|                                       | <b>JULY 2021</b>  |  |
| <b>7/1, 7/15, 7/29</b>                | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel         |
| <b>7/13, 7/27</b>                     | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel |

|                   |   |   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| <b>7/15</b>       | Georgia Alternate Assessment Presentation   | Parents, Teachers, School Level Admin., LEAs, District Level Admin.       |
| <b>7/27</b>       | Fall Assessment Conference (GAA 2.0)  | District Level Admin., District Test Coordinators                         |
|                   | <b>AUGUST 2021</b>  |   |
| <b>8/12, 8/26</b> | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel  |
| <b>8/10</b>       | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel                                  |
| <b>8/17</b>       | Accessibility and Accommodations Part 3: Implementation Scenarios   | District Level Admin., District Test Coordinators, State Level Specialist |
| <b>8/4</b>        | Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting  | (GaDOE) State Level Program Specialist                                    |
|                   | <b>SEPTEMBER 2021</b>   |   |
| <b>9/9, 9/23</b>  | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel  |
| <b>9/7, 9/21</b>  | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel                                  |
| <b>9/1</b>        | Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting  | (GaDOE) State Level Program Specialist                                    |
| <b>9/15</b>       | The Georgia Brigade- Community of Practice  | District Teachers   |
| <b>9/21</b>       | Supporting Students with the most Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar: The importance of an appropriate communication system | State Level Personnel, LEAs, District Administrators, District Teachers   |
|                   | <b>OCTOBER 2021</b>   |   |
| <b>10/, 10/21</b> | NCEO 1% CoP   | (National) State Level Personnel  |
| <b>10/5</b>       | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting   | State Level Personnel, Questar Personnel                                  |
| <b>10/6</b>       | Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting  | (GaDOE) State Level Program Specialist                                    |
| <b>10/19</b>      | Supporting Students with the most Significant Cognitive Disabilities webinar: The difference between CBI and WBL                    | State Level Personnel, LEAs, District Administrators, District Teachers   |

|                                |  |  |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>10/12, 10/19</b>            | GAA 2.0 Math Test Design and Expectations  | State Level Personnel,<br>District Teachers                                      |
| <b>10/20</b>                   | The Georgia Brigade- Community of Practice   | District Teachers  |
| <b>10/21</b>                   | GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility Meeting   | State Level Personnel  |
| <b>10/18, 10/19,<br/>10/20</b> | CCSSO- Assessment, Standards and Education for<br>Students with Disabilities   | National Conference  |
| <b>10/21/2021</b>              | GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility Meeting   | State Level Personnel,<br>District Level LEAs,<br>District Level Teachers        |
|                                | <b>NOVEMBER 2021</b>   |  |
| <b>11/4, 11/18</b>             | NCEO 1% CoP  | (National) State Level<br>Personnel  |
| <b>11/16, 11/30</b>            | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting  | State Level Personnel,<br>Questar Personnel                                      |
| <b>11/3</b>                    | Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting   | State Level Personnel  |
| <b>11/16</b>                   | Supporting Students with the most significant cognitive<br>disabilities webinar: Teaching Strategies   | State Level Personnel,<br>LEAs, District<br>Administrators, District<br>Teachers |
| <b>11/17</b>                   | The Georgia Brigade Community of Practice  | District Teachers  |
|                                | <b>DECEMBER 2021</b>   |  |
| <b>12/2, 12/16,<br/>12/30</b>  | NCEO 1% CoP  | (National) State Level<br>Personnel  |
| <b>12/1</b>                    | Significant Cognitive Disabilities Monthly Meeting   | State Level Personnel  |
| <b>12/14, 12/28</b>            | GAA 2.0 Bi-Weekly Meeting  | State Level Personnel,<br>Questar Personnel                                      |
|                                | <b>JANUARY 2022</b>  |  |
| <b>1/18</b>                    | Supporting students with the most significant cognitive<br>disabilities webinar: Including students in elementary,<br>middle, and high school classrooms | State Level Personnel,<br>LEAs, District<br>Administrators, District<br>Teachers |
| <b>1/19</b>                    | The Georgia Brigade Community of Practice  | District Teachers  |
|                                | <b>FEBURARY 2022</b>   |  |
| <b>2/15</b>                    | Supporting students with the most significant cognitive<br>disabilities webinar: Aided Language Stimulation  | State Level Personnel,<br>LEAs, District<br>Administrators, District<br>Teachers |

|             |  |   |
|-------------|--|---|
| <b>2/16</b> | The Georgia Brigade Community of Practice  | District Teachers   |
|             | <b>MARCH 2022</b>  |   |
| <b>3/15</b> | Supporting students with the most significant cognitive disabilities webinar: Transition | State Level Personnel, LEAs, District Administrators, District Teachers |
| <b>3/16</b> | The Georgia Brigade Community of Practice  | District Teachers   |

**Additional Notes:**

The Georgia Brigade is a community of practice that meets the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of every month (August – March).

Dates for the 2020/2021 school year are as follows:

- August 12, 2020
- September 9, 2020
- October 14, 2020
- November 11, 2020
- December 9, 2020
- January 13, 2021
- February 10, 2021
- March 17, 2021

## B.5: Assessment Manuals, Handbooks, and Newsletters



The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) logo features a stylized orange and yellow figure running or jumping over a green hill-like shape, with the letters "GaDOE" in a bold, orange, sans-serif font below it.

**Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent**

**Search this site**

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[Home](#) → Teaching and Learning → Assessment Research, Development and Administration → For Educators

**For Educators**

**Formative Assessments & Resources**

- DRC BEACON
- Formative Instructional Practices (FIP)
- Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills 2.0 (GKIDS 2.0)
- GKIDS Readiness Check
- Keenville
- TestPad

**Summative Assessments**

- ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
- Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
- Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0)
- Georgia Milestones Assessment System
- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

**Other Assessment Resources**

- Accountability
- Assessment Innovation and Flexibility Resources
- College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)
- Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM)
- Lexile Framework for Reading
- Retired Assessments

**Related GaDOE Links**

- Curriculum and Instruction
- Dual Enrollment Program
- College Readiness and Talent Development (AP, SAT, PSAT, ACT, IB)

**Other Links**

**Memoranda & Announcements**

- Georgia Assessment and Training Calendar (QuickStart Guide)
- 2021-2022 Student Assessment Handbook
- 2021-2022 Accessibility & Accommodations Manual
- 2021-2022 Assessment Administration Protocol Manual

**User Guides and Forms**

- Assessment Rescore Request User Guide
- MyGaDOE Portal Navigation Guide
- Principal Certification Form
- School Assessment Plan Template
- Special Accommodation Request User Guide
- Superintendent Test Certification User Guide
- Testing Irregularity Form User Guide

**Newsletters**

**2021-2022**

- Assessment Update November 2021
- Assessment Update October 2021
- Assessment Update September 2021
- Assessment Update August 2021
- Assessment Update July 2021

**2020-2021**

- Assessment Update June 2021
- Assessment Update May 2021
- Assessment Update - Special Edition
- Assessment Update April 2021
- Assessment Update March 2021
- Assessment Update February 2021
- Assessment Update January 2021 (Updated 1/6/2021)
- Assessment Update December 2020
- Assessment Update November 2020
- Assessment Update October 2020

[Testing/Assessment For Educators webpage](#)

[2021-2022 Student Assessment Manual](#)

[2021-2022 Accessibility & Accommodations Manual](#)

[GAA 2.0 Test Administration Manual 2021](#)

## B.6 GAA 2.0 Resources and Training Calendar



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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→ Teaching and Learning → Assessment Research, Development and Administration → GAA 2.0 Resources

### Formative Assessments & Resources

DRC BEACON

Formative Instructional Practices (FIP)

Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills 2.0 (GKIDS 2.0)

GKIDS Readiness Check

Keenville

TestPad

### Summative Assessments

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

Alternate ACCESS for ELLs

Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0)

Georgia Milestones Assessment System

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

### Other Assessment Resources

Accountability

Assessment Innovation and Flexibility Resources

College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI)

Georgia Student Growth Model (GSGM)

Lexile Framework for Reading

Retired Assessments

### Related GaDOE Links

Curriculum and Instruction

Dual Enrollment Program

College Readiness and Talent Development (AP, SAT, PSAT, ACT, IB)

### Other Links

Governor's Office of Student Achievement

## GAA 2.0 Resources



### Administration Resources

GAA 2.0 Test Administration Manual 2021  
GAA 2.0 Pre and Post Administration Procedures 2021 Checklist  
GAA 2.0 Eligibility Criteria - 2021-2022  
Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI) Form  
Validation Form for Transcription of Answer Documents

GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility - October 2021  
GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures - Use of Manipulatives - October 2020  
GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training - January 2021  
▪ GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training FAQ  
GAA 2.0 Pre-Administration Webinar - February 2021



### Educator Resources

GAA 2.0 Achievement Level Descriptors  
GAA 2.0 GSE Extended Content Standards  
GAA 2.0 Sample Tasks  
GAA 2.0 Score Interpretation Guide 2021

GAA 2.0 Teacher Resource Guides  
GAA 2.0 Test Blueprints  
GAA 2.0 Test Score Ranges  
GAA 2.0 Vocabulary Lists



### Parent Resources

GAA 2.0 Parent Flyer  
GAA 2.0 Parent Flyer - Spanish

Understanding the GAA 2.0 Achievement Levels



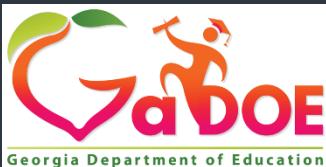
### Technology Resources



## Georgia Assessment and Training Calendar

[Download PDF](#)[Clear All](#)

| School Year ▾ | Start Date ▾ | End Date ▾ | Assessment ▾ | Topic(s) ▾ | Topic Details ▾                        |  |
|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|--|--|
| 2021-22       | 10/21/2021   | 10/21/2021 | GAA 2.0      | Training   | GAA 2.0 Overview and Eligibility       |  |
| 2021-22       | 1/20/2022    | 1/20/2022  | GAA 2.0      | Training   | GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training      |  |
| 2021-22       | 2/3/2022     | 2/3/2022   | GAA 2.0      | Training   | GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures |  |
|               | 2021-22      | 1/20/2022  | 1/20/2022    | GAA 2.0    | Training                               | GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training      |
|               | 2021-22      | 2/3/2022   | 2/3/2022     | GAA 2.0    | Training                               | GAA 2.0 Test Administration Procedures |
|               | 2021-22      | 2/17/2022  | 2/17/2022    | GAA 2.0    | Training                               | GAA 2.0 Pre-Administration Training    |
|               | 2020-21      | 1/21/2021  | 1/21/2021    | GAA 2.0    | Training                               | GAA 2.0 Nextera Platform Training      |
|               | 2020-21      | 2/18/2021  | 2/18/2021    | GAA 2.0    | Training                               | GAA 2.0 Pre-Administration Webinar     |



Georgia Department of Education

# Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0

## KEY FEATURES

**Basic text and simplified graphics** are used to help students understand test material.

The test is untimed to allow for **flexible scheduling**, including customized student breaks and pacing.

If a student does not provide the correct answer to a question, examiners are directed to give students a **second, scripted opportunity** with additional support to answer the item.

Examiners can use the same **manipulatives** during testing that students use during classroom instruction to help students respond to tasks.

**Scenarios** or passages introduce each task to engage students and activate their background knowledge.

For more information, contact the Assessment Administration Division

(800) 634-4106

### What is the GAA 2.0?

The Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0) is designed to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to the state academic content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the knowledge, concepts, and skills inherent in the standards.

The Georgia Standards of Excellence and Extended Content Standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities drive the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment.

### What are Extended Content Standards?

The Extended Content Standards reflect how a grade-level standard can be made accessible for students with significant cognitive disabilities for both instruction and assessment. They are separated into three access points, starting with the least complex and moving to the most complex concepts and skills. GAA 2.0 tasks are written to these access points.

### How are Assessment Items Structured?

Each test has 11 tasks. Tasks begin with a scenario, followed by three parts that increase in complexity to give students the opportunity to show what they know and can do.



### How will the test be administered to students?

Test examiners will assess each student individually. Most students will be able to use the same communication mode on the GAA 2.0 test as they would typically use in their classroom. The assessment is not timed and can be paused for a variety of reasons.

### How will scores be used?

Parents can use scores to learn more about their student's achievement. Educators can use assessment results to plan for classroom instruction and monitor student progress. Scores are also utilized in the state's school accountability system, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI).

### Who will take the GAA 2.0?

The GAA 2.0 will be administered to all eligible students in the following areas:

- Grades 3-8 and high school will be assessed in English Language Arts and Mathematics.
- Grades 5, 8, and high school will be assessed in Science.
- Grades 8 and high school will also be assessed in Social Studies.

### When will my child take the test?

Georgia's Spring 2021 GAA 2.0 test administration window is March 22 through April 30, 2021. School district administrators determine when students within their district will test during this state window.



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Georgia Department of Education

December 2021 - 42



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B 8 Development and Training Plan – Supporting Reduced Alternate Assessment Placement for Early Learners

This table outlines development and training events which took place in the 2019-2020 school year to target the reduced placement of early learners on the alternate assessment pathway.

| Date                  | Event                       | Participants/Audience   | Format            | Purpose  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| October 2019          |                             |   |                   |  |
| 10/22/19-<br>10/23/19 | Development meeting         | Educators and specialists with expertise in instructing students with significant cognitive disabilities                                  | Face-to-Face      | In this two-day meeting, educators and specialists closely reviewed the current GKIDS 2.0 leaning progression content and administration processes to identify what supports were needed to extend access to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.  |
| January 2020          |                             |   |                   |  |
| 1/28/20               | Stakeholder focus group     | Educators and specialists with expertise in instructing students with significant cognitive disabilities                                  | Webinar           | Based on the requests and guidance offered by educators in the fall development work, an updated framework was proposed and review, using the addition of comprehensive support to ensure GKIDS is inclusive of all students and avoid requirement of alternate assessment placement until 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade.                |
| March 2020            |                             |   |                   |  |
| 3/5/20                | Development meeting         | Educators and specialists with expertise in instructing students with significant cognitive disabilities as well as content area experts. | Face-to-Face      | Detailed parts of implementing the framework of comprehensive support were addressed during this workday.  |
| June 2020             |                             |   |                   |  |
| 7/6/20                | Training resources          | Educators and district/school test coordinators   | Posted to Website | GKIDS Resources for the 2020-2021 school year included an updated Test Administration Manual and Resource Guide, with guidance on including all kindergarten students in this assessment aligned to the standards for which they are receiving instruction.  |
| October 2020          |                             |   |                   |  |
| 10/1/20               | Pre-Administration Training | District/school test coordinators   | Webinar           | In the Pre-Administration training for district and school coordinators responsible for the administration of GKIDS, guidance was offered on interpreting the new report elements related to comprehensive support, as part of the broader goal of ensuring all students can be served by the general assessment where possible. |

## **Appendix C: Public Notice**

LEAs and the public were provided an opportunity to submit feedback to the GaDOE prior to the submission of this waiver request. The public comment period lasted from October 27, 2021 to November 27, 2021- meeting the 30-day State Board of Education rule. Public notice of the intent to submit a waiver (C.1) was posted to the GaDOE website (C.2) Emails were sent from the GaDOE's Deputy Superintendent of Assessment and Accountability to LEA superintendents, assessment directors, special education and Title I directors, and LEA accountability contacts (C3). Additionally, notice was sent to members of the State's Special Education State advisory Panel which includes Ga PTA (C4).

- Public Notice Document
- Website Location and Federal Programs
- Emails Announcing Public Notice

Georgia Department of Education

**Public Notice of ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver for 2021-2022**

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking comments on the following waiver request for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which will be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education (US ED). A survey with an opportunity for comments is provided at this [link](#) until 11:59 p.m. **November 27, 2021**. Questions should be submitted to Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, at [atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us) no later than **November 27, 2021**.

The ESSA includes a statewide 1.0 percent participation cap in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for each content area (1111(b)(2)(D)(i)(I)). States can request a one-year waiver from this requirement if the state anticipates being above the cap. Georgia received a one-year waiver from the requirement for the 2020-2021 school year. The GaDOE is submitting a similar request for the 2021-2022 school year to provide the necessary time to continue to implement policies and district supports to ensure the alternate assessment is only administered to those students for whom it is intended.

GaDOE anticipated that Georgia would be above the 1.0 percent cap in 2020-2021. In 2021, Georgia's schools in fact utilized the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0) for an estimated 1.5 percent of tested students. GaDOE anticipates that Georgia will be above the 1.0 percent cap in 2021-2022 as well. The waiver submission for the 2021-2022 school year will include a demonstration of progress in the work of reducing the percentage of students assessed via the GAA as well as the following information, as outlined in 34 CFR § 200.6(c)(4)ii-v:

- State-level data analysis (2021) showing the number and percentage of students in each subgroup who took the GAA; and
- assurances from the State that each local education agency (LEA) anticipated to exceed the 1.0 percent cap a) followed State guidelines under paragraph 200.6(d) - excluding (d)(6), and b) will address any disproportionality in the percentage of student subgroups utilizing 2019 data under section 1111(c)(2)(A), (B), or (D) being administered the GAA; and
- a plan and timeline by which a) the State will improve its guidelines under § 200.6(d), b) the State will take additional steps to support and provide appropriate oversight to each LEA that the State anticipates will use the GAA to assess more than 1.0 percent of its students in a content area, and c) the State will address any disproportionality in the percentage of students taking the GAA.

Prior to submitting this ESSA waiver request, the GaDOE is providing public notice to all interested parties across Georgia. The GaDOE is providing such notification by posting a public notice on its website of the intent to request a waiver of the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards 1.0 percent cap. In addition, the GaDOE has emailed information pertaining to the waiver to all district superintendents, Title I directors, assessment directors, special education directors, parent groups, and the State Advisory Panel for Special Education. Copies of all comments the State may receive from stakeholders in response to this notice will be attached to the waiver request sent to US ED.

Public Comment Notice for SEA Waiver October 27, 2021

[Title I Homepage Posting](#)



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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→ Office of School Improvement → Federal Programs → Title I, Part A

Federal Programs

**Title I, Part A**

Academic Achievement Programs  
Allocations  
Committee Of Practitioners  
Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)  
Family-School Partnership Program  
Federal Programs Monitoring  
Other Resources  
Private Schools / Equitable Services  
Professional Qualifications & ESSA In-Field Reporting  
Schoolwide Programs  
Targeted Assistance Programs  
Title I Annual Reports  
Title I Webinars, Workshops and Conferences

Monitoring Archive

## Title I, Part A - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged



### LEA Monitoring and Technical Assistance Unit

Title I, Part A funds provide supplemental funding to support educators in improving the academic achievement of students who are economically and educationally disadvantaged. The United States Department of Education awards Title I, Part A funds to state education agencies (SEAs), which subgrant funds to local education agencies (LEAs) on a federal formula based on the US Census Bureau counts of school-age children from low-income families residing in each district.

The Title I, Part A division at the Georgia Department of Education provides technical assistance, resources, and program monitoring to local education agencies (LEAs) in order to ensure all children have a "significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education, and to close educational achievement gaps" (ESSA, Section 1001).

### Contact Information



**Ken Banter**  
Senior Program Manager  
Title I, Part A  
Phone: 404-463-3467  
kbanter@doe.k12.ga.us



**Brittan Ayers**  
Education Program Specialist  
404-491-3669  
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### Public Notifications

Public Notice of ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver for 2021-2022

[Special Ed Homepage Posting](#)



Georgia Department of Education



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent

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[State Performance Plan \(SPP\), Annual Performance Reports \(APR\) and Annual Determinations](#)

[Continuous Improvement](#)

[Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process \(GCIMP\)](#)

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[Due Process Hearing Decisions](#)

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[Special Education Legal Aid Providers](#)

## Special Education Services and Supports

The Georgia Department of Education (Division for Special Education Services and Supports) provides necessary infrastructure and supports for leaders, teachers, and families to meet the whole child needs of each student improving student outcomes and school climate resulting in an increased quality of life and workforce ready future. We must commit to effective collaboration across agencies and school-home partnerships to support local school districts in their efforts to provide special education and related services for students with disabilities.

The GaDOE must provide state General Supervision for local school districts to improve educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities and ensure that the requirements of IDEA are met. We believe that all students must have an equitable opportunity for school completion and successful postsecondary outcomes.

### Contact Information



Shaun Owen  
Deputy Superintendent  
Federal Programs  
Phone: 404-971-0096  
Email: sowen@doe.k12.ga.us



Wina Low  
Interim State Director,  
Special Education Services and  
Supports  
Email: wlow@doe.k12.ga.us

[Staff Contact List](#)

### Special Education Help Desk

[Special Education Questions & Support](#)

404-656-3963

[SPEDHelpDesk@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:SPEDHelpDesk@doe.k12.ga.us)

FAX: 404-651-6457

[Contact Vision/Hard of Hearing Coordinators](#)

### Frequently Accessed Resources

[Events](#)

- [IDEAS Conference](#)
- [Disproportionality](#)

[Public Notice of ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022](#)

Federal Programs Update 10.29.2021



GaDOE Division of Federal Programs <[federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us)>  
To Paula Swartzberg

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**Dear Colleague:**

**Please review these updates from the Division of Federal Programs.**

***ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice***



The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding the alternate assessment 1.0 percent participation cap put in place under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Prior to submitting the waiver, GaDOE is seeking comments from local education agencies (LEAs) and other education stakeholders.

Additional waiver details are available in the alternate assessment waiver [public notice](#). The notice is available on the GaDOE's [Title I](#) webpage. A survey with an opportunity for comments is provided at this [link](#) until 11:59 p.m. **November 27, 2021**. Questions should be submitted to Allison Timberlake via [email](#) no later than **November 27, 2021**.

## Emails

### ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice



Allison Timberlake

To  K12 Superintendents;  K12 Charter School Superintendents

Cc  Richard Woods;  Matt Jones;  Lauren Holcomb;  Paula Swartzberg;  Wina Low;  Shaun Owen;  Caitlin Dooley

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Superintendents:

(bcc: Assessment Directors, Special Education Directors, Title I Directors, Curriculum Directors)

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding the alternate assessment 1.0 percent participation cap put in place under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Prior to submitting the waiver, GaDOE is seeking comments from local education agencies (LEAs) and other education stakeholders.

In submitting the 1.0 percent participation cap waiver, GaDOE is requesting that ED allow the State a year to further implement guidelines and interventions to support LEAs in ensuring the appropriate administration of the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0). During the one-year waiver period, GaDOE's Offices of Special Education and Assessment and Accountability will work collaboratively to ensure LEAs are provided the necessary support and technical assistance.

Additional waiver details are available in the alternate assessment waiver [public notice](#). The notice is attached to this email and is also available on the GaDOE's [Title I](#) webpage. A survey with an opportunity for comments is provided at this [link](#) until 11:59 p.m. **November 27, 2021**. Questions should be submitted to me via [email](#) no later than **November 27, 2021**.

Thank you,  
Allison

Allison Timberlake, Ph.D.  
Deputy Superintendent for Assessment & Accountability  
Georgia Department of Education  
1562 Twin Towers East  
[205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE](#)  
[Atlanta, GA 30334](#)  
(470) 579-3021  
[atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us)

FW: ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice



Wina Low

To: [adreians2014](#); [Allen Mueller](#); [Alyssa Barnes](#); [Angela Slade](#); [Anne Fernandez](#); [Anne Ladd](#); [attorneykjw](#); [Camela \(Candi\) Mears](#); [Dashaunda S Patterson](#); [Delephia Riley](#); [Dorland](#); [Eric McGhee](#); +27 others  
Cc: [Shaun Owen](#); [Allison Timberlake](#); [Paula Swartzberg](#)

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Good afternoon,

Please see the message below regarding the request for a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) about the alternate assessment 1.0 percent participation cap put in place under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). This document has been placed in the Livebinder for our State Advisory Panel meeting on Friday and on our webpage. We can discuss further during our scheduled meeting.

Thank you in advance for sharing your input and communicating the opportunity to provide feedback.

Wina

Wina Low  
Interim State Director

Georgia Department of Education

Division for Special Education Services and Supports

1562 Twin Towers East

[205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE](#)

[Atlanta, Georgia 30334](#)

Cell: 470-316-8636

Email: [wlow@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:wlow@doe.k12.ga.us)

GaDOE Website: [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)

"Educating Georgia's Future"



## ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice



Allison Timberlake

To  K12 Superintendents;  K12 Charter School Superintendents

Cc  Richard Woods;  Matt Jones;  Lauren Holcomb;  Paula Swartzberg;  Wina Low;  Shaun Owen;  Caitlin Dooley

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Superintendents:

(bcc: Assessment Directors, Special Education Directors, Title I Directors, Curriculum Directors)

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is seeking a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) regarding the alternate assessment 1.0 percent participation cap put in place under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). Prior to submitting the waiver, GaDOE is seeking comments from local education agencies (LEAs) and other education stakeholders.

In submitting the 1.0 percent participation cap waiver, GaDOE is requesting that ED allow the State a year to further implement guidelines and interventions to support LEAs in ensuring the appropriate administration of the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0). During the one-year waiver period, GaDOE's Offices of Special Education and Assessment and Accountability will work collaboratively to ensure LEAs are provided the necessary support and technical assistance.

Additional waiver details are available in the alternate assessment waiver [public notice](#). The notice is attached to this email and is also available on the GaDOE's [Title I](#) webpage. A survey with an opportunity for comments is provided at this [link](#) until 11:59 p.m. **November 27, 2021**. Questions should be submitted to me via [email](#) no later than **November 27, 2021**.

Thank you,  
Allison

Allison Timberlake, Ph.D.  
Deputy Superintendent for Assessment & Accountability  
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ESSA Alternate Assessment 1.0 Percent Cap Waiver Request for 2021-2022

FW: ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice



Paula Swartzberg

To Paula Swartzberg

Cc Alison Timberlake; August Ogletree; Jeffrey Harding; Kris Dennis; Lacey Andrews

Bcc Debra.Crosby@apping.k12.ga.us; lisatruckland@atkinson.k12.ga.us; jason.rigdon@bcraiders.com; mlambert@baker.k12.ga.us; pansi.corbett@baldwin.k12.ga.us; jedwards@banks.k12.ga.us; jennie.persinger@barrow.k12.ga.us; beth.groom@bartow.k12.ga.us; lisa.stone@benhillschools.org; +236 others

Public Notice of ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022.pdf

127 KB

Reply Reply All Forward ...

Wed 10/27/2021 4:13 PM

Accountability contacts:

Please see the email below.

Best,  
Paula

Paula Swartzberg  
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**From:** Allison Timberlake <[ATimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ATimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 27, 2021 4:11 PM  
**To:** K12 Superintendents <[superintendents@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:superintendents@list.doe.k12.ga.us)>; K12 Charter School Superintendents <[k12charterschoolssuperintendents@list.doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:k12charterschoolssuperintendents@list.doe.k12.ga.us)>  
**Cc:** Richard Woods <[rwoods@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:rwoods@doe.k12.ga.us)>; Matt Jones <[mattjones@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:mattjones@doe.k12.ga.us)>; Lauren Holcomb <[lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov](mailto:lauren.holcomb@scsc.georgia.gov)>; Paula Swartzberg <[pswartzberg@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:pswartzberg@doe.k12.ga.us)>; Wina Low <[wlow@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:wlow@doe.k12.ga.us)>; Shaun Owen <[SOwen@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:SOwen@doe.k12.ga.us)>; Caitlin Dooley <[cdooley@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:cdooley@doe.k12.ga.us)>  
**Subject:** ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice

ESSA Alternate Assessment Cap Waiver 2021-2022 Public Notice



Allison Timberlake

To K12 Superintendents; K12 Charter School Superintendents

Cc Richard Woods; Matt Jones; Lauren Holcomb; Paula Swartzberg; Wina Low; Shaun Owen; Caitlin Dooley

You forwarded this message on 10/27/2021 4:14 PM.

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Reply Reply All Forward ...

Wed 10/27/2021 4:11 PM

Superintendents:

(bcc: Assessment Directors, Special Education Directors, Title I Directors, Curriculum Directors)

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## Appendix D: Public Comments

The following question was posed in the online survey attached to the public notice.

***Please select "Yes" or "No" to provide your opinion on this matter.***

*I support Georgia's ESSA one-year waiver from the 1.0 percent participation cap in alternate assessments (GAA 2.0) based on alternate achievement standards in each content area.*

***Provide any additional comments in the box below. [Note: Copies of all comments received will be attached to the waiver request sent to US ED.]***

There were 162 responses to the survey with 157 supporting the waiver.

**Provide any additional comments in the box below. [Note: Copies of all comments received will be attached to the waiver request sent to US ED.]**

Districts can not control who moves into county. Students needs must be met and having a cap can limit appropriate services provided to students. The GAA 2.0 Edibility Criteria Form is a good document to ensure only students who needing alternate standards and assessment receive them.

Students should be placed in their least restrictive environment based upon their individual needs. Decisions should not be forced regarding state testing to placement dictating based upon a participation cap, when the placement decision of the IEP contradicts the assessment that should be administered to the student. Each year our system exceeds the 1% cap, because the IEP committee makes the best decision for the individual needs of that student. We do not exceed by much but this cap rule is not in the best interest of ALL students.

As a district an IEP committee makes individual decisions for students by answering the questions to yes or no for the Alternate curriculum.

Our district has experienced an increase in transfer students with significant needs justifying GAA which puts us slightly over the 1%.

Districts are still in need of supports to ensure the GAA is only administered to those students for whom it is intended.

I'm in support of Georgia's request for a one-year waiver of the 1.0 percent participation cap on alternate state assessments (GAA 2.0) in each content. GaDOE and the school districts are making progress in meeting this requirement, but more time is needed to support school districts in identifying those students who truly need an alternate state assessment.

Due to COVID and new alignment of tests. Students and teachers are adjusting to our new normal.

On behalf of Carrollton City Schools, I would like to let you know that we support the ESSA waiver request for 1% participation cap for GAA administration. The GAA enrollment in Carrollton City Schools currently exceeds the 1% cap because a special program exists in our system that has drawn large numbers of students with the most significant disabilities. Families of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities move to the Carrollton City School district specifically to receive specialized services due to the exceptional special education services and supports provided. The GAA is a vital assessment for our students that meet the criteria for administration. Thank you for your consideration as we continue to administer the GAA for all students that meet the criteria, even if participation exceeds 1%.

In our district, we adhere strictly to the guidelines when identifying students who qualify to take the alternate assessment. Due to our enrollment, we have been slightly over the 1% cap. This is in no way a failure on the part of the school system to implement the guidelines, but instead, due to our student enrollment. We could use an additional year to identify other supports to put into place.

I think we need more data.

Many students will benefit from this waiver.

Looking at 1% by grade level is not reasonable for smaller districts that have less than 400 kids in a grade level. For these districts if they have 4 kids on GAA, they are over 1% even if they have only 10 students in the entire district out of 5000 kids . It would make more sense to me to look at 1% of a total population tested rather than at each grade level.

In our part of the state, the average IQ is lower than in other areas, the parents of students with disabilities seek out our school system specifically because of the services we provide. We retrain every year and have every case reviewed by a team of psychologists and special education specialists before the IEP is approved. and I am not sure providing guidance will reduce our percentage of students who qualify for the alternate assessment. I don't know that the 1% ESSA cap is realistic.

Due to Covid-19 and the new test design, the waiver is necessary.

Educational decisions are life changing decisions. It is important to allow time for transition to prevent regulations from negatively impacting the success of student progress. Being forced to change the type of instruction based on a regulation, does not meet the intent of the law. We need time to prepare students that are not developmentally ready for the rigor of the general education curriculum. Georgia deserves an opportunity to meet the needs of the whole child in the midst of this pandemic.

There should not be a cap on something that is an individual determination and is ultimately an IEP committee decision.

The rational behind establishing a 1.0% participations is statistically unreasonable. This pseudo-mandate is similar to the unrealistic requirements of NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND. If a school district is demonstrating a pattern of abuse when determining eligibility for GAA participation, then the district should receive technical assistance and support from GADOE stakeholders to consider options that conform to the needs of the child as oppose to using an arbitrary percentile that requires a waiver request from US ED.

In our district we have over the 1 % that require an alternative assessment. We have many special education with severe/ profound disabilities.

As a very small system, percentage caps or penalties are very difficult and unreasonable. For example, we have some out-of-county students with severe disabilities who will impact the one percent. We have explored our out-of-county student policies with legal services and learned we can do very little to prevent this, unless we just do not allow ANY out-of-county students at all. This also hurts us with graduation rates for SWDs. If you are showing an obvious and significant trend in over-identification or consistent poor completion rate over a number of years, that is a real issue worth exploring. But a less than one percent overage should be looked at in terms of actual numbers - meaning if cap is exceeded because of one or two students ( which will impact your system every year those students are in a tested grade level until they graduate), then allowances are called for. I do think that the eligibility area of students with disabilities who are identified for alternative assessment should always be reviewed. Systems should not manipulate the intent of alternative assessment to boost their assessment outcomes.

More than 1% of students in our system require an alternate assessment.

Our numbers routinely exceed the 1% cap due to the extremely low enrollment numbers of our small district. Each child placed on the alternate assessment plan is thoroughly vetted and evaluated to ensure we are in compliance with state and federal regulations. This waiver will ensure all students receive the education and services they need to succeed.

Our district has a large number of students with Autism...and multiple disabilities. We differentiate students who can perform in inclusion classes; however, many of our students have very limited cognitive abilities and have moderate to severe autistic characteristics. Families really struggle with what will happen with their children if something happens to the parents/guardians because their children have such great needs. These students and families need daily living/communication educational goals for their future.

These blanket numbers limit local district's flexibility and our ability to best serve our students.

The 1% waiver is appropriate and reasonably allows LEA's to assess the most vulnerable student population.

It is hard to imagine how a cap for students taking the GAA in any particular school system or state lends itself to the founding principle of IDEA decisions being individualized for a student. If Individual Education Plans are inspected and found to be appropriate for each individual taking the GAA, how can the IEP team deny the student the right to have the assessment that is recommended by the team solely because it does not fall within the 1% cap? Clearly, they cannot.

By what means was it determined that 1% is an appropriate cap for each state to have students assessed by an alternative method? Small systems in rural Georgia can go above or below the 1% cap based on the enrollment of one student. Likewise, a mid-size system may have to remove many students from the GAA to get below the 1% cap. It is not appropriate to administratively determine which students must be removed from the GAA based on the cap. The IEP teams are given the responsibility to determine the state assessment.

I do not believe it is appropriate to teach a student on an adaptive curriculum while testing them on the full depth of general curriculum standards, which go beyond the level of prerequisite skills that are linked to the grade-level curriculum. The GAA is the only option available, in my opinion, for students in the adapted curriculum in tested grade levels. Perhaps Georgia needs an assessment for students who can physically access the GMAS, yet who are educated on an adaptive curriculum. This would give IEP teams a third option for state assessment, reducing the number of students who are assessed on the GAA to only those who cannot physically access the test. For a brief moment, students were able to be tested on a modified State test. Is that not something that can be reconsidered?

I appreciate the need to be sure students are taking the GAA based on their individual needs and not because school systems want to skew test results. But in an effort to correct one problem, have we not created another? The 1% alternate assessment cap may help State accountability, but it promises to cause harm to individual students, for whom there is a right to a FAPE.

For smaller districts that have only 400 kids in a class and having only like 5 kids on GAA quickly puts the district over that 1% cap. It would make more sense to look at 1% of a total population tested rather than at each grade level.

I support the waiver of the 1% cap on student participation on the GAA.

Nonw

I work at a school that is 100% IEP. The 1% cap is inappropriate for our population. I imagine the cap provides frustration to many other schools. Students should be assessed based on their needs, not an arbitrary number. For Every Student to Succeed (ahem), we need to assess students appropriately. The purpose of assessment is to monitor and measure learning. If the test is inappropriate for the child because they've been forced into the standard testing instead of more appropriate alternate testing due to an arbitrary cap, the test is useless and does nothing to help the child succeed or help their teachers.

2.1% of the population have intellectual disability, yet US ED holds states to a 1% cap for students participating in alternate assessments. Forcing students to participate in assessments that are not developmentally appropriate is inhumane.

The 1.0 participation cap MIGHT be a good rule of thumb; however, I feel some kids are falling through the cracks. We are placing students in regular education taking Milestones that are not receiving instruction, adaptations and accommodations to meet their learning needs. If students are taken off or not considered for the alternate assessment based on the fact that their school has reached their 1% cap, we are doing them a disservice. Removing or not considering students from the GAA based on this criteria would be like telling a student they can't be a girl because we already have 50% girls in our school. In addition, we should consider allowing the alternate assessment for students with multiple disabilities or students with mild intellectual disabilities PLUS a sensory disability (with deficits in adaptive skills).

Since the beginning of the Coronavirus, pandemic students have had to deal with some pretty tough issues. This includes learning loss, issues with virtual school and technology, students moving back and forth from face-to-face to virtual, and students having family issues such as parents losing jobs, family members dying, and food and money issues.

We have students in our district who meet the criteria to be assessed on GAA 2.0 and we support their right to be assessed on their progress on meeting academic standards.

As a special educator and administrator, I not only support the waiver but I would ask that the cap be re-evaluated and permanently extended. I understand the reasoning behind the cap, but in my opinion as an educator with 30 years of experience, the cap creates situations where students are not being served properly because we must limit the number of students. Use of the GAA should be based solely on student need and not some arbitrary percentage

NA

It depends on the population and you can not say that only 1% of the population is in need of the alternate assessment

Our district has a large number of transfer students. General education standardized assessments are not appropriate for intellectually delayed students. Maybe the state should reconsider the wording of this rule.

This plan has been very beneficial in my daughter's schooling since she has special needs keep up the good work

Many students are farther behind than pre-pandemic and have a lot of ground to make up

There is no simple mathematical cap for how many people need the alternate assessment

Due to regression and recoupment times from illness, family illness, close contact, low engagement virtually students attendance is low and participation is low.

Students returning after online classes are taking some time to adjust and follow the regular schedule and students will require additional time to prepare for GAA

Students have been putting in a lot of effort to catch up with lost instructional time but additional time will help in preparing the students for the future.

I don't believe there should be a cap. The end result is a handful of students that really should be GAA being left out because it puts the county over the 1% limit.

COVID-19 Pandemic

none

When new policies and procedures are implemented, state and local systems need adjustment period allowances. Implementation on a large scale takes time for all stakeholders to be properly informed.

Some GAA students did not return to face-to-face instruction. They opted for a different program due to medical reasons.

Camden County is home to a naval submarine base that is considered Category 5. Category 5 means that the family member's needs are highly specialized, complex or severe, requiring continuity of care. Because of this, the service member meets criteria to homestead. Those families who include children with disabilities are often assigned to our local naval submarine base because Camden County Schools is equipped to understand and care for the needs of the children. Families once adjusted in Camden County often request and complete the Exceptional Family Members application requesting to remain in Camden County Schools during the active duty assignment of the parent(s).

Across the board and especially our school was hit hard with positive Covid tests of students this year. Our students have learning gaps due to the pandemic.

GAA participation should be based on individual student needs, not an arbitrary percentage chosen by a Federal agency. Putting a cap on participation may persuade some local education agencies to deny access to the GAA in order to help the state education agency meet the cap.

I think it is very important for Georgia to receive the 1% waiver. The school systems nor the state are in control of the number of students with significant cognitive disabilities that live in the districts or state.

Since the decision to participate in the alternate assessment is the IEP committee's decision, the federal government should not be able to punish or restrict States who exceed the 1% cap imposed by the federal government.

Even when not impacted by Covid, it is impossible to guarantee less than 1% of the students will participate in GAA. We do not control the cognitive functioning level of the students. We simply do our very best to educate the ones who enter our doors to the fullest of our ability.

Our students are REALLY struggling and are further behind than expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes in their learning rates are very real.

As a school psychologist practicing in this system since 1994, this has been a record year so far in terms of the sheer number of students transferring into our system with significant educational deficits, severe disabilities, complex histories and need for extensive support. We are all drowning. Any relief is appreciated.

Student populations sometimes exceed the 1% cap due to the requirement to remain in compliance with IDEA directives. A waiver would benefit districts while avoiding penalties.