



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

August 21, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: System Test Coordinators
System Special Education Coordinators

FROM: Tony Eitel
Director of Assessment Administration

SUBJECT: Guidance for Special Needs Scholarship Students to Participate in State Assessments

In 2007, the State Legislature passed Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship Program (Senate Bill 10, SB10). This program provides students with disabilities the opportunity to attend eligible private schools. The law also allows scholarship students to participate in state assessments. The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding how scholarship students attending private schools may participate in state testing for the 2015-2016 school year.

Location

School systems are not required to test scholarship students at their local facilities. The Georgia Department of Education will assign a testing location and administer the requested assessment(s). This location may be at the GaDOE offices in Atlanta or a regional facility (i.e. RESA or ETTC). The assignment of a testing location, and possibly test administration dates, will be made at the discretion of the GaDOE based on availability and capacity.

Applicable Assessments

Scholarship students are eligible to take the Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) assessment in grades three through eight.

Notification/ Scheduling

If a student is attending a private school under the scholarship provisions of SB10, then the parents/legal guardians must advise the Assessment Administration Division of the Georgia Department of Education of their desire for the student to be assessed with a state assessment. **This notification should be in writing and provided no less than six weeks prior to the first day of the scheduled state testing window.** A form is provided with this memorandum to submit such requests.

Transportation

Parents/legal guardians assume responsibility for the transportation of the scholarship student to and from the designated testing location on the scheduled day(s). Parents/legal guardians must make certain that the student arrives punctually for testing.

Accommodations

As provided in O.C.G.A. §20-2-2114(f), acceptance of the scholarship has the same effect as a parental refusal to consent to services pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq. Accordingly, neither the public school nor the testing center will provide testing accommodations required in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). However, the testing center will provide testing accommodations required to allow the student to access the testing program in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Such accommodations may not be identical to accommodations in the student’s IEP and are only designed to provide the student access to the test.

To receive an accommodation under these stipulations, the parents/legal guardians must provide evidence of the type of accommodations and rationale for such accommodation at time of request for testing so that the testing center can make the necessary arrangements. The evidence for the need for accommodations during testing is typically part of a student’s IEP. Private school documentation of individual accommodations that are provided to the student at the private school should be provided. If such documentation from the private school is not available, the parent is responsible for producing documentation from the student’s current school that describes the accommodations that the private school affords the student in instruction and assessment at that school. Documentation should be written on the private school letterhead and signed by the principal. Only accommodations that are authorized as indicated in the current Student Assessment Handbook and/or Examiners Manual may be used for students to receive valid scores. These documents may be accessed on the GaDOE testing web site:

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>

2015-2016 State Testing Dates

| Assessment | Administration Date(s) | Registration must be received by: |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Georgia Milestones End of Grade (EOG) (Grade 3-8) | April 4 – May 6, 2016 | January 29, 2016 |

Please direct inquiries regarding this policy to Deborah Houston in the Assessment Administration Division at (404) 657-0251 or dhouston@doe.k12.ga.us.

cc:
Richard Woods, State School Superintendent
Matt Jones, Chief of Staff
Melissa Fincher, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability
Deborah Gay, Director of Special Education Services and Supports