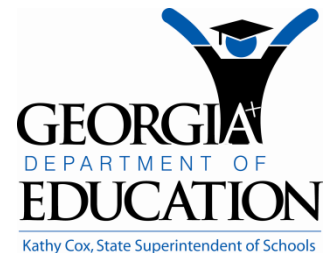




Testing Update

2010 Spring Leadership Conference
Athens, GA

Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools
“We will lead the nation in improving student achievement.”



Three Main Topics

- Accommodations
- Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards
- Questions



Accommodations

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Historical Perspective

- Prior to IDEA and NCLB, **all** students were not always included in the assessment process
- The focus on accommodation has shifted from an “anything goes” approach for inclusion to ensuring valid measurement of student achievement
- Federal regulations stipulate states have policies on appropriate accommodations, monitor those policies, and ensure valid measurement

Important Points to Remember

- Allowable accommodations *always* grow out of the content and skills measured by the assessment and the purpose of the assessment
- Teams and committees should consider the purpose and content of the assessment as well as the individual student's need and circumstance when selecting accommodations
- **Inappropriate use of accommodations can (and does!) negatively impact student achievement**

Eligible Students

- Students eligible for accommodations include:
 - Students with Disabilities
 - students with individualized educational plans
 - students served under Section 504*
 - English Language Learners
 - Students qualifying for language assistance services
 - ELL students who are also SWD
 - Students who have exited language assistance services in the last two years (ELL-Monitored)**

* Only in the rarest of circumstances would a 504 student qualify for a conditional accommodation.

** ELL-M students are not eligible for conditional accommodations.

Accommodations

- Accommodations allow access...
 - they are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and scheduling that provide equitable instructional and assessment access for students with disabilities and English language learners.
- Accommodations reduce or eliminate the effects of a student's disability or limited English proficiency
- Accommodations do not provide an unfair advantage
- Accommodations do not reduce or change learning expectations

Modifications

- Modifications, on the other hand, involve:
 - Changing, lowering, or reducing learning or assessment expectations
 - May result in implications that could adversely affect a student throughout that individual's educational career
 - Examples include
 - Requiring a student to learn less material
 - Revising assignments or tests to make them easier

Modifications are not allowed on Georgia assessments.

Accommodations

In Georgia accommodations MAY NOT

- alter, explain, simplify, paraphrase, or eliminate any test item, reading passage, writing prompt, or choice option
- provide verbal or other clues or suggestions that hint at or give away the correct response to the student

Only state-approved accommodations may be used on state-mandated assessment, following the guidance issued.

Target Skills vs Access Skills

- Target Skills: those skills and concepts the test is designed to measure
- Access Skills: those needed by the student to demonstrate knowledge and application of the target skills

Accommodations do not alter target skills.

Key Considerations

- Different tests serve different purposes
 - Accommodations may be allowed for one test, but not for another...it has to do with the test's purpose and what is it designed to measure
 - When considering an accommodation, consider the purpose of the test and what it is designed to measure

Key Considerations

- For all students we should consider –
 - the student’s need for the accommodation
 - the student’s experience with the accommodation
 - whether the accommodation is of benefit to the student
 - the student’s feelings and beliefs about the accommodation

Conditional Accommodations

- More expansive accommodations that provide access for students with more severe disabilities or more limited English proficiency who would not be able to access the assessment to demonstrate their achievement without such support
 - Should be used sparingly, per State Board Rule
 - Must be considered when interpreting scores

Conditional Accommodations

- Guidance on the appropriate use of conditional accommodations is provided in the Student Assessment Handbook
- Only students meeting the guidance criteria are eligible for conditional accommodations
- The educational plans for students qualifying for conditional accommodations should include specific goals that address the deficits which necessitate the accommodation

Conditional Accommodations

- There are three accommodations that are considered conditional for the CRCT:
 - Signing reading passages (SWD only)
 - Oral reading of reading passages (**grades 3 – 8 only**)
 - Use of a basic function calculator (SWD only)
- There are no approved conditional accommodations for the GHSGT or EOCT

Why must we attend to the guidance for conditional accommodations?

1. These accommodations were never intended to be available for all students.
2. The guidance is designed to protect the accommodations for students who truly require them.

Why must we attend to the guidance for conditional accommodations?

3. Anytime an accommodation is considered it is important to reflect what the test is designed to measure.
 - The goal is meaningful (i.e., valid) measurement of student achievement

4. It is important to consider the long term effects of inappropriate accommodation use.
 - Accommodations should foster independence, not dependence

Consider the 'Constructs'

- The Reading CRCT is designed to measure reading comprehension.
 - Inherent in the state curriculum in the elementary and middle grades are reading strategies and skills.
 - Each test has a range of passages on it
- The Mathematics CRCT is designed to measure computational skill and mathematical understanding.
 - Inherent in the state curriculum in the elementary and middle grades are mathematics procedures and processes.

Points to Remember

- Only state-approved accommodations may be considered
- Federal regulations specify that students participating with unapproved accommodations may not be considered participants for AYP purposes
- Use of accommodations must be accurately coded

Additional Resources

- Student Assessment Handbook
- Accommodations Manual for SWD
- Frequently Asked Questions

All are posted on the Testing webpage:

http://www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx

Feedback

- What additional information is needed to help IEP teams make good decisions about accommodations?



Alternate Assessment based on Modified Achievement Standards

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What is an AA-MAS?

- An assessment that covers the same grade-level content as the general assessment, with expectations for content mastery modified
 - the modified expectations must still be challenging for eligible students and should position the student toward achieving grade-level proficiency

What is an AA-MAS?

- Modified academic achievement standards (expectations) may not be based on academic content standards that have been modified or restricted
- The AA-MAS must demonstrate alignment to the grade-level curriculum standards
 - In other words, it must cover the same grade-level content as the general education assessment

What is an AA-MAS?

- Proficient performance on an AA-MAS must represent understanding of grade-level content, albeit through a less rigorous assessment
- An AA-MAS may NOT:
 - assess off-grade level standards, content, or skills
 - lower learning expectations
 - reduce the number of standards, content, or skills

Defining the Population

- According the US ED, “there is a small group of students whose disability precludes them from achieving grade-level proficiency and whose progress is such that they will not reach grade-level proficiency in the same time frame as other students.”

Ground Rules: Eligibility

- US ED guidance stipulates:
 - there must be objective evidence demonstrating the student’s disability has precluded the student from achieving grade-level proficiency
 - the student’s progress to date in response to appropriate instruction, including special education services designed to meet the individual needs of the student, is such that even if significant growth occurs, the IEP team is reasonably certain the student will not reach grade-level proficiency within the year covered by the IEP
 - the student’s IEP must include goals that are based on the academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled

Summary of Federal Criteria

- Student must have an IEP with goals based on current grade's academic content standards
- Student's disability precludes him/her from achieving grade-level proficiency on the general assessment
- Even if significant growth occurs, the student will still not achieve grade-level proficiency in this school year

Georgia's Journey

- Our journey began with asking:
 - Who are the students who are persistently low performing and therefore might be eligible for an AA-MAS?
 - What are these students' demographic and achievement characteristics?

Identification of the Population

- Persistently low performing
 - Achieve lowest performance level in Reading and/or Mathematics on three separate testing occasions
- 2006 Baseline Population
 - 2 Cohorts: Grade 5 and Grade 8
 - Assessment administrations:
 - Spring 2006
 - Spring 2005
 - Spring 2004

Identified Population

- Persistently Low Performance
 - Grade 5 Reading: 3%
 - Grade 5 Mathematics: 4%
 - Grade 8 Reading: 4%
 - Grade 8 Mathematics: 9%
 - N's ranged from 4,016 to 12,252
 - Georgia averages ~125,000+ students per grade

Identified Population

- Compared to the baseline population of Spring 2006, the identified population included:
 - Proportionally more male students
 - Proportionally more African-American students
 - Proportionally more Free/Reduced-Price Lunch students
 - Proportionally more students with disabilities
 - Baseline: ~15% Identified: ~ 40% – 55%
 - Proportionally more students with mild intellectual disabilities
- Approximately 2% of students at each grade were identified as persistently low performing in both content areas (Reading and Mathematics).
- In grade 8, 77% of the students identified in Reading were also identified in Mathematics.

Identified Potential and Problematic Items

- What items on the Spring 2006 forms functioned for the identified students?
- What items proved to be problematic for the identified students?
- Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to identify items.

Findings: Data Mining

- Half the students identified as persistently low performing were not special education students
- Deficit concepts and/or skills were not clearly discernable
 - There was no clear pattern for the identified population in terms of item type, design feature, or skill classification
- Tests did contain items that functioned for the identified group of students

Georgia's Journey – Phase 2

- Convened a multi-disciplinary group to discuss work to date and propose solutions
- Piloted revised items with a representative sample of Georgia students

Georgia Educator Review

- Defined/described the population
 - Who are these students? How would you describe them when they read or do mathematics in your classroom?
 - What are their greatest struggles in reading or mathematics?
 - What instructional strategies seem to best support their learning?
- Reviewed “candidate” items
- Suggested revisions and/or enhancements for each identified item, including visuals, graphics, etc.
- Provided suggestions for future item and test development

Teachers' Perceptions of PLP Students

- Passive learners / non-risk takers
- Have meta-cognition deficits
 - Can't generalize skills and concepts to new situations or problems
 - Don't make connections
 - Can't change topics easily
 - Can't readily access and apply strategies
- Limited vocabulary and prior knowledge
- Poor decoding, fluency, and comprehension skill
- Poor number sense

Teacher Strategies for PLP Students

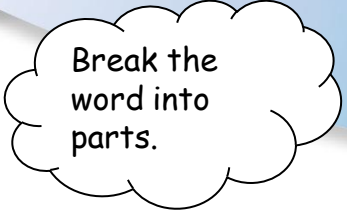
- Guided practice
- Preview words/questions
- Group, chunk, and summarize
- Visual tools
 - Number lines
 - Place value charts
 - Manipulatives
 - Graphic organizers
 - Multiple representations

Suggested Types of Revisions

- Simplify language in question/stem and/or distracters
- Simplify graphics, visuals, etc.
- Eliminate extraneous information
- Substitute another (*more familiar*) word without changing the construct
- Reformat items or passages (e.g., adding more white space, size of text)
- Adjust layouts (e.g., reorder items or passages)
- Separate reading passages into segments, followed by related items

Suggested Types of Enhancements

- Add a Helpful Hint in a “Thought Balloon”
 - Definition, key word or phrase
 - Reminder of approach to help solve a multi-step problem (e.g., circle the information you need to solve this)
- Provide a Scaffold
 - Graphic organizer (e.g., timeline for organizing chronology)
 - Table, graph, chart, or visual to enhance *conceptual understanding* (e.g., input-output chart for finding pattern)
 - Key words, phrases, definitions (e.g., sidebar glossary), introductions to passages
- General Presentation: underline, bold, enlarge key words/phrases/symbols; number paragraphs or lines



Break the word into parts.

Sample Reading Item

(using more familiar words in distracters; shortening stem)

BEFORE

In paragraph 9, what does the word genuine mean?

- a. real
- b. pretend
- c. content
- d. anxious

AFTER

In paragraph 9, what does genuine mean?

- a. real
- b. pretend
- c. happy
- d. worried

Example of “Segmenting” a passage

Carol Ryrie Brink lived with her Grandmother Caddie and two aunts on a tiny farm in Idaho. The farm was a great place to live. Besides wonderful tall climbing trees, it had cats and chickens and a barn that held her pony, Tommy, whom she rode all over the countryside and through the streets of town.

Even so, Carol was sometimes lonely. She would climb to the top of her favorite tree and make up stories to entertain herself. Carol knew all about stories. The favorite part of her day was when Grandmother Caddie would sit with her and tell stories about when she was a pioneer girl, and her family had moved from Boston to the wilderness of Wisconsin. Grandmother Caddie told Carol story after story about the adventures of her and her brothers.

Answer questions 1–6 in your answer booklet.

1. Why did Carol enjoy hearing her grandmother’s stories?
 - A She could listen to her grandmother’s stories from the top of a tree.
 - B She enjoyed how her grandmother read stories aloud.
 - C She thought her grandmother’s adventures were unusual.
 - D She liked to imagine her grandmother as a pioneer girl.

Sample Mathematics item

(reorganize & simplify text, underline key word)

BEFORE

Bill was discussing the total sales in his store this week. He said that on Monday there were twice as many sales as Thursday, less 13. If there were 135 sales on Thursday, how many sales did he have on Monday?

AFTER

Bill had 135 sales on Thursday. **The sales on Monday were twice as many as Thursday, less 13.**

How many sales did Bill have on Monday?

Sample Mathematics Item

(change format; simplify reading load)

BEFORE

- Mary has six white shirts, four blue shirts, and five red shirts in her dresser. If she randomly chooses...

AFTER

Mary has

6 white shirts

4 blue shirts

5 red shirts

If she randomly chooses...

Pilot Test

- Pilot test conducted in February 2008
 - Two test forms per grade
 - Items appeared in original state on one form and modified state on second form (forms counter-balanced)
 - Items identified as potential served as link items, appearing in original state on both forms
- Both regular and special education students participated
 - Grade 5: 3,741 students
 - Grade 8: 3,647 students

Field Test

- Field test conducted in February 2009
 - Two test forms per grade
- Only special education students participated
 - Grade 3: 826 students
 - Grade 4: 782 students
 - Grade 5: 850 students
 - Grade 6: 826 students
 - Grade 7: 836 students
 - Grade 8: 736 students
 - High School: 700 students

Teacher Surveys: Post Pilot & Field Test

- Teachers reported students were more relaxed during and confident after pilot/field test
- Teachers reported types of revisions / enhancements appeared effective for targeted population

Feedback: Participation Guidelines

- For each content area:
 - Evidence that the student’s disability has precluded the student from achieving grade-level proficiency.
 - Evidence the student’s progress to date is such that, even if significant growth occurs, the student will not achieve grade-level proficiency.
 - Evidence stems from multiple, valid measures collected over time.
 - The student’s IEP includes goals based on the grade-level GPS for the content area.
 - The student has access to the grade-level curriculum.
- The decision should not be related to:
 - Time receiving special education services;
 - Excessive or extended absences; or
 - Language, cultural, or economic differences;
- The decision may not be based solely on the student’s disability and must be an IEP team decision, not an administrative one.



Questions

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