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July 23, 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 #4

This letter is the fourth 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 2004-2005 school year.

### Updates/changes

- The State Board approved the proposed changes to the Statewide Passing Rule. The approved rule is attached to this memo. The EOCT score will be calculated as 15% of the student's final course grade.
- During the 2004-05 school year, the Geometry EOCT score will not be factored into the student's final course grade. Following the Winter 2004 administration, recalibration and standard setting for the Geometry EOCT, with the use of calculators will take place. This is a one-year waiver only – Geometry EOCT scores will be a part of final course grades beginning in the 2005-2006 school year.

The following items review some of the questions still being asked about the EOCT program.

### **What courses require an EOCT?**

There are eight EOCT:

Algebra I	Economics
Geometry	U.S. History
Physical Science	Ninth Grade Literature and Composition
Biology	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 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) by telephone 404-656-5975, and by e-mail at lcalhoun@doe.k12.ga.us..

- 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 may be used on the transcript for college credit.
- For high school credit, the course grade will be determined using the State Board approved calculation (Course grade 85 percent /EOCT score 15 percent). To provide consistency for all students, this final course grade should be used to determine class standings, GPA for high school, etc.
- 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 using the same procedure outlined above for dually enrolled students. The approved State Board calculation will be used to determine the grade and credit awarded toward high school graduation.
- For courses (i.e. online, correspondence, PSO, etc.) that end at times not conducive for testing the student during the state testing window, an online administration of the EOCT can be arranged. Contact Linda Calhoun in the Testing Division to discuss individual situations.
- Students enrolled in alternative school settings (i.e. night school programs) will be tested during the state testing window if possible. 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 in 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 Quality Core Curriculum (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; systems must complete a certification process to determine the availability of this option. Online administration should be considered for groups who need scores returned quickly (i.e. seniors who may need the passing score to graduate).

We will be piloting local scanning in some systems/schools for the Winter 2004 administration. We are currently working with our vendor to make arrangements for this option.

#### **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 15 percent of the course grade. (See attached approved rule change.) 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. When 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. EOCT scores will not be 'banked' and no 'retests' will be given.

One copy of the Individual Student Report should be placed in the permanent record as test documentation. The other copy of the Individual Student Report should be sent home to parents. The approved rule states: "EOCT reports shall provide students, parents, and educators with individual scores on each EOCT taken; student scores must be recorded on, in, or with the individual student report card."

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 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 need to insure that the student earns all credit needed toward graduation.
- 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. The scale score range for each subject is shown on the Individual Student Report. A grade conversion score (0 – 100), where a 70 corresponds to Meets Standard and a 90 corresponds to Exceeds Standard, indicates the score to be used for the student's final course grade calculation.

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

For the Winter 2003 administration, only electronic class roster reports and transcript labels were provided. Labels were shipped with the Spring 2004 summary reports.

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

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**When will I get score reports?**

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 the vendor. Teachers can then use the score to calculate the student's final grade in the course.

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

Your continued work to implement and support of the EOCT program is appreciated. If you have questions about the program, please contact Linda Calhoun at the Department of Education, Testing Division, at (404) 656-5975 or via e-mail at [lcalhoun@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lcalhoun@doe.k12.ga.us).

cc: Kathy Cox  
State Superintendent of Schools  
Pearson Educational Measurement  
RESA Directors

**Code: IHA**

**160-4-2-.13 STATEWIDE PASSING SCORE.**

**(1) DEFINITION.**

(a) **Minimum passing score** – the lowest possible score that a student can earn and still meet the requirements for completion of a subject or grade.

(b) **End-of-Course Tests (EOCT)** – Assessments administered at the completion of core high school courses specified by the State Board of Education, in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281(g), to measure student achievement in the four content areas of English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

**(2) REQUIREMENTS.**

(a) Each local board of education shall establish 70 as the minimum passing score for all subjects/courses taught in grades 4-12 in the public schools of the state.

(b) Each school containing any grade 9-12 shall record and maintain numerical grades of students in all courses for which credit is given in those courses.

(c) If letter grades instead of numerical grades are given in grades 4-8, the local board of education shall determine the relationship of letter grades to the numerical passing score of 70.

(d) Beginning in the 2004-2005 school year, End-of-Course Tests shall be used as the final exam in the courses assessed by an End-of-Course Test. EOCT reports shall provide students, parents, and educators with individual scores on each EOCT taken; student scores must be recorded on, in, or with the individual student report card.

(e) A student's numeric score on the End-of-Course Test shall count for 15% of the student's final numeric grade in the course assessed by the End-of-Course Test.

Authority O.C.G.A. §20-2-240; 20-2-281.

**Adopted: July 8, 2004**

**Effective: August 1, 2004**