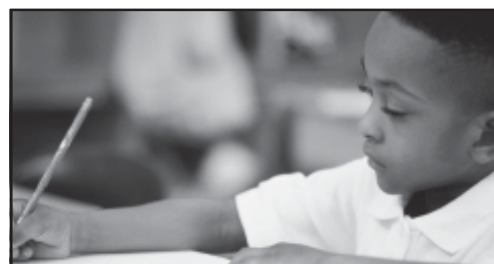


**Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) Assessment Program—  
4th Grade Promotion Requirements for 2005–06**

*Gwinnett schools measure student learning of the school system’s curriculum—the Academic Knowledge and Skills or AKS—in a number of ways. Gateway tests are given in the 4th and 5th grades at the elementary school level. The 4th grade Gateway measures students’ learning of the AKS in language arts and mathematics. Gwinnett measures students’ understanding of science and social studies using the state’s Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). To earn promotion to 5th grade, Gwinnett students must earn a set score or higher on each part of the Gateway, and meet on-grade-level expectations on the social studies and science portions of the CRCT. As the parent of a 4th grader, you may have questions about these promotion requirements. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions.*



**Who takes the 4th grade Gateway and CRCT tests?**

All 4th graders are required to take the tests. Promotion of special education students is based on each student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP). Students in the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program may not be required to pass the 4th grade Gateway or meet the CRCT requirement, based on the recommendation of their test participation committee.

**What kind of tests are the Gateway and the CRCT and how does a student prepare for them?**

Gwinnett’s 4th grade Gateway test assesses language arts and mathematics, using multiple choice, short-answer, and short-essay questions. The state’s CRCT is made up of multiple-choice subtests that cover reading, English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Because Gwinnett’s curriculum and the state curriculum include virtually the same learning objectives for science and social studies, the CRCT subtests alone are an appropriate and meaningful assessment tool for these subjects. However, in the areas of language arts and mathematics, GCPS wants a fuller, richer picture of how well a student is learning than can be gained through a multiple-choice test. Gateway results provide that full, rich picture, including important information on areas in which a student needs additional help or challenges. The good news is that what students do in class every day— learn the AKS— prepares them for both the Gateway and the CRCT. Of course, regular school attendance is critical to a student’s academic success. Attendance on test days also is important so students have an opportunity to “show what they know.” Sample questions for the CRCT are available at [http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/curriculum/testing/crct\\_items.asp](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/curriculum/testing/crct_items.asp).

**What does a student have to score on the 4th grade Gateway and required CRCT subtests to pass?**

Gateway passing scores were recommended by Gwinnett County teachers and adopted by the School Board. CRCT passing scores were set by the state. A 4th grader must pass both Gateway subtests (language arts and mathematics) and meet grade-level expectations on the science and social studies CRCT subtests to be promoted. See the chart below for passing scores/performance levels required to pass the Gateway and CRCT subtests.

Subtests	*Range of Possible Scores	*Required Passing Score/ Performance Level	% of Students Who Passed in 2005 on First Try
Language Arts Gateway	300–800	430 or higher	98.7%
Mathematics Gateway	300–800	469 or higher	93.4%
Science CRCT	150–450	300 or higher (Level 2)	94.0%
Social Studies CRCT	150–450	300 or higher (Level 2)	93.0%

*\*These are scale scores. It is not appropriate to convert them to percentages.*

**When will students take the tests? How much time will they have to take it?**

In the spring of 2006, the Gateway will be given on April 11 (language arts) and April 12 (mathematics). Students will spend 90 minutes each of these days in testing. They may ask for additional time during the same test day, if needed, to finish the day's subtest. Gwinnett 4th graders will take the state's CRCT April 19–25. Each of the five subtests is given on a different day and students will have 70–110 minutes to finish the day's section. The science portion will be given on April 24 and social studies on April 25.

**When will parents get the results?**

In late May, the school will contact parents if their child did not pass the CRCT subtests (science and social studies) or did not do well on the multiple-choice part of the Gateway test (language arts and math). Gwinnett's academic summer school, offered at no charge to parents, is recommended for students who were unsuccessful on these tests. Some students already may have been recommended for summer school, based on grades. Summer school begins in June. The third week of June, a letter will be mailed to all 4th grade parents with their child's final results for the Gateway and CRCT subtests required for promotion.

**What if a student does not pass the 4th grade Gateway or the CRCT?**

Most *will* pass. For those who don't pass both subtests on the Gateway or meet the passing requirement on the science and social studies sections of the CRCT, extra help is available to prepare them for another test over the same material.

- ◆ A student may get extra help during the free academic summer school. Then, the student may take a retest in July.
- ◆ Students are required to take and pass a retest only in the subject(s) they failed.
- ◆ A student who cannot attend summer school still may take a retest at the end of summer school. However, a student is more likely to pass if he or she receives extra help through targeted summer school classes.
- ◆ A student who has not passed after a retest will not be promoted to 5th grade. Instead, the student will receive extra help the next year through a transition program. This program follows system guidelines, but specifics vary from school to school. That way, teachers can tailor a plan to the academic needs of each student in the program. The goal of the transition program is to help the student catch up academically with his or her classmates.

**If students have to pass the Gateway and CRCT to be promoted, are grades still important?**

Yes, grades *are* important! They are a good indicator during the year of how well a student is learning the AKS, and an early warning that a child may need extra help. (See box above to see how grades affect the review procedure.)

**Bottom line: How does Gwinnett's AKS Assessment Program benefit students?**

The teaching and learning that goes on in Gwinnett's 4th grade classrooms every day prepares students for academic success. Passing scores on the Gateway and CRCT reinforce that your child has successfully demonstrated the knowledge and skills to be promoted to the 5th grade.

*If you have other questions about the 4th grade promotion requirements, ask your child's teacher or principal.*

**REVIEW PROCEDURE****What happens if a child has gotten good grades all year, but unexpectedly fails the Gateway?**

If a 4th grader earns a "C" or better on report cards all year in the subject areas tested (reading, spelling, writing, and math), but unexpectedly fails, an automatic "Review Procedure" is launched. An impartial committee reviews the student's grades and other information provided by teachers and parents. Using this information, the committee recommends one of the following:

- ◆ waive passage of the Gateway for this student;
- ◆ waive passage of the test, but recommend summer school; or
- ◆ require a retake and passing the Gateway before being promoted to 5th grade.

**What if a child has gotten good grades all year, but fails CRCT subtests required for promotion?**

If a 4th grader earns a "C" or better on report cards all year in science or social studies, but fails the CRCT in that subject, passage of the CRCT is waived for that subject but summer school may be recommended.