

**WAIVERS AND VARIANCES
OF HIGH SCHOOL
GRADUATION ASSESSMENTS**

Date: March 20, 2006

REQUIREMENTS.

The Columbia County School System has developed a process for notifying students and parents or guardians of the procedures related to the application and granting of waivers and variances. This information shall be communicated to students and parents or guardians by the guidance counseling department of each local school upon the fourth unsuccessful attempt on the HSGT or GHSWT. Former and current students shall be notified of this information through the Columbia County School System's newsletters and publications, local media publications, and/or high school student/parent handbooks.

Meeting the eligibility criteria does not ensure that a waiver or variance will be granted.

Requests for a waiver or variance of a high school graduation test shall be filed with the local school superintendent by the student and parent or guardian through the local school's guidance department.

The request shall specify the following:

1. The rule(s) and requirement(s) that are to be waived or varied, including the specific provisions and wording,
2. The specific facts which would justify a variance or waiver for the student,
3. The reason why the variance or waiver requested would serve the purpose of the underlying requirement, and
4. Permission for Department staff to receive all records – including special education – pertinent to the request.

(A) WAIVERS.

1. Upon receipt of a request for a waiver, the local school superintendent or designee shall certify that the student has met the following minimum eligibility criteria:

- (i) The student is incapable of passing a particular section of the HSGT or the GHSWT as documented in the student's individualized education program (IEP); or
- (ii) The student has provided documented evidence of a substantial hardship(s).

2. For those students who meet the minimum eligibility criteria for applying for a waiver, the local school superintendent or designee shall submit; within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the waiver request the following information to the state superintendent of schools:

- (i) School records, including official student transcript, current schedule/status of the student, the student's program of study, high school attendance records, and high school graduation test reports;**
- (ii) Plans of accommodations made for the student in the instructional program, including minutes of student support team meeting(s) and other action plans if any;**
- (iii) If applicable, accommodations made with regard to the assessment(s) in question;**
- (iv) Special education records (where applicable), including evaluation reports, eligibility reports, legible individualized education program, classroom modifications that have been implemented, test administration addenda and strategies.**
- (v) A statement setting forth the superintendent's or local board of education's position with respect to the request; and**
- (vi) Any other information, including a copy of the request from the student, parent(s), or legal guardian.**

3. The State Board of Education may by a majority vote grant a waiver if:

- (i) A student's disability is directly related to his ability to pass a particular section of the GHS GT or the GHS WT; or**
- (ii) The student did not have a reasonable opportunity to pass a particular section of the GHS GT or the GHS WT due to a substantial hardship beyond the student's control.**

(B) VARIANCES.

1. Upon receipt of a request for a variance, the local school superintendent or designee shall certify that a student has met the following minimum eligibility criteria:

- (i) The student has attempted the relevant section(s) of the GHS GT or the GHS WT four or more times without passing and**
- (ii) The student has successfully completed a structured remedial class(es) after each attempt to pass the relevant section(s) of the GHS GT or the GHS WT.**

2. For those students who meet the minimum eligibility criteria for applying for a variance, the local school superintendent shall submit within fifteen (15) business days of receiving the variance request, the following information to the state superintendent of schools:

- (i) School records, including official student transcript, current schedule/status of the student, the student's program of study, high school attendance records, and high school graduation test reports;**

- (ii) Plans of accommodations made for the student in the instructional program, including minutes of student support team meeting(s) and other action plans, if any;
- (iii) If applicable, accommodations made with regard to the assessment(s) in question;
- (iv) Special education records (where applicable), including evaluation reports, eligibility reports, legible individual education plans, classroom modifications that have been implemented, test administration addenda and strategies;
- (v) A statement giving the number of attempts the student has made to pass the test(s) for which the variance is requested, including an explanation of extenuating circumstances known to the school if the student did not take advantage of each testing opportunity;
- (vi) A statement describing opportunities provided by the school to assist the student in preparing for the test(s), including remediation classes, tutoring sessions, etc., and the participation of the student in such activities (student or parent may have additional information)
- (vii) A statement setting forth the superintendent's or local board of education's position with respect to the request; and
- (viii) Any other information, including a copy of the request from the student, parent(s), or legal guardian.

3. The State Board of Education may by a majority vote grant a variance to students who satisfy all of the following requirements:

- (i) The student has passed any three of the five graduation tests (four content sections of the GHSGT and the GHSWT);
- (ii) The student has met the attendance and course unit requirements for graduation as described in the applicable State Board of Education High School Graduation Requirements Rule;
- (iii) The student has a 90% or better attendance record, excluding excused absences, while enrolled in grades 9-12;
- (iv) The student has obtained a scale score that falls within one standard error of measurement (SEM) for passing the relevant section of the GHSGT or GHSWT. The SEM shall be applied to the student's highest score achieved over multiple administration; and,
- (v) Where applicable, the student has successfully passed each of the End-of-Course Tests (EOCT) related to the sections of the GHSGT or the GHSWT in which the variance is being sought.

AUTHORITY: §160-1-3-.09

ADOPTED: March 20, 2006

REVISED:

COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

**Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT)/
Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT)
System Checklist for Variance Requests**

Please complete the information below, attach appropriate documentation and submit the completed packet to:

GHSGT Waiver/Variance Requests, 1862 Twin Towers East, Atlanta, GA 30334

Student Name: _____

Test(s) for which student is requesting consideration for a variance: _____

1. ___ Student has attempted to take the relevant section(s) of the test four times.
2. ___ The most recent attempt of the relevant section(s) of the test is within the last calendar year.
3. ___ Student has taken advantage of structured remediation after each unsuccessful test attempt.
4. ___ Student has passed three of the five graduation tests (four content sections of the GHSGT and the GHSWT).
5. ___ Student has met the attendance and course unit requirements for graduation or is currently on track for completing requirements.
6. ___ Student has a 90 percent or better attendance record, excluding excused absences, while enrolled in grades 9-12.
7. ___ Student has obtained a scaled score that falls within one standard error of measurement (SEM) for passing the relevant section(s) of the GHSGT or GHSWT.
8. ___ Student has successfully passed the End-of-Course Test(s) (EOCT) related to the section(s) of the GHSGT or the GHSWT in which the variance is being sought. (If an end of course test was not available for the course when the student took the course, please indicate NA indicating that the test was not available.)

Attached to this checklist, please submit in order the following information:

Section A: ___ A signed statement from the superintendent or local board of education indicating their position regarding this request that includes other information that may be pertinent to the request.

Section B: ___ A copy of the original request from the student or parent/guardian.

Section C: ___ A copy of school records, including an official transcript.

Section D: ___ A copy of the student's current schedule/status, including program of study.

Section E: ___ Information pertaining to high school attendance records, including a statement that the student meets the 90 percent or better attendance record. If attendance records are not available, explain why they are not available.

Section F: ___ Student's GHSGT/GHSWT test reports;
___ Documentation or assurance that structured remediation has been accessed;
___ A statement giving the number of attempts the student has made to pass the test(s) for which the variance is requested, including an explanation of extenuating circumstances known to the school if the student did not take advantage of each testing opportunity;
___ A statement describing any extraordinary opportunities provided by the school to assist the student in preparing for the test(s), including remediation classes, tutoring sessions, etc., and the student's participation in such activities.

Section G: _____ Additional information, as pertinent, including:
_____ EOCT scores, if available; if not available, indicate that the EOCT was not available for the course when the student took it;
_____ Any special education records (if applicable), including evaluation reports, eligibility reports, legible Individual Education Plans, classroom modifications that have been implemented.
_____ Any plans for accommodations made in the student's instructional program, including minutes of Student Support Team (SST) meetings, and other action plans, if any.
_____ Any recommendations for accommodations that have been made for the test in question.
_____ Test administration addenda and strategies.

Packet prepared
by: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

DOE Use Only Case # _____ GADOE 12/2005

www.gadoe.org

**Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT)/
Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT)
System Checklist for Waiver Requests**

*Please complete the information below, attach appropriate documentation and submit the completed packet
to:*

GHSGT Waiver/Variance Requests, 1862 Twin Towers East, Atlanta, GA 30334

Student
Name: _____

Test(s) for which student is requesting consideration for a
waiver: _____

1. ____ Student has a disability that is documented in an Individual Education Program (IEP) that prevents the student from passing a section of the GHSGT/GHSWT, and/or
____ Student has a substantial hardship that is beyond the student's control that prevents the student from passing a section(s) of the GHSGT/GHSWT.
2. ____ Student has attempted to take the test four times with appropriate accommodations.
3. ____ The most recent attempt of the relevant section(s) was within the last calendar year.
4. ____ Student has taken advantage of structured remediation after each unsuccessful test attempt.

Attached to this checklist, please submit in order the following information:

Section A: ____ A signed statement from the superintendent or local board of education indicating their position regarding this request that includes other information that may be pertinent to the request.

Section B: ____ A copy of the original request from the student or parent/guardian.

Section C: ____ A copy of school records, including an official transcript.

Section D: ____ A copy of the student's current schedule/status, including program of study.

Section E: ____ Information pertaining to high school attendance records.

Section F: ____ Student's GHSGT/GHSWT test reports;
____ Documentation or assurance that structured remediation has been accessed;
____ A statement giving the number of attempts the student has made to pass the test(s) for which the variance is requested, including an explanation of extenuating circumstances known to the school and if the student did not take advantage of each testing opportunity;
____ A statement describing any extraordinary opportunities provided by the school to assist the student in preparing for the test(s), including remediation classes, tutoring sessions, etc., and the student's participation in such activities.

Section G: _____ Student's special education information:

_____ Any special education records (if applicable), including evaluation reports, eligibility reports, legible Individual Education Programs (IEPs), classroom modifications that have been implemented.

_____ Any plans for accommodations made in the student's instructional program, including minutes of Student Support Team (SST) meetings, and other action plans, if any.

_____ Any recommendations for accommodations that have been made for the test(s) in question.

Section H: _____ Additional information, as pertinent, including: test administration addenda and strategies.

Packet prepared

by: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

DOE Use Only Case # _____ GADOE - 12/2005 –
www.gadoe.org

BDH(2) – Request for Variance _____ or Waiver _____

REQUEST FOR VARIANCE OR WAIVER

Justification:

How will the student benefit from the Waiver or Variance?

Permission for Release/Use of Records:

Student Parent/Guardian Date

COLUMBIA COUNTY WAIVER AND VARIANCE INFORMATION CHECKLIST

1. Signed Statement from the Superintendent
2. Statement of Attendance or Explanation as to the absence of the Attendance Record