

Georgia Department of Education
Item for State Board of Education Approval
– Other –

Item Name

AA – English Language Arts Achievement Standards

Recommendation – Action Item

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the English Language Arts (ELA) achievement standards (cut scores) for the new Georgia Milestones Assessment System ELA assessments aligned with Georgia's new K-12 ELA Standards.

Supports the Following Education Goal or Goals in the Agency Strategic Plan

GOAL 1: We partner with educators to deepen learning, so every student is ready for the future. (SBOR 1,6,9)

Purpose

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System is designed to measure student achievement relative to the knowledge and skills outlined in Georgia's state-adopted content standards, as required by federal (the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act) and state law (O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281). Georgia Milestones was first administered during the 2014-2015 school year. Following the State Board of Education's adoption of Georgia's new K-12 English Language Arts Standards, the Georgia Department of Education redeveloped the English Language Arts (ELA) assessments to align with the revised standards. The new ELA assessments were first administered during the 2025-2026 school year. The final phase of the assessment development process is to establish achievement standards to define the performance expectations associated with each achievement level and the cut scores used to classify student achievement.

Summary

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) conducted a standard setting process to establish recommended achievement standards for the new Georgia Milestones English Language Arts (ELA) assessments aligned to Georgia's K-12 ELA Standards. Achievement standards define the performance expectations associated with each achievement level and establish the cut scores used to classify student performance. GaDOE utilized the nationally-recognized Bookmark Standard Setting Procedure, an evidence-based methodology that has been used previously in Georgia and other states. This process relied on the professional judgment of experienced Georgia educators, who evaluated assessment content, Achievement Level Descriptors (ALDs), and student performance expectations to recommend achievement level cut scores.

The standard setting process included multiple rounds of independent review, discussion, and refinement by panels of Georgia educators and higher education representatives with expertise in the content standards, assessment, and student population. Following the standard setting workshop, the recommended cut scores underwent a policy review by a separate committee of education, business, and community stakeholders to evaluate their appropriateness and consistency across grades.

Throughout the process, GaDOE worked closely with its Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), an independent panel of national assessment experts, to ensure adherence to established professional and technical standards. The resulting recommendations are presented to the State Board of Education for consideration and adoption as the achievement standards for the new Georgia Milestones ELA assessments.

For the updated GAA 2.0 ELA assessments, aligned with the Extended Content Standards, which are extensions of the grade-level standards at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity, the educator panel and policy review committee validated the existing cut scores for continued use; these achievement standards have already been adopted by the State Board of Education in 2019.

Contact

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