Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) Glossary

Revised 11-30-07

Anchor Paper	A sample of student work that exemplifies a specific level of performance. Raters use anchors to score student work, usually comparing the student performance to the anchor. For example, if student work was being scored on a scale of 1-5, there would typically be anchors (previously scored student work) exemplifying each point on the scale.
Benchmark	A detailed description of a specific level of student performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. Benchmarks are often represented by samples of student work. A set of benchmarks can be used as "checkpoints" to monitor progress toward meeting performance goals within and across grade levels. A benchmark is a standard against which something can be measured or evaluated. In education, a benchmark is typically some form of assessment that the teacher uses either (1) in a formative manner, determining gaps and strengths in student learning so that the teacher can take corrective action or (2) in a summative way, marking progress of students at end of unit.
Benchmark Assessments	Student assessments used throughout a unit or course to monitor progress toward learning goals and to guide instruction. Effective benchmark assessments check understanding and application of knowledge and skill rather than recall; consequently, effective benchmark assessments include performance tasks. Benchmark assessments may involve pre- and post-assessments.
Commentary	Oral or written feedback that identifies the features of a work sample that illustrate the relevant parts of a standard(s). Commentary draws attention to the qualities of student work with direct reference to the performance descriptions for the relevant standards.
Common Assessments	Common assessments are the result of teachers collaborating and coming to consensus about what students should know, understand and be able to do according to the standards. Common assessments assess the standards and provide teachers a means for looking at student work.
Concept Map	A concept map is a document that outlines the concepts, essential questions, vocabulary, instructional tools and assessments for each unit.
Content Descriptions	Content Descriptions describe how the standards set forth in the state's curriculum are assessed on the state-mandated assessments. Developed primarily for educators, each content specific document provides information about the

content assessed and is based on the work of Georgia teachers. The documents are organized by each content domain (groupings of similar content standards) that is reported for an assessment. Associated curricular standards are listed as well as associated concepts, skills, and abilities (e.g., the things students are expected to know and be able to do relative to each grade and domain). There is no hierarchy in the listing; each is of equal importance. Each state-mandated assessment (i.e., CRCT, GHSGT, EOCT) is designed to assess how well students know and are able to perform each of the various concepts, skills, and abilities for a specific content area at their grade level or at the end of a course.

The Content Descriptions are in no way intended to substitute for or supplant the curriculum. They supplement the curriculum by providing more descriptive information about how content will be assessed. Furthermore, the Content Descriptions do not suggest when concepts and skills should be introduced in the instructional sequence; rather, their purpose is to communicate when and how concepts and skills will be assessed via the state-mandated assessments.

To learn more, go to
http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx

Content Standards	Content standards are broad statements of what students should know and be able to do in a specific content area. They state the purpose and direction the content is to take and are generally followed by elements.
Culminating Performance Task	A culminating performance task is designed to be completed at or near the end of a unit of instruction. The activity is designed to require students to use several concepts learned during the unit to answer a new or unique situation. The measure of this activity allows students to give evidence of their own understanding toward the mastery of the standard.
Curriculum Document	A curriculum document contains all standards that should be learned by all students.
Curriculum Map	A curriculum map provides an outline of the course content by units and may provide a suggested time schedule for each unit.
Depth of Knowledge (DOK)	Depth of knowledge (DOK) is a term that refers to the substantive character of the ideas in the performance standards. DOK classifies the various levels of understanding that students must demonstrate as they encounter and master the content and skills within the performance

	standards. This schema for evaluating standards has four levels of knowledge: (a) recall, (b) skill/concept, (c) strategic thinking, and (d) extended thinking. Operational definitions and labels vary somewhat by subject.
Differentiation	Differentiation is a broad term referring to the need of educators to tailor the curriculum, teaching environments, and practices to create appropriately different learning experiences for students. To differentiate instruction is to recognize students' varying interest, readiness levels and learning profiles and to react responsively. There are four elements of the curriculum that can be differentiated: content, process, products and learning environment.
Elements	Elements are part of the content standard that identify specific learning goals associated with the standard.
Enduring Understanding	An enduring understanding is a big idea that resides at the heart of a discipline and has lasting value outside the classroom. Enduring understandings should be transferable between units of a course and between courses in the same content area.
English Language Learner (ELL)	Refers to students whose first language is other than English and whose command of English is limited. The term is used interchangeably with limited English proficient.
English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	ESOL is an acronym that stands for English to Speakers of Other Languages. ESOL is a state funded instructional program for eligible English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12.
Essential Question	An essential question gets to the heart of a particular enduring understanding and helps students relate the factual knowledge to the concepts on the unit. There are two types of essential questions that are used in the GPS frameworks: Broad/Overarching • Go to the heart of the discipline • Re-occur naturally in the discipline • May not have a definitive answer • Raise other important questions Unit/Content Specific • Relate to specific aspects of the content • Frame specific set of lessons or units • May be answered as result of lesson • May not have a definitive answer
Evaluation	The process of making judgments about the level of student understanding or performance.

Feedback	Descriptive comments provided to or by a student that provide very specific information about what a student is or is not doing in terms of performance needed to meet identified standards/learning goals.
Focus Standard	Focus standards are the specific standards being assessed within the unit of instruction.
Formative Assessment	A formative assessment is an evaluation tool used to guide and monitor the progress of student learning during instruction. Its purpose is to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and failures. Formative assessments diagnose skill and knowledge gaps, measure progress, and evaluate instruction. Teachers use formative assessments to determine what concepts require more teaching and what teaching techniques require modification. Educators use results of these assessments to improve student performance. Formative assessments would not necessarily be used for grading purposes. Examples include (but are not limited to): pre/post tests, portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, teacher/student conferencing, teacher commentary and feedback.
Frameworks	Frameworks are intended to be models for articulating desired results, assessment processes, and teaching-learning activities that can maximize student achievement relative to the Georgia Performance Standards. They may provide Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions, tasks/activities, culminating tasks, rubrics, and resources for the units.
Gifted Student	A gifted student is a student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability(ies), exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields, and who needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.
GPS	GPS is an acronym for the Georgia Performance Standards.
Graphic Organizer	A graphic organizer is a pictorial or graphical way to organize information and thoughts for understanding, remembering, or writing. Graphic organizers are powerful tools that can be used to enhance learning and create a foundation for learning.
Lexile	Lexile, also known as the Lexile Score or Lexile Measure, is a standard score that matches a student's reading ability with difficulty of text material. A Lexile can be interpreted as the level of book that a student can read with 75% comprehension. Experts have identified 75% comprehension

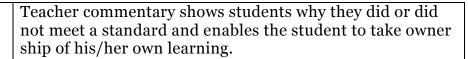|	
	level as offering the reader a certain amount of comfort and yet still offering a challenge. Lexiles range between approximately BR (for beginning reader) and 1700. To learn more, go to http://www.gadoe.org/lexile.aspx
Organizing Framework	An organizing framework guides teachers as they plan for instruction ensuring that all standards are addressed and achieved by the end of the course.
Performance Level Descriptors	A verbal statement describing each performance level in terms of what the student has learned and can do. These statements are available for each state-mandated assessment for each content area and grade level where applicable. To learn more, go to http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx
Performance Levels	A range of scores that defines a specific level of performance as articulated in the Performance Level Descriptors. Each student receives a scale score and a performance level designation (e.g., does not meet standard, meets standard, or exceeds standard) when assessed on a state-mandated assessment. The Performance Level and Performance Level Descriptors provide more meaning to the scale score. To learn more, go to http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_testing.aspx
Performance Standards	Performance standards provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction and student work. They define the level of work that demonstrates achievement of the standards, enabling a teacher to know "how good is good enough." Performance standards incorporate content standards, but expand upon them by providing suggested sample tasks, sample student work and teacher commentary.
Performance Task	A performance task may be a formative or summative assessment that checks for student understanding/misunderstanding and or progress toward the standards/learning goals at different points during a unit of instruction. Performance tasks involve the application of knowledge and skills rather than recall and result in tangible products or observable performances. They involve meaning-making, encourage self-evaluation and revision, require judgment to score and are evaluated using predetermined criteria (rubrics).

Process Standards	Process standards define the means used to determine patterns of thought and behavior that lead to conceptual understanding.
Pyramid of Intervention	The Pyramid of Intervention is also known as the Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions. It is a conceptual framework developed by GaDOE that will enable all students in Georgia to continue to make great gains in school. The pyramid is a graphic organizer that illustrates layers of instructional efforts that can be provided to students according to their individual needs. The Pyramid of Intervention can be located on the GaDOE website – www.gadoe.org. Click on the box on the left side titled School Improvement. Look under Key Resources and click on the bullet titled Pyramid of Intervention.
Rubric	A rubric is based on a continuum of performance quality and a scale of different possible score points. A rubric identifies the following: • Shows levels of quality • Communicates standards • Tells students expectations for assessment task • Includes dimensions (criteria), indicators and a rating scale. • Is **NOT** a checklist (yes or no answers)
Standard	A standard is something set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value or quality. A standard defines the broad expectations for an area of knowledge in a given domain and may include an expectation of the degree to which a student expresses his or her understanding of that knowledge.
Standards-Based Classroom	A standards-based classroom is a classroom where teachers and students have a clear understanding of the expectations (standards). They know what they are teaching/learning each day, why the day's learning is an important thing to know or know how to do, and how to do it. They also know that they are working toward meeting standards throughout the year. Standards-based learning is a process not an event.
Standards-Based Instructional Bulletin Boards	A strategically placed bulletin board in the classroom that provides examples of student work that have been correlated to the standards by elements. Generally, the student work, the task, the standard and the commentary on the work are posted on the bulletin board for students and others to refer to as a model or exemplar of student

	work that meets or approaches meeting the standard(s).
Strand	A strand is an organizing tool used to group standards by content.
Student Commentary	Oral or written comments made by the student or student group that provides feedback to the student regarding his/her progress toward the specified standard(s) or goals of instruction.
Student Work	Student work may or may not demonstrate that the student is meeting the standard. Student work should be used by the teacher to show the student what meeting the standard looks like.
Student with Disabilities (SWD)	Refers to a child evaluated as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as emotional disturbance), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, or deaf-blindness and who needs special education and related services. If it is determined, through an appropriate evaluation, that a child has one of the above disabilities identified but only needs a related service and not special education, the child **is not** a child with a disability. If the related service required by the child is considered special education rather than a related service, the child would be determined to be a child with a disability.
Summative Assessment	A summative assessment is an evaluation tool generally used at the end of an assignment, unit, project, or at the end of the course. In an educational setting, summative assessments tend to be more formal kinds of assessments (e.g., unit tests, final exams, projects, reports, and state assessments) and are typically used to assign students a course grade or to certify student mastery of intended learning outcomes for the Georgia Performance Standards.
Tasks	Tasks provide the opportunity for students to demonstrate what they can do, their knowledge and understanding related to specific standards or elements. This demonstration may occur at any time during the course or at the end of the course.
Teacher Commentary	Oral or written comments made by the teacher that provide feedback to the student regarding his/her progress toward the specified standard(s); comments may include praise in addition to constructive criticism and will often include guidance for revising work or for future work.

| | Teacher commentary shows students why they did or did not meet a standard and enables the student to take owner ship of his/her own learning.

Note: Public commentary is posted commentary that specifies the evidence in student work that effectively illustrates relevant parts of the standard(s); these are general statements provided to guide parents and students in understanding the standards. Private commentary is commentary that identifies the features of a specific student's work sample that illustrate the relevant parts of a standard(s) as well as feedback and guidance for next steps. Private commentary is meant for the student, teacher and parent, not the public. |
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