



Date: July 29, 2024

From: Matt Arthur
Executive Secretary, Georgia Professional Standards Commission

Re: GACE Transition Coming July 1, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

We are committed to the success of all Georgia's learners and supporting prospective Georgia educators to enter and stay in the profession. One part of our charge is to ensure the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) assessments measure the knowledge and skills needed to perform the job of an educator in Georgia's public schools. The purpose of this communication is to highlight a few future enhancements to the GACE program aimed at supporting the educator pipeline.

As shared previously, the GACE will transition to a new testing supplier, Evaluation Systems, Pearson (ES), in less than one year. You can stay up to date on important announcements, ways to be involved, and more at [GaPSC - Educator Assessment - GACE](#).

Following are a few examples of innovations and enhancements coming to the GACE program July 1, 2025:

TESTLETS: A New Testing Design

Georgia will be the first state to adopt an innovative "testlet" design model. Testlets break up the assessment into shorter measures, each focused on one content area, or subarea. Even though testlets can be taken separately, a candidate's best scores on each testlet together add up to produce the total score on the assessment.

As an example, the current GACE design divides most assessments into two tests. Candidates need to take and pass each of two tests, and each test can cover a range of different content areas. For example, the current GACE *Elementary Education (P-5)* assessment has Test I covering reading, language arts and social studies, with Test II covering science, mathematics, health, physical education, and art.

The new GACE *Elementary Education (P-5)* assessment will cover the same content, but it will consist of shorter testlets, each covering a separate content area such as mathematics. This design allows test takers the option to choose to take testlets at different times and "bank" the testlet score for when they have completed all other testlets within an assessment. While providing more flexibility, testlets also allow test

takers to more clearly understand how their performance in each content area contributes to their overall assessment score.

Advantages of testlets to test takers include:

- Grouping any combination of testlets together for testing in a single sitting or across multiple administrations, thus customizing their own path to completion;
- Banking individual testlet scores;
- Having the option to retake one or two testlets rather than the entire assessment reduces test takers' test time and costs;
- Timing when to take a testlet to align with the completion of that part of the program coursework, creating much tighter linkages between learning, assessment, and feedback; and
- Receiving reliable subscores and objective-level data to gauge strengths and weaknesses, while supporting program providers' continuous improvement of preparation.

SEPARATE LITERACY ASSESSMENT

The Georgia Early Literacy Act (HB538) was passed in the 2023 legislative session, requiring all teacher certification GACE assessments to be aligned with developmentally appropriate evidence-based literacy instruction by July 1, 2025.

After input from a representative advisory group, all initial teaching field candidates will take a separate literacy assessment, in addition to the content assessment for their preparation field.

Application of the Science of Reading

For the following preparation fields, candidates will be required to demonstrate application of knowledge and skills by passing an *Application of the Science of Reading* assessment:

- Birth Through Kindergarten and Special Education Preschool
- Elementary Education (P-5), Special Education General Curriculum/Elementary Education (P-5), and Middle Grades Reading
- Special Education (P-12) fields of General Curriculum, Adapted Curriculum, Deaf Education, Physical and Health Disabilities, and Visual Impairment

Fundamentals of the Science of Reading

For the following preparation fields, candidates will be required to demonstrate an understanding of critical elements of reading by passing a *Fundamentals of the Science of Reading* assessment:

- Middle Grades (4-8) fields: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science
- Secondary (6-12) fields: Agriculture Education, Business Education, Career & Technical Specializations, Economics Education, English Education, Family and Consumer Sciences Education, Geography Education, Healthcare Science, History Education, Marketing Education, Mathematics Education, Political Science Education, Science Education, and Speech Education
- P-12 fields: Art, Computer Science, Dance, Drama, Engineering and Technology, English to Speakers of Other Languages, Health and Physical Education, Music, and World Languages

The appropriate literacy assessment can be taken at the same time as the content assessment or separately.

GACE CONTENT KNOWLEDGE PREPARATION MATERIALS

We know high quality test preparation materials are helpful to both test takers and educator preparation providers (EPPs). With the new program, all test takers will have sample practice items for all assessments and online study guides, along with *free* full-length, interactive practice tests. Test takers will also have a range of online videos and tutorials, as well as subscription-based interactive instructional learning courses aligned to the GACE assessments and designed to help test takers strengthen subject matter content knowledge. In short, there will be extensive preparation resources for test takers and EPP faculty.

NOMINATE YOURSELF OR OTHERS TO ASSIST

Georgia has a customized assessment program, meaning all GACE assessments are developed with input from Georgia educators and those who prepare Georgia educators. Educator and faculty involvement is critical for developing professional certification assessments reflective of Georgia's approved standards and to ensure assessments are fair.

We encourage you, as a Georgia certified or licensed educator and/or faculty from a state-approved EPP, to complete and submit an application for participation in ongoing assessment development activities. We also encourage you to nominate your Georgia colleagues who may be interested in this work.

Full information, along with a link to complete and submit an application and/or nominate your colleagues, is available at [GACE Recruitment \(nesinc.com\)](https://nesinc.com).

In closing, it is an exciting time in Georgia as the GACE program undergoes a comprehensive redevelopment to ensure educator success and nurture the educator pipeline, all aimed at making a positive impact on P-12 learning.

Again, please know we are committed to involving Georgia stakeholders and keeping all informed as progress continues toward the July 1, 2025, GACE launch.