

The New Grade 8 Writing Assessment: Introduction

Why did I receive this informational packet?

If you have received this informational packet, you are an important link in informing teachers and/or students about the changes to the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment. These changes were made in order to align the statewide writing assessment with the English Language Arts Georgia Performance Standards.

To whom should this informational packet be distributed?

It is important that this electronic document be **distributed immediately across content areas** to all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade teachers, special education teachers, English language learner (ELL) teachers, school level administrators, system testing directors, testing coordinators, system curriculum directors, language arts coordinators, system special education directors and system ELL directors.

What is the purpose of this informational packet?

The purpose is to introduce teachers and students to the new Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment. The packet contains information that will help teachers provide middle school students (specifically current 6th and 7th graders) with the appropriate instruction prior to the first implementation of the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment.

When will the new assessment be administered?

The first operational assessment of the new Grade 8 Writing Assessment will be January 17 & 18, 2007 (specific dates will be provided). Until the new assessment is operational in 2007, the current Grade 8 Writing Assessment will remain unchanged and be administered in January 2006.

In preparation for the operational assessment, a sample of schools was selected to participate in a field test of the new Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment. The field test will be administered October 5-12, 2005. Each system that has been selected to participate in the field test will be notified on August 3, 2005.

How will the new Grade 8 Writing Assessment be different from the MGWA?

The name has changed. The new assessment will be referred to as the Grade 8 Writing Assessment. Middle Grades Writing Assessment (MGWA) will no longer be used.

Previously all students had a choice of a narrative, persuasive, or expository genre to address a particular topic. This has changed. Students will be given either an expository topic or a persuasive topic. Because topics will be spiraled, students may receive either one of the two writing topics thus requiring them to be prepared to write in both genres. The new Grade 8

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