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June 9, 2004

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** System Superintendents  
System Test Coordinators

**FROM:** Ida H. Love, Ph.D.  
Deputy Superintendent  
Curriculum and Instruction

Sharron Hunt, Ph. D.  
Director of Testing  
Testing Division

**SUBJECT:** End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) – Guidance Letter #3

This letter is the third in the series of update information related to the EOCT. The information contained in this letter will provide guidance to assist in planning for the fall/winter administration of the EOCT. Important details related to the courses requiring end-of-course tests are also outlined.

The following questions and answers are crucial to the successful planning and implementation of the EOCT program.

### What courses require an EOCT?

There are eight EOCT:

Algebra I

Geometry

Physical Science

Biology

Economics

U. S. History

Ninth Grade Literature and Composition

American Literature

**If a student is earning credit towards graduation for one of the above listed courses, they must be assessed using the appropriate EOCT. For example, if a student is earning credit for the Algebra I graduation requirement, he/she must take the Algebra I EOCT regardless of the course title or number.**

### **Who should be assessed?**

Any student, regardless of grade-level, enrolled in an EOCT course (see above) must take the appropriate EOCT. The following groups will be included:

- Students taking a block-scheduled course who complete the full year course in one semester will be tested at the end of that semester.
- Students following a traditionally scheduled (36-week) course will be tested at the end of the second semester of the course.
- Students who complete a course at the end of one semester (typically Economics) will be tested at the completion of the course.
- Middle-school students who are enrolled in an EOCT course will be tested, whether or not they receive high school credit. If credit is not given, the diagnostic information will allow students, parents, and teachers to make informed decisions for future educational planning.

Given the diversity of high school programs of study across the state, there may be situations that do not fit into the above scenarios. Some of these are addressed below. However, if there are specific situations that are not clarified, please contact Ms. Linda Calhoun in the Testing Office at the Georgia Department of Education (DOE) (404-656-5975).

- Students who are dually enrolled in a course to earn both high school and college credit will be required to take the EOCT to earn credit at the high school level. High schools are responsible for determining that post-secondary courses meet the criteria for dual enrollment. Scores will be counted as follows:
  - The college instructor must issue a numeric grade for the student. A letter grade may also be issued, but the high school must receive a numeric score for the course.
  - The college issued grade will be used on the transcript for college credit.
  - For high school credit, the course grade will be determined using the State Board approved calculation.
- Students enrolled in online courses or correspondence courses for which they receive graduation credit for one of the eight required EOCT courses must take the corresponding EOCT. Courses must be approved prior to requesting credit for the course. Grades for online or correspondence courses will be calculated for high school credit as stated above for students who are dually enrolled. The approved State Board calculation will be used to determine the grade and credit awarded toward high school graduation.
- Students enrolled in alternative school settings (i.e. night school programs) will be tested during the state testing window. The schedule may be altered from the system test dates to meet the alternative program course schedule if needed. For example,

the system may be using a one-day administration; the night school, because the course only meets two nights a week, may need to use a two-day administration.

- Students who enroll from non-accredited programs (i.e. private schools, home study, etc.) may be required to take the EOCT to determine placement at the high school. The diagnostic value of the EOCT will allow informed decisions about the placement of students who are transferring from another educational facility. **To earn credit** for a course requiring an EOCT, a student enrolling from a non-accredited program must **take and pass** the corresponding EOCT. For example, the student must take and pass the Algebra I EOCT to be awarded credit by the high school in which he/she is enrolling.

If a student is enrolled in your school and takes a course via an alternate venue (i.e. online, PSO), the system/school is responsible for ensuring that the course is consistent with the QCC for the course and that the student takes the EOCT for that course prior to receiving credit.

### **What are the administration procedures?**

Systems may schedule the EOCT at any time during the testing window. Make-up testing may also be conducted at any time during the testing window.

Systems may elect a one-day or a two-day administration; however, all schools in the system should follow the same schedule. The following are examples of scheduling options for the EOCT:

- Block scheduling: Systems elect to test Group A/Biology on Monday and Group B/Biology on Tuesday, using a one-day administration.
- One-day administration: All students take Biology/Section I in the morning and Biology/Section II in the afternoon.
- Two-day administration: All schools test Biology/Section I on Monday and Biology/Section II on Tuesday during scheduled class periods.

Maintaining test security and test integrity is critical. Students and teachers need to understand test protocols and the ramifications of not following testing procedures. Continuing to allow flexibility in the scheduling of the EOCT is dependent upon the cooperation of everyone involved in the testing process.

Online test administration is also an option for EOCT; however, the online option is not available for entire school populations at this time. We continue to work to make this option viable for larger groups of students. Online administration should be considered for groups who need scores returned quickly (i.e. seniors who may need the passing score to graduate).

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

Beginning in the fall of the 2004-2005 school year, the EOCT score will be used as a final exam grade, calculated as a percentage of the course grade. The change in legislation states that the State Board will determine the percentage that the EOCT will count toward the final grade. (See attached proposed rule change.) The percentage for the calculations will be addressed at the June Board meeting. Final policy decisions will be included in the July guidance letter. The resulting course grade calculation will determine whether a student earns credit for the course. If the student passes the course with a 70 or higher, credit will be earned. If the student fails the course with a grade of below 70, no credit will be earned. If the student repeats a course to earn credit for graduation, he/she would participate in the EOCT at the end of the repeated course so that the final course grade can be calculated. At this time, EOCT scores will not be 'banked' and no 'retests' will be given. A copy of the Individual Student Report should be placed in the permanent record as test documentation. The proposed rule change also includes this statement: "Student scores must be recorded on the student transcript and/or the individual student report card." Further direction for posting EOCT scores to student transcripts/report cards will be addressed in the July guidance letter.

In all instances, the student's EOCT score should be calculated with the course grade at the time that the student is completing the course and at the time that the credit for the course is awarded. For clarification, the determination of the 'course' grade may differ in systems across the state.

- A course may be taught in a block-scheduled timeframe. The course grade would then be calculated at the end of the semester when the student completes the course (Winter or Spring).
- If a course is taught as a two-semester, or year long course, the EOCT score will be calculated with the second semester course grade. The student would be awarded the full credit for the course at this time. In cases where students do not pass the first semester and have not earned the .5 credit toward the full-course credit, systems will need to insure that the student earns all credit needed toward graduation. Students could be tested at either the winter or spring administration.
- Some systems offer courses over a two-year period and award credit for one of the courses requiring an EOCT. In this case, the student would take the EOCT at the END of the semester that completes the course, and at the time the full credit for the course would be awarded.
- Courses taught as summer courses awarding a credit towards graduation would be required to take the EOCT during the summer administration.

**What are the results of the standard setting process and what scale will be used to report scores?**

The standard setting process was completed in April. Cut score and scaling recommendations were approved at the May Board meeting.

The student will receive two scores: the scaled score and a grade conversion score. Each EOCT has a unique scale score range. These will be detailed in the Interpretive Guide for the EOCT. A grade conversion score (0 – 100), where a 70 corresponds to Meets Standard and a 90 corresponds to Exceeds Standard, will indicate the score to be used for the student's final course grade calculation.

**Will calculators be allowed on the EOCT?**

Algebra I was recalibrated after the Winter 2003 administration to allow the use of calculators. Calculators can be used on the Physical Science and Economics EOCT. For the spring and summer 2004 administrations of the Geometry EOCT, calculators cannot be used. Recalibrating the Geometry EOCT for the use of calculators is being considered. More information will follow in the July guidance letter.

**What reports will be received by systems?**

For the Winter 2003 administration, only electronic class roster reports and transcript labels will be generated. Labels will be shipped with the Spring 2004 summary reports. These will be delivered by June 18, 2004. Electronic class rosters will be available around mid-June, following the Board approval of the standards. Hard copy reports will be shipped by late June.

Systems will receive a full set of reports for each subsequent EOCT. The following reports will be included: Individual Student Reports (2 copies), Classroom roster reports (electronic only) with the 5-day turnaround (Rapid Scoring), School Summary Reports, System Summary Report, and a State Summary Report.

To accommodate systems, a Rapid Scoring Report program will be used so that systems will receive EOCT scores in a timely manner (5-day turnaround). Systems will be able to send answer documents for scoring four times during the testing window. For each shipment, scores for the documents included in that shipment will be returned electronically as Teacher Class Rosters within 5 days of receipt of the materials at Pearson. The teacher can then use the score to calculate the student's final grade in the course.

System Superintendents

Page 6

June 9, 2004

NOTE: The success of Rapid Scoring is dependent upon the accurate return of answer documents by systems. School and System Test Coordinators must ensure that answer documents are completed accurately and that materials are returned according to instructions for Rapid Scoring to be implemented.

We will continue to update systems on policy information related to EOCT. The next guidance letter will be sent in July. If you have questions about the EOCT program, please contact Mrs. Linda Calhoun at the Department of Education, Testing Office, at (404) 656-5975 or via email at [lcalhoun@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lcalhoun@doe.k12.ga.us). Your continued support of this program is appreciated.

cc: Kathy Cox  
State Superintendent of Schools