

September 6, 2007

MEMORANDUM

TO: System Test Coordinators

FROM: Jeff Barker, Ph.D.
Assessment Administration Director

SUBJECT: Update for the Fall Main Administration of the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT)

To assist you in the September 26, 2007 GHSWT main administration, the following guidelines are specified for your attention.

Changes:

- **This is the first GPS based administration of the GHSWT, which continues to be a test of persuasive writing. In persuasion, the writer assumes a position on an issue and uses language to influence the reader. The purpose is to express a writer's opinion on a subject either explicitly or implicitly.**
- **Students must produce a composition of no more than two pages on an assigned topic.**
- **The two-hour test administration includes 100 minutes of student writing time.**
- **The scoring system is analytic. Analytic scoring means that more than one feature or domain of a paper is evaluated.**
- **Student writing will be assessed analytically in four domains: *Ideas, Organization, Style, and Conventions*. Analytic scoring will provide detailed information on student writing including scale scores and performance levels.**
- **Scores in each domain range from 1 to 5 (5 being the highest score). The total weighted raw scores range from 10 (1's in all four domains) to 50 (5's in all four domains). A score of "1 to 5" is assigned to each domain by each rater. Domain scores are combined to obtain a total score for each student.**
- **In combining the domain scores, the Ideas score is given a weight of 40%; the other domains of Organization, Style, and Conventions are given a weight of 20% each. The total score is then converted to a three-digit scaled score.**
- **There are three performance levels represented: Does Not Meet (100-199), Meets (200-249), and Exceeds (250+).**

- **The System and School Coordinators Manuals have been combined into one document.**

Coding:

There have been some changes to the GHSWT answer document. Please be certain all examiners and school coordinators are fully aware of these changes.

- In addition to the student FTE number, students must provide their Georgia Testing Identifier (GTID) number. School coordinators should provide examiners with student rosters that include both FTE and GTID numbers, Special Education or ELL status, and information about accommodations.
- Students **MUST** enter the form number of the test they take in the correct space on the answer document.
- Students should complete information about their diploma status. Please note that Special Education has been added as a Diploma Endorsement Sought.
- Grade information should be indicated: students should grid grade 11, 12, or Other; if Other, they should write in the grade.
- The State-Directed Use Only Boxes (SDU A or SDU B) should be completed only by School or System Test Coordinators. SDU A is used to enter the code for the GNET programs that students attend. The two-digit code should be marked for all students who are served at a GNET facility. This information is being collected in order to provide summary reports to each center. Codes can be found in the System and School Coordinator's Manuals.
- Note: The facility codes have been updated. Please make certain you use the current list of codes in your fall manuals.
- SDU B is used to report irregularities or invalidations. Should a testing irregularity occur during the administration, document the situation on the System Coordinator Testing Irregularities Documentation Form then contact Dr. Kay Ellen Rutledge (404-463-5047) for specific instructions. Some situations may result in the invalidation of the student's work and/or reporting to the Professional Standards Commission. Guidance will be provided in these situations for proper documentation and reporting.
- The For Teacher Only section is used to indicate student SRC codes and the type of Accommodation(s) students received (S for Setting; P for presentation; R for response; and SC for scheduling options). The For Teacher Use Only section is also used to record whether the accommodation is Conditional or Standard and to indicate the source specifying the accommodation, i.e. IEP, IAP, TPP.
- Special programs (GNET, alternative programs, etc.) should not use the 6xxx series state school codes. Students should be coded with the state school code where their FTE is collected. A separate header sheet must identify each school where students are reported as FTE. School codes of 6XXX should not be used.

General Information:

- The GHSWT must be administered the morning of September 26, 2007.
- All assessments must be completed in one day. A make-up prompt is provided for those students not in attendance on the first day of testing.
- All student responses **MUST** be written in English. Cursive and print are both acceptable on the final draft. Students should not skip lines on the final draft.
- Answer documents should arrive at the Georgia Center for Assessment (GCA) for scoring no later than October 5, 2007.
- Results will arrive in systems on or before November 9, 2007.

Testing Materials:

- Inventory all test materials immediately upon receipt (materials should arrive in systems September 13, 2007). You should open shrink-wrapped packages in order to inventory all materials and to prepare appropriate quantities for schools.
- If any additional materials are needed, please request them via Schoolhouse at www.schoolhouse.ncs.com.
- Systems will receive barcode labels for the fall GHSWT. Labels should be placed on answer documents according to instructions in the Examiner's Manual.
- The students' FTE and GTID numbers must be used as the Student ID number on all state-mandated assessments. Please check the accuracy of these numbers.
- Only the Drafting Sheets provided may be used for writing the initial draft. No other scratch paper is allowed.
- Examiners **MUST** account for all testing materials before dismissing students.

Accommodations:

- Students eligible to take the GHSWT with accommodations may only be provided those accommodations that are explicitly approved in the Student Assessment Handbook.
- Word processors are not allowed unless this accommodation is specified in the student's IEP, IAP, or ELL/TPC and the accommodation should have been routinely used during the normal course of the student's regular education program. All editing features must be disabled in order to meet the requirements of a standard administration.
- Students who have a temporary physical impairment (e.g., broken arm or hand) that prevents production of a handwritten response should not be tested. High school students should have testing delayed to the next regularly scheduled administration, with the following exception:
Eligible students may be provided accommodations based on an emergency Section 504 Plan to allow participation in the assessment. A word processor may be used with the spell check function disabled. The word processor print out should include the student's name and FTE and GTID number and be placed inside the Answer Document. GCA will score the printout as the final draft. One other option is the use of a scribe. Please contact Dr. Kay Ellen Rutledge for scribing instructions.

- The prompts must not be read aloud to students or interpreted unless that requirement is listed in the IEP, IAP, or whose regular education program includes this accommodation.
- Writing materials for visually impaired students may be enlarged by the System Test Coordinator. All enlarged writing materials must be accounted for and returned.
- Prompts may be communicated via sign language.
- ELL students may use a word – to – word translation dictionary as a standard administration if their TPP calls for one.
- Extended time is a standard accommodation for ELL students.

Questions regarding the GHSWT should be referred to Dr. Kay Ellen Rutledge in the Assessment Administration Division by phone at (404) 463-5047 or via e-mail at krutledg@doe.k12.ga.us.

cc: System Superintendents
GNET Testing Coordinators
RESA Directors
Dr. Cynthia Ashby, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
Dr. Dorothy Arensman, Georgia Academy for the Blind
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