

Chapter 1 – Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Acceleration – Interventions that are implemented to increase the speed at which students acquire skills.

Accommodation – Changes in instruction that enable children to demonstrate their abilities in the classroom or assessment/test setting. Accommodations are designed to provide equity, not advantage, for children with disabilities. Accommodations include assistive technology as well as alterations to presentation, response, scheduling, or settings. When used appropriately, they reduce or even eliminate the effects of a child’s disability but do not reduce or lower the standards or expectations for content. Accommodations that are appropriate for assessments do not invalidate assessment results.

Aim line – The line that connects the median baseline data point and the long range goal (LRG) data point. If you are using a data base system to enter the data, the program may plot this line. If you are hand graphing, then you would use the median baseline data point (use at least 5-7 data points for baseline) and then plot the LRG point. Connect the two points, and then you have constructed the aim line (McCook, 2006).

Alternate Assessment – An assessment aligned with alternate achievement standards for children with the most significant cognitive disabilities; designed by the state and required in lieu of regular statewide assessments, when determined necessary by the child’s IEP team.

Anchor Paper(s) – A sample of student work that exemplifies a specific level of performance. Raters use anchors to score student work, usually comparing the student performance to the anchor. For example, if student work was being scored on a scale of 1-5, there would typically be anchors (previously scored student work) exemplifying each point on the scale.

Assessment – Assessment is a broad term used to describe the collection of information about student performance in a particular area. Assessments can be formative or summative; and formal or informal.

At Risk – An at-risk student is a student with specific needs that may hinder academic achievement, graduation, or ability to successfully transition to college or career opportunities. The Georgia Department of Education is committed to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs), parents, and students with a comprehensive set of resources and interventions to support the needs of students at-risk of not being successful in school. Students may need support in any of the following areas

- Academic
- Social/Emotional
- Behavior/Health/Physical
- Graduation/Advisement/Advocacy

Baseline – An initial observation or measurement that serves as a comparison upon which to determine student progress.

Behavior Intervention Plan- A plan developed for students who are exhibiting behavioral difficulties that include targeted behaviors, intervention strategies, reinforcers and consequences, and a plan for collecting and monitoring data. Behavior Intervention Plans should include positive behavioral support.

Benchmark – A detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student

work. A set of benchmarks can be used as "checkpoints" to monitor progress toward meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

Benchmark Assessments – Student assessments used throughout a unit or course to monitor progress toward learning goals and to guide instruction. Effective benchmark assessments check understanding and application of knowledge and skills rather than recall; consequently, effective benchmark assessments include performance tasks. Benchmark assessments may involve pre- and post-assessments.

Benchmarks for Progress Monitoring – Measures that are used to determine student progress and to guide instruction. These measures may assess a specific skill such as number of correct words read per minute (reading fluency).

Benchmark Papers – Another term used for anchor papers.

Commentary – Oral or written feedback that identifies the features of a work sample that illustrate the relevant part(s) of a standard. Commentary draws attention to the qualities of student work with direct reference to the performance descriptions for the relevant standards.

Common Assessment – Common assessments are the result of teachers collaborating and coming to consensus about what students should know, understand and be able to do according to the standards. Common assessments assess the standards and provide teachers a means for looking at student work.

Comprehensive Evaluation – In-depth evaluation provided when there is a suspected disability. It is conducted to determine if a student has a disability and to determine the educational needs of the student.

Concept Map – A concept map is a document that outlines the concepts, essential questions or enduring understandings, vocabulary, instructional tools, and assessments for each unit.

Content Descriptions – Content Descriptions describe how the standards set forth in the state's curriculum are assessed on the state-mandated assessments. Developed primarily for educators, each content specific document provides information about the content assessed and is based on the work of Georgia teachers. The documents are organized by each content domain (groupings of similar content standards) that is reported for an assessment. Associated curricular standards are listed as well as associated concepts, skills, and abilities (e.g., the things students are expected to know and be able to do relative to each grade and domain). There is no hierarchy in the listing; each is of equal importance. Each state-mandated assessment (e.g., CRCT, EOCT) is designed to assess how well students know and are able to perform each of the various concepts, skills, and abilities for a specific content area at their grade level or at the end of a course.

The Content Descriptions are in no way intended to substitute for or supplant the curriculum. They supplement the curriculum by providing more descriptive information about how content will be assessed. Content Descriptions do not suggest when concepts and skills should be introduced in the instructional sequence; rather, their purpose is to communicate when and how concepts and skills will be assessed via the state-mandated assessments.

Content Standards – Content standards are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do in a specific content area. They state the purpose and direction the content is to take and are generally followed by elements.

Culminating Performance Task – A culminating performance task is designed to be completed at or near the end of a unit of instruction. The activity is designed to require students to use several concepts

learned during the unit to answer a new or unique situation. The measure of this activity allows students to give evidence of their own understanding toward the mastery of the standard.

Curriculum-Based Assessment – An informal assessment in which the procedures directly assess student performance in targeted content or basic skills in order to make decisions about how to better address a student's instructional needs.

Curriculum-Based Measurement – Curriculum-based measurement, or CBM, is a scientifically-based method of monitoring student educational progress through direct assessment of academic skills. CBM can be used to measure basic skills in reading, mathematics, spelling, vocabulary, and written expression. It can also be used to monitor readiness skills.

Curriculum Map – A curriculum map provides an outline of the course content by units and may provide a suggested time schedule for each unit.

Data-based Instruction – An instructional approach in which student performance data is used to assess the effectiveness of the instruction and to make changes in instruction based on the data.

Data Point – A single point of data on a graph or chart that illustrates a student's performance/progress.

Data teams – Teams of educators responsible for data analysis and decision making and that function at the level of the district, school, and grade (or content area) as well as across grade levels in the same content area (i.e., vertical teams); they may include school administrators, school psychologists, grade/content area general educators, various specialists and other behavioral/mental health personnel.

Decision Rule - A local system's pre-determined statement that defines the required score or level of progress on a specified assessment within a stated time period for deciding whether additional (or reduced) intervention is necessary. For example, "First grade students in General County who do not move to low risk on the DIBELS after 12 weeks of Tier 2 intervention (small group for 20 minutes 5x per week) will begin Tier 3."

Depth of Knowledge – Depth of knowledge (DOK) is a term that refers to the substantive character of the ideas in the performance standards. DOK classifies the various levels of understanding that students must demonstrate as they encounter and master the content and skills within the performance standards. This schema for evaluating standards has four levels of knowledge: (a) recall, (b) skill/concept, (c) strategic thinking, and (d) extended thinking. Operational definitions and labels vary by subject.

Differentiation – Differentiation is a broad term referring to the need of educators to tailor the curriculum, teaching environments, and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying interest, readiness levels, and learning profiles and to react responsively. There are four elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, products, and learning environment.

Elements – Elements support the content standard to identify specific learning goals associated with the standard.

Eligibility Team – A group of qualified professionals and the parent/guardians of the child; members determine whether the child is a child with a disability and they determine the educational needs of the child.

Enduring Understanding – An enduring understanding is a big idea that resides at the heart of a discipline and has lasting value outside the classroom. Enduring understandings should be transferable between units of a course and between courses in the same content area.

English Learner (EL) – (formerly English Language Learner, ELL) Refers to students whose first language is other than English and whose command of English is limited. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with Limited English Proficient (LEP).

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – ESOL is a state funded instructional program for eligible English Learners (ELs) in grades K-12.

Essential Question – An essential question gets to the heart of a particular enduring understanding and helps students relate the factual knowledge to the concepts on the unit. There are two types of essential questions that are used in the Standards frameworks: broad/overarching and unit/content specific.

Evaluation – The process of making judgments about the level of student understanding or performance.

Exemplars – An example of student work which provides a model product.

Evidence-based interventions – Specific interventions supported by well designed, independent research studies. There is *evidence* that the interventions improve student outcomes. (Rathvon, 1999).

Feedback – Descriptive comments provided to or by a student that provide specific information about what a student is/is not doing in terms of performance needed to meet identified standards/learning goals.

Fidelity of implementation and instruction – Fidelity refers to the provision or delivery of instruction in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed. Other related terms to fidelity are intervention integrity or treatment integrity which often refers to the same principle.

Flexible Grouping – A type of differentiation in which students are organized into groups based on interests and/or needs. Groups are not static and teachers use data to establish and modify the composition of the student groups. Students may change groups based on performance and needs.

Fluency – The ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression and comprehension. The ability to automatically recognize conceptual connections, perform basic calculations, and apply appropriate problem solving strategies.

Formative Assessment – A formative assessment is an evaluation tool used to guide and monitor the progress of student learning during instruction. Its purpose is to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and progress toward mastery. Formative assessments diagnose gaps in skill and knowledge, measure progress, and evaluate instruction. Teachers use formative assessments to determine what concepts require more teaching and what teaching techniques require modification. Educators use results of these assessments to improve student performance. Formative assessments would not necessarily be used for grading purposes. Examples include (but are not limited to): pre/post tests, curriculum based measures (CBM), portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, teacher/student conferencing, teacher commentary, and feedback.

Frameworks – Frameworks are intended to be models for articulating desired results, assessment processes, and teaching-learning activities that can maximize student achievement relative to the State

adopted Standards and Curriculum. They may provide enduring understandings, essential questions, tasks/activities, culminating tasks, rubrics, and resources for the units.

Functional Behavior Assessment – A problem-solving process for student behavior that uses techniques to identify what triggers a given behavior and to identify interventions that directly address it.

Common Core Georgia Performance Standards – Common Core Standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education careers so that they will graduate from high school able to succeed in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses and in workforce training programs. These standards:

- Are aligned with college and work expectations;
- Are clear, understandable and consistent;
- Include rigorous content and application of knowledge through high-order skills;
- Are informed by other top performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- Are evidence based

Gifted Student – A gifted student is one who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or one or more creative abilities, exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Guidance – Information provided to the student about what to do next, including steps or strategies to try in order to improve and progress toward identified standards/ learning goals.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – A written document that outlines the special education and related services specifically designed to meet the unique educational needs of a student with a disability. It is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with IDEA 2004.

Individualized Education Program Team (IEP Team) – Individuals who are responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP for a student with a disability.

Interventions – Targeted instruction that is based on student needs. Interventions supplement the general education curriculum. Interventions are a systematic compilation of well researched or evidence-based specific instructional strategies and techniques and include progress monitoring.

Lexile – (also known as the Lexile Score or Lexile Measure) a standard score that matches a student's reading ability with difficulty of text material. A Lexile can be interpreted as the level of book that a student can read with 75% comprehension. Experts have identified 75% comprehension level as offering the reader a certain amount of comfort and yet still offering a challenge. Lexiles range between BR (for Beginning Reader) and 1700.

Modifications – Alterations that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency at a particular grade level. Consistent use of modifications can negatively impact grade level achievement outcomes. Modifications in statewide assessments may invalidate the results of the assessment.

Organizing Framework – An organizing framework guides teachers as they plan for instruction in order to ensure that all standards are addressed and achieved by the end of the year.

Performance Level Descriptors – A verbal statement describing each performance level in terms of what the student has learned and can do. These statements are available for each state-mandated assessment for each content area and grade level where applicable.

Performance Levels – A range of scores that define a specific level of performance as articulated in the Performance Level Descriptors. Each student receives a scale score and a performance level designation (e.g., does not meet standard, meets standard, or exceeds standard) when assessed on a state-mandated assessment. The Performance Level and Performance Level Descriptors provide more meaning to the scale score.

Performance Standards – provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction, and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know “how good is good enough.” Performance standards incorporate content standards, but expand upon them by providing suggested tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary.

Performance Task – a formative assessment that checks for student understanding/misunderstanding and/or progress toward the standards/learning goals at different points during a unit of instruction. Performance tasks involve the application of knowledge and skills rather than recall and result in tangible products or observable performances. They involve meaning-making, encourage self-evaluation and revision, require judgment to score, and are evaluated using predetermined criteria (rubrics). Culminating performance tasks differ from other performance tasks because they are created over time during the unit. Culminating performance tasks measure conceptual understanding of the standards/learning goals specified for a specific unit and usually involve multiple modalities.

Probe – When using a Curriculum Based Measure (CBM), the instructor gives the student brief, timed samples, or "probes," of academic material taken directly from the student's school curriculum. These CBM probes are given under standardized conditions. For example, the instructor will read the same directions every time that he or she gives a certain type of CBM probe. CBM probes are timed and may last from 1 to 5 minutes, depending on the skill being measured. The student's performance on a CBM probe is scored for speed, or fluency, and for accuracy of performance. Since CBM probes are quick to administer and simple to score, they can be given repeatedly (for example, twice per week). The results are then charted to offer the instructor a visual record of a targeted child's rate of academic progress (Jim Wright, Intervention Central website: <http://www.interventioncentral.com/>).

Problem Solving Process - Problem Solving is a process that uses the skills of professionals from different disciplines to study student achievement, implement scientifically based interventions, and evaluate impact on performance. More specifically, it is a four step process that includes: What is the problem? Why is it happening? What is our plan? and then Implementation of the plan.

Problem Solving Team – A team of people, which may include school staff and parents, who use a problem solving approach to address a problem or area of need for a student.

Process Standards – Process standards define the means used to determine patterns of thought and behavior that lead to conceptual understanding.

Professional Learning Community – A group of individuals who seek and participate in professional learning on an identified topic.

Progress Monitoring – Progress monitoring is a scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic and behavioral performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Pyramid of Interventions – (also, Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions). It is a conceptual framework whose purpose is to enable all students in Georgia to make great gains in school. It is a graphic organizer that illustrates layers of increasingly intense instructional efforts that can be provided to students according to their individual needs and progress.

Rate of Improvement- Related to progress monitoring a student's rate of improvement is the number of units of measure (i.e. words read correctly (wrc), correct responses, correct digits) a student has made per week once an intervention is implemented. To determine this rate, divide the total number of units gained by the number of weeks that have elapsed. (ex.: 16wrc/9 weeks = 1.5 wrc/week) Comparing rate of improvement to a typical peer is one factor that is considered to determine whether a student has made adequate progress. An at-risk student's rate of improvement must be greater than the rate of improvement of a typical student in order to "close the gap" and finally perform at grade level.

Response to Intervention – Response to Intervention (RTI) is a practice of academic and/or behavioral interventions designed to provide early, effective assistance to underperforming students. Research-based interventions are implemented and frequent progress monitoring is conducted to assess student response and progress. The student's response is used as feedback to more accurately target interventions. When students do not make progress, increasingly more individualized interventions are introduced.

Research Based Intervention – one where the methods, content, materials, etc. were developed with guidance from the collective research and scientific community. (Harn, 2007)

Rubrics – Based on a continuum of performance quality and a scale of different possible score points, a rubric identifies the key traits or dimensions to be examined and assessed and provides key features of performance for each level of scoring.

Scaffolding – Scaffolding is the instructional technique of using teacher support to help a student practice a skill at a higher level than when performed independently. The opportunity to practice the skill at this level helps students advance to the point where they can operate at this high level on their own.

Scientifically-based research (SBR) – Research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain valid knowledge relevant to core academic development, instruction, and difficulties; and includes research that: (a) employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment; (b) involves rigorous data analyses that are adequate to test the stated hypotheses and justify the general conclusions drawn; (c) relies on measurements or observational methods that provide valid data across evaluators and observers and across multiple measurements and observations; and (d) has been accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through a comparably rigorous, objective, and scientific review. [Section 9101(37) of ESEA; 34 C.F.R. § 300.35]

Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support – “A broad range of systematic and individualized strategies for achieving important social and learning outcomes while preventing problem behavior with all students.” (Sugai et al., 2005) Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is based on a problem-solving model and aims to prevent inappropriate behavior through teaching and reinforcing appropriate behaviors (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2007).

Scoring Rubric – A scoring guide that enables teachers to make reliable judgments about student work and enables students to self-assess their work. A rubric is based on a continuum of performance quality

and is built upon a scale of different possible score points to be assigned. A rubric identifies the key traits or dimensions to be examined and assessed and provides key features of performance for each level of scoring (descriptors) which signify the degree to which the criteria have been met.

Standard – An indicator established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value or quality. It defines the broad expectations for an area of knowledge in a given domain and may include an expectation of the degree to which students express understanding of that knowledge.

Standard Protocol Intervention – A process where a school or system uses pre-determined scientifically based interventions in a specific sequence with identified students, usually implemented at Tier 2.

Standards-Based Classroom – a classroom where teachers and students have a clear understanding of the expectations (standards). They know what they are teaching/learning each day, why the day's learning is important to know or know how to do, as well as how to do it. They also know that they are working toward meeting standards throughout the year and that standards-based learning is a process, not an event.

Standards-Based Instructional Bulletin Board – one that is strategically placed in the classroom that provides examples of student work that have been correlated to the standards by elements. Generally, the student work, the task, the standard, and commentary on the work are posted; students and others can refer to it as a model or exemplar of student work that meets or approaches meeting the standard(s).

Strand – A strand is an organizing tool used to group standards by content.

Strategy – A loosely defined collective term that is often used interchangeably with the word “intervention”; however strategies are generally considered effective, solitary instructional/behavioral practices rather than a set of prescribed instructional procedures, systematically implemented.

Student Commentary – A student's oral or written self-reflective, metacognitive comments that self-assess his or her progress toward the specified standard(s) and that provide feedback to the teacher about student understanding; as a result of effective self-assessment, students develop the skills necessary to self-adjust and become more independent learners.

Student Support Team (SST) – a multi-disciplinary team which utilizes a problem-solving process to investigate the educational needs of students who are experiencing academic and/or social/behavioral difficulties. SST, which is required in every Georgia public school, uses a data-driven process to plan individualized supports and interventions and to assess their own effectiveness.

Student with a Disability – Refers to a child evaluated as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as emotional disturbance), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment, or a specific learning disability who needs special education and related services.

Student Work – Student work may or may not demonstrate that the student is meeting a standard. Student work should be used by the teacher to show the student what meeting the standard means.

Summative Assessment – A summative assessment is an evaluation tool generally used at the end of an assignment, unit, project, or course. In an educational setting, summative assessments tend to be more formal kinds of assessments (e.g., unit tests, final exams, projects, reports, and state assessments) and are typically used to assign students a course grade or to certify student mastery of intended learning

outcomes for the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and the state adopted curriculum where applicable.

Tasks – Tasks provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate what they can do, what knowledge they have, what understanding they have that relates to specific standards or elements. This demonstration may occur at any time during the course or at the end of the course.

Teacher Commentary – Oral or written comments made by the teacher that provide feedback to students regarding their progress toward the specified standard(s); comments may include praise in addition to constructive criticism and will often include guidance for revising work or for future work. Teacher commentary shows students why they did or did not meet a standard and enables students to take ownership of their own learning.

Note: *Public commentary* is posted commentary that specifies the evidence in student work that effectively illustrates relevant parts of the standard(s); these are general statements provided to guide parents and students in understanding the standards. *Private commentary* is commentary that identifies the features of a specific student's work sample that illustrate the relevant parts of a standard(s) as well as feedback and guidance for next steps. Private commentary is meant for the student, teacher and parent, not the public.

Teaching Rubric – Teaching rubrics are explicitly designed to support as well as to evaluate student learning. Teaching rubrics have several features that support learning:

- Teaching rubrics are written in language that students can understand;
- Teaching rubrics are created with students as a result of the teaching that has occurred in the classroom (not before the teaching takes place);
- Teaching rubrics define and describe quality work;
- Teaching rubrics refer to common weaknesses in students' work and indicate how those weaknesses can be avoided, and;
- Teaching rubrics can be used by students to assess their works-in-progress and guide revision and improvement.

Tiered Instruction – Varying levels of instructional intensity within a tiered delivery model.

Trend Line – Line of a graph that connects data points. This is used to compare against the aim line to determine responsiveness to interventions. The trend line is what the student has actually achieved vs. the aim line which is the desired performance score.

Universal Screening – A quick process of assessing student performance, usually of an entire grade level and typically three times per year, to determine progress in relation to student benchmarks and thereby identify struggling students early; related directly to student learning standards.

Links to other RTI glossaries of terms on the internet:

<http://www.rtinetwork.org/>

<http://www.rti4success.org/RTIGlossary>