

September 1, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: System Test Coordinators
System Curriculum Coordinators
System Special Education Directors

From: Jan Reyes, Ed.D., Director of Assessment Development

SUBJECT: Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0 High School Test Design Survey and
Nomination of Educators for Test Development Activities

As you know, SB 367 was recently signed into law and one requirement of this legislation is the reduction of End of Course (EOC) testing in high school to once per content area. At the State Board of Education meeting on August 27, the determination was made that the courses to be tested will be Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra, Biology, U.S. History, and American Literature and Composition. Therefore, Georgia Milestones EOC assessments will now be administered only for those courses.

The **Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0)** is designed to be administered to students with significant cognitive disabilities for whom the Georgia Milestones assessments would not provide an appropriate measure of student achievement, as determined by the student's Individualized Education Program team. The purpose of the GAA 2.0 is to ensure all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, are provided access to the state-adopted content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate progress toward achievement of the state standards.

Currently, the high school GAA 2.0 is administered for the first time in Grade 11 and each content area assessment includes standards from both courses previously assessed on Georgia Milestones. For example, the GAA 2.0 High School Mathematics assessment includes tasks aligned to Algebra I standards as well as tasks aligned to Geometry standards.

Given the recent reduction to one Georgia Milestones EOC assessment per content area, **we need to consider whether revisions to the GAA 2.0 high school assessments are necessary.** Federal and state law require that alternate assessments are aligned with state content standards and promote access to the general education curriculum, but there is no federal requirement that the alternate assessments in high school assess content from the same courses as the state's general assessment. For this reason, **we would like input from Georgia educators who work with high school students eligible to participate in the GAA 2.0** prior to moving forward with any revisions to the assessments.

Please share the survey link below with the appropriate staff in your district (e.g., teachers, school leaders, district leaders who work with or support high school students with significant cognitive disabilities) to help us determine the approach that is in the best interest of our high school students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Survey link: [GAA 2.0 High School Test Design Survey](#)

Response deadline: **September 15**

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Richard Woods, *Georgia's School Superintendent*

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If it is determined that revisions to the GAA 2.0 high school assessments are necessary, we will need to convene committees of Georgia educators to participate in work related to revising the test blueprints, Extended Content Standards, and achievement level descriptors. As meetings will need to begin in October, we ask that each district proceed now with nominating educators for participation. Should it be determined that these meetings are not needed, all nominees will be notified accordingly.

As we understand that the current environment may make it difficult for educators to be away from their students, participation in this work will involve a **combination of independent reviews and feedback, along with virtual meetings held outside of typical school hours to the extent possible**. Nominated educators will be provided additional details and will have the opportunity to indicate their availability for the meetings.

System Test Coordinators, System Curriculum Coordinators, and System Special Education Directors are asked to collaborate and submit the names of highly qualified educators who work with high school students eligible for the GAA 2.0. Districts may submit up to **four (4) nominations** and are encouraged to nominate first-time as well as veteran participants. For this work, we will need to include educators who participated in previous meetings related to the GAA 2.0 high school test blueprints, Extended Content Standards, and achievement level descriptors. A list of educators from your district who have participated in these meetings, if applicable, will be provided to System Test Coordinators via email.

Please note that we are seeking Special Education and General Education nominees. General Education participants serve as content area experts and need not hold any certifications in Special Education.

Please submit nominations, using the link provided below, during the period of **September 1 – September 15, 2020. Nomination does not guarantee invitation to an event.** Only those who receive an official email invitation for an event may attend.

Please consider educators from your district who:

- demonstrate depth of knowledge in their content area;
- demonstrate instructional expertise;
- increase student achievement through the use of proven, research-based practices;
- participate in ongoing professional learning;
- provide leadership among their colleagues;
- represent the gender, ethnic, and regional diversity of your system;
- teach diverse and/or exceptional student populations, including vision/hearing impaired students;
- receive recognition for their contributions to teaching and learning; and/or
- bring a fresh perspective to the GAA 2.0 development process.

Nomination Process

1. Establish a nominee pool; the nominee's direct supervisor(s) should approve participation.
2. Collect information needed to complete a nomination survey; an optional template is provided on page 4.
3. **Provide each nominee a copy of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) included on page 5 of this memo.**
4. Fill out one online nomination form for each nominee **no later than September 15, 2020** using the following link:

<https://www.cvent.com/d/n7qz71>

Please Note: Only System Test Coordinators, System Curriculum Coordinators, and/or System Special Education Directors may submit nominees using the survey link provided. We respectfully request that you work collaboratively to submit up to 4 nominations per district.

After the nomination window has closed, all nominees will receive an email request to submit an application for participation. At this time, nominees will provide more information regarding teaching experience and availability to participate in the meetings. Nominees should expect to receive this email around September 18 and may need to check their Clutter or Junk folders as these emails are occasionally received in those folders.

Specific meeting details will be provided when the event invitation is sent. Invited educators must confirm acceptance of the invitation and will be provided instructions to do so.

Given that participation in this work will involve a **combination of independent reviews and feedback, along with virtual meetings held outside of typical school hours**, it is not anticipated that educators will incur any expenses related to the meetings, however an honorarium will be provided to compensate participants for their time.

For questions about the nomination process, please contact Questar by email at lamoako@questarai.com or by phone at 866-997-0698.

Should you have questions about the Georgia Alternate Assessment, please contact me (jreyes@doe.k12.ga.us; 404-463-6665) at the GaDOE.

Thank you for your help with this important aspect of the Georgia Alternate Assessment.

cc: System Superintendents

Richard Woods, State School Superintendent

Matt Jones, Chief of Staff

Allison Timberlake, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability

Sandy Greene, Ed.D., Director of Assessment Administration

Mary Nesbit-McBride, Ph.D., Assessment Specialist

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0 High School Test Development Workshop Nominee Information

- This form is for local school district use only. It is intended to help the person nominating gather all the relevant information about the nominee that the Department needs. **Do not forward this form to the GaDOE or Questar.**
- **All information must be provided through the survey link that appears in the memo.**
- System Test Coordinator, System Curriculum Coordinator, System Special Education Director, or designee will use the information on this form to complete the *GAA 2.0 High School Test Development Nominee Survey*.

Nominee's First Name	
Nominee's Last Name	
Nominee's School Email Address	
School Administrator's First Name	
School Administrator's Last Name	
School Administrator's Email Address	

Does this nominee teach Special Education or General Education?
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> General Education

Grade level(s) nominee currently teaches or supports (select all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> 9	
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	
<input type="checkbox"/> Not Currently Teaching (please specify grade level & role)	

Content area(s) nominee currently teaches or supports (select all that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/> English Language Arts	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics	
<input type="checkbox"/> Science	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social Studies	



Fall 2020 Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0 High School Test Development Workshops Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How was I nominated?

A call for nominations was emailed to System Test Coordinators, System Curriculum Coordinators, and System Special Education Directors for all public K-12 school districts and state charter schools. Districts were encouraged to nominate up to 4 educators to participate in development meetings for the GAA 2.0 high school assessments. It was requested that each district ensure their nominees were aware that they had been nominated.

Now that I have been nominated, what are the next steps?

Around September 18, an email will be sent to all nominated educators requesting they complete a survey to indicate their interest and availability to participate in the meetings. Nominated educators are encouraged to check their Clutter, Junk, and/or Spam email folders as these emails occasionally are received in those folders. We also ask that educators tentatively hold dates for which they have indicated availability.

When will I know if I've been selected to participate?

Initial invitations will be sent in late September. Once the invitation for a meeting has been sent, educators have one week to either accept or decline the meeting.

*Please note that all nominees are considered alternates until the date of the meeting and may receive an invitation at a later time. If for any reason an invited educator declines the invitation or cancels, another educator will be invited to fill that spot. This cycle could continue up until the first day of the committee meeting.

How are participants selected to participate in committee meetings?

A representative group of educators from across the state will be identified. Some factors that are considered to ensure a balanced representation include region, gender, race/ethnicity, years of experience, and experience with different student populations.

If I am selected to participate, will my travel expenses be reimbursed?

Participation in this work will involve a combination of independent reviews and feedback, along with virtual meetings held outside of typical school hours (to the extent possible). Therefore, it is not anticipated that educators will incur any travel expenses related to the meetings. An honorarium will be paid to compensate educators for their participation. Further details will be provided in the application and availability survey.

