

Brad Bryant, State Superintendent of Schools

September 23, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: System Test Coordinators
System Special Education Directors

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. 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 2010-2011 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 ETC). The assignment of a testing location will be made at the discretion of the GaDOE based on availability and capacity.

Applicable Assessments

Scholarship students are eligible to take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) in grades three through eight, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT) in grade eleven, and the Writing Assessments in grades five, eight, and eleven.

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

If testing accommodations are to be provided for the student during the assessment(s), then the parents/legal guardians must provide evidence of the type of accommodations and rationale for such accommodations at the time of the 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. A current IEP from the private school is the preferred documentation. If a current IEP 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. The GaDOE will not honor any accommodations that are not authorized as indicated in the current Student Assessment Handbook and/or Examiners Manual. These documents may be assessed on the GaDOE testing web site: http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx.

2010-2011 State Testing Dates

Assessment	Administration Date(s)	Registration Must be Received By:
Grade 8 Writing Assessment	January 19, 2011	December 17, 2010
Georgia High School Writing Test	February 23, 2011	January 14, 2011
Grade 5 Writing Test	March 2, 2011	January 21, 2011
Georgia High School Graduation Tests	March 14 – April 1, 2011	February 1, 2011
Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests	April 25 – 29, 2011	February 18, 2011

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

cc:

- Brad Bryant, State Superintendent of Schools
- Martha Reichrath, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent for Standards, Instruction and Assessment
- Melissa Fincher, Associate Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability
- Nancy O’Hara, Associate Superintendent, Innovative Instruction
- Carmen Freemire-Hernandez, Program Manager, Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program