



**Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent**  
*"Making Education Work for All Georgians"*

## **Secondary Assessment Transition Plan Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

### **Why is the state transitioning away from the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT)?**

A portion of the A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000 (HB 1187), specifically amendments to O.C.G.A. §20-2-281, stipulated that the State Board of Education should discontinue the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) once the End of Course Tests (EOCT) are fully developed. Federal accountability requirements and previous State Board of Education Graduation Rule course requirements prohibited this transition from occurring earlier. Current course requirements, outlined in State Board Rule 160-4-2-.48, High School Graduation Requirements for Students Enrolling in the Ninth Grade in the 2008-2009 School Year and Subsequent Years, require all students take the courses associated with EOCTs to earn a high school diploma. The one exception to this is that students may take either Physical Science (which has an EOCT) or Physics (which does not have an EOCT). With all students participating in EOCTs in the core content areas, it is now possible to meet federal accountability requirements with the EOCT.

### **What courses require an End of Course Test (EOCT)?**

The End-of-Course Test (EOCT) program is comprised of the following ten content area tests:

#### **English Language Arts**

- Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
- American Literature and Composition

#### **Mathematics**

- Mathematics I: Algebra/Geometry/Statistics
- Mathematics II: Geometry/Algebra II/Statistics
- GPS Algebra
- GPS Geometry

#### **Science**

- Biology
- Physical Science

#### **Social Studies**

- United States History
- Economics/Business/Free Enterprise

**What are the testing requirements for students who entered grade nine for the first time in school year 2011 – 2012 and thereafter?**

The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) is not required for these students to earn a high school diploma. These students will not take, and are not required to pass, the GHSGT. The End of Course Tests (EOCT) will contribute 20% to the course grade (for those core courses in which an EOCT is mandated). This group of students is required to pass the course with the increased weight of the EOCT applied to the course grade. The requirement to achieve a passing score on the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) remains for these students.

**What are the testing requirements for students who enrolled in grade nine for the first time from July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011?**

The graduation testing requirement for diploma eligibility may be achieved by passing one of the two EOCTs in each content area (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies) or the corresponding content area GHSGT.

Under this flexibility, a passing score on a content area EOCT can serve as an alternate demonstration of proficiency and satisfy the requirement to pass the corresponding content area GHSGT.

For this group of students, the EOCT will continue to contribute a minimum of 15% to the student's course grade. The GHSGT will remain available for any student unable to meet the testing requirement through the EOCT in any content area. The requirement to achieve a passing score on the GHSWT remains for these students.

**Does a student who enrolled in grade nine for the first time between July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011, have to take the GHSGT in a content area for which they have already passed at least one EOCT?**

No. The graduation testing requirement may be achieved by passing one of the two EOCTs in each content area (language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies). For example, a student in this cohort who has passed the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature EOCT has fulfilled their GHSGT English Language Arts requirement. That student does **not** have to pass the GHSGT English Language Arts test and, therefore, should not take the GHSGT in English Language Arts.

**May students who enrolled in grade nine for the first time between July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011, who are not enrolled in a course retake the EOCT for that course in order to post a passing score to fulfill the testing requirement for graduation?**

No. These students should take the GHSGT in any content area needed to fulfill their testing requirements.

**Should students who enrolled in grade nine for the first time between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2011, defer participation in a GHSGT content area if they have not yet taken the EOCT in that content area?**

Students should not defer participation in any GHSGT content area for which an EOCT has yet to be taken. For example, many students take American Literature, U. S. History, and Economics during their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade years. These EOCTs are traditionally administered after the GHSGT's spring administration. Students should not defer taking the English Language Arts and/or Social Studies GHSGTs in anticipation that they will pass the American Literature, U. S. History, or Economics EOCT. To do so would limit the number of opportunities these students have to achieve a passing score to earn their diploma.

**Who determines if eligible students (those who enrolled in grade nine for the first time from July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2011) have met their testing requirements for a diploma?**

Using the test data reported to them, systems and schools will make the determinations regarding the completion of testing requirements for graduation. There is no need to apply for a waiver or variance in order to use the flexibility offered under the Secondary Assessment Transition Plan. The Georgia Department of Education's Technology Division has placed a report in the Student Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to assist systems in determining the status of students in this regard. This report provides local schools a comprehensive view of a student's high school test history. This is designed to assist the school in determining a student's progress in meeting their high school testing requirements.

**What are the assessment requirements for students who entered grade nine for the first time prior to the 2008 – 2009 school year?**

Students who enrolled in grade nine for the first time prior to July 1, 2008, are required to pass the GHSGT. These students were subject to previous State Board Rules that established their graduation requirements. The Graduation Rules for these students (IHF 1 – 5) were less prescriptive in terms of specific courses required of students and allowed for multiple diploma options. Passing the GHSGT remains the uniform performance expectation for all students to earn a Georgia diploma under former graduation rules. The GHSGT served as a measure of basic proficiency in the core content areas.

The test is administered several times a year so that students have multiple opportunities to take the test. Students should check with their local school systems for dates and locations.

**For those students required to pass the GHSGT and who have the need to re-test, will the test remain available?**

Yes. The GHSGT will continue to be administered for students who are required to pass the GHSGT in order to earn their diploma. The test is given in September, November, March, and July. Students should check with their local school systems for dates and locations.

### **Given the transition plan, who should take the GHSGT?**

- Students who entered grade nine for the first time between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2011, have earned sufficient course credit, and who have not passed at least one EOCT in each of the four content areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. These students are only required to test in the GHSGT content area in which they have not achieved a passing score on at least one of the two corresponding content area EOCTs. These students must take and pass the GHSWT as that requirement remains for all students regardless of enrollment date.
  - For example, a student passed the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature, Mathematics I, and US History EOCTs. Unfortunately, the student did not pass the Biology or Physical Science EOCTs. This student must take and pass the GHSGT in Science to earn the diploma. The student does not need to take or pass the GHSGT in English Language Arts, Mathematics, or Social Studies.
- Students who entered grade nine for the first time prior to July 1, 2008, and have earned sufficient course credits. These students must take and pass all four content area GHSGTs as well as the GHSWT.
- Individuals who enrolled in grade nine for the first time prior to July 1, 2008, and who have left high school with a Certificate of Performance or Special Education diploma and returned to retest. These students must take and pass all four content area GHSGTs and the GHSWT.

### **What are the assessment requirements for students who transfer into a Georgia public high school?**

The requirements for individual students are determined by the date a student first enrolls in grade nine. A student's transcript and/or records from their previous school should assist in making the necessary determinations.

### **How will a student's grade/credit be calculated using the EOCT?**

The EOCT is administered upon completion of each previously listed course that requires an EOCT. A student's final grade in the course will be calculated using the EOCT as follows (per State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.13, Statewide Passing Score):

For students enrolled in grade nine for the first time before July 1, 2011, the EOCT counts as a minimum of 15% of the final grade.

For students enrolled in grade nine for the first time on July 1, 2011 or after, the EOCT counts as a minimum of 20% of the final grade.