

Georgia Students Brace for CRCT

Laura Diamond, Atlanta Journal Constitution | Friday, April 17, 2009



As metro Atlanta students return from spring break today, elementary and middle schools will prepare for the annual round of CRCT testing.

During the next couple of weeks, anxious students will take the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests, which measure whether students learned what the state says they need to know. Results help determine whether students in grades three, five and eight move on to the next grade level. Scores also determine whether schools meet testing goals mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Last spring, about 71 percent of sixth-graders and 76 percent of seventh-graders failed the social studies sections of the exams. About 38 percent of eighth-graders failed the math test. The three exams were new and based on revamped curriculum. Parents and local educators were outraged over the results and accused the state of developing defective tests. Some still don't trust the system.

The state has improved sixth- and seventh-grade social studies and provided teachers with more training, particularly in math, said Stephen Pruitt, an associate superintendent for the Georgia Department of Education who oversees testing. State leaders clarified and changed what should be taught in social studies and trained teachers on the new material. The state also developed new social studies tests, which will be field-tested when sixth- and seventh-graders take the tests. Students' scores on those two tests won't count.

Pruitt said students struggled in math because the exams were based on a new and more rigorous curriculum. As teachers become more comfortable with the material, scores will improve, he said. Public schools now use an integrated approach to math, which weaves elements of algebra, geometry and statistics into a single math class, rather than teaching each separately. Middle school students now study algebra and other concepts previously taught in high school.

"For a testing system to be effective it must have the confidence and trust of students, parents, teachers and the general public," Callahan said. "I really hope it goes smoothly, but I think everyone has their fingers crossed that we don't have another train wreck."

1. In appropriate paragraph form, compare and contrast the strengths and weaknesses regarding the use of a standardized examination to measure student mastery of concepts identified in the curriculum. **(GPS – Grades 6 – 8: MRC a, d)**
2. Use proportions ($a/b = c/d$) to describe relationships and solve the following: In 2008, 38,844 students participated in the CRCT in Henry County of which 3,046 were in sixth grade. 74% met or exceeded standards on the math CRCT. Assuming an additional six percent met the state qualifications, how many more students were encounter success? **(GPS – Grade 6: M6A2c; addressed November 10 – December 19, 2008)**
3. Describe patterns in proportionate relationships and solve the following: In 2008, 38,844 students participated in the CRCT in Henry County of which 2,951 were in seventh grade. 81% met or exceeded standards on the math CRCT. Assuming an additional seven percent met the state qualifications, how many more students were encounter success? **(GPS – Grade 7: M7A3d; addressed October 6 – November 21, 2008)**
4. Interpret a solution in the following context: In 2008, 38,844 students participated in the CRCT in Henry County of which 3,146 were in eighth grade. 82% met or exceeded standards on the math CRCT. Assuming an additional eight percent met the state qualifications, how many more students were encounter success? **(GPS – Grade 8: M8A2d; addressed February 2 – March 6, 2009)**
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2008-09 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer interchangeably as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and circle graph. **(GPS – Grade 6: M6N1 f, g; M6D1c; Grade 7: M7D1 f)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *criterion*, *mandated*, *revamped*, *integrated*, *curriculum*, and *rigorous* obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to further demonstrate comprehension. **(GPS – Grades 6 –8: MRC a, c, d)**

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) adapted from georgiastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with the curriculum map and annotated adjacent to the respective grade level inquiry.

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