GMAP innovative pilot: Spring 2022 field test

As part of an initiative to make Georgia assessments more student-centered, GMAP—a consortium of Georgia school districts—will pilot through-year assessment, an innovative model from NWEA® that unifies state and district assessments in one solution built on the shared goal of fostering student learning with actionable data. With this new approach, schools administer adaptive assessments in the fall, winter, and spring to provide instructionally relevant information and produce annual summative scores for accountability.

Through-year assessment versus MAP Growth

Through-year assessment is different from MAP® Growth™, the flagship assessment from NWEA used by many Georgia districts. It is a newly developed, criterion-referenced assessment. For 2021–22, it will focus on grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, measuring student achievement relative to the Georgia Standards of Excellence at the depth and breadth required by the Georgia summative blueprint.

Students show what they know throughout the year, and each test is informed by the previous one. Scores that are below proficient in the fall and winter are not counted toward summative proficiency scores. The intent is for through-year assessments to replace interim assessments such as MAP Growth as well as the Georgia Milestones test, streamlining testing and providing timely insights that support teaching and learning.

The benefits: Adaptivity and instructional utility

The through-year test engine supports fine on-grade adaptivity to capture student development from beginning to advanced levels of understanding for each Georgia academic standard. As a result, useful proficiency information will be available each term, instead of only at year’s end. In addition, the assessments adapt below and above grade level as needed in response to student performance, and provide RIT scores—grade-independent indicators of student learning level. RIT scores provide access to industry-leading national norms from NWEA that inform schools’ understanding of how well their students are growing and achieving relative to counterparts nationally and support students in setting rigorous but achievable growth goals.

A critical step: Spring 2022 field test

The GMAP innovative pilot is part of Georgia’s participation in the federal Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority (IADA) program, which aims to support the implementation of new, more student-centered approaches to statewide assessment. A requirement for the program is that results from the innovative assessment are comparable to the Georgia Milestones test.

In spring 2022, GMAP districts will administer through-year field tests in ELA and mathematics in grades 3–8 to gather data that supports comparability. The field tests will serve to calibrate new items needed to enable the through-year assessment to effectively assess grade-level performance and produce RIT scores. As new items will be tested, students may notice that the tests are somewhat longer than usual. In the months leading up to the spring 2022 field test, GMAP district leadership will share resources with school leaders to help them understand how to administer the spring field tests.

### SPRING 2022 FIELD TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content area standards</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Test length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELA and mathematics (Grades 3–8)</td>
<td>April 4–May 13, 2022</td>
<td>ELA: Approx. 50 questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on Georgia Standards of Excellence</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mathematics: Approx. 50 questions</td>
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By participating in the spring 2022 field test, schools in GMAP districts are facilitating an important precursor to the through-year pilot in 2022–23. They will also have a rare opportunity to influence the development of a pioneering, streamlined approach to assessing student performance. Feedback from field test participants will play an integral role in the evolution of the system ahead of and beyond the 2022–23 pilot.

**Spring 2022 field test results**

After the spring 2022 through-year assessment field tests, districts and schools will receive files containing RIT and sub-score data for individual students. Given the transitional nature of the tests, results will not be comparable to preceding years and should be interpreted with caution and in context of other data sources. For this reason, districts that use MAP Growth results to inform instruction or make decisions about students (e.g., gifted programs) are recommended to also administer MAP Growth in the spring of 2022.

In addition, GMAP districts will still need to administer Georgia Milestones in spring 2022 to fulfill accountability requirements, as the ELA and mathematics through-year field tests are precursors to through-year assessment; the tests will not yet be considered operational and therefore cannot be administered in place of the Georgia Milestones test.

**A worthy investment**

While the field tests administered to GMAP schools in spring 2022 may result in some extra testing for districts that also administer MAP Growth to inform decisions, it is a worthy investment expected to pay off in the following year. Provided results are as expected and once approved by the Georgia State Board of Education, through-year assessments will be administered in lieu of MAP Growth and Georgia Milestones.

**The finish line**

After the spring 2022 field test and the 2022–23 through-year pilot, the 2023–24 school year will represent the “demonstration year” intended to illustrate that the through-year solution is viable for statewide implementation for ELA and mathematics.*

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*Science for grades 5 and 8 will follow the same timeline as ELA/math starting in 2022–2023 and options for high school will be explored if the innovative solution is adopted statewide (timeline TBD).