Explaination of Examinations and Scoring

The Purpose of Testing

The purpose of the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE) is to determine student competency in the areas of reading, English, and mathematics. The HSGQE provides this information in the form of test scores that reflect the essential skills that students should know as a result of their public school experience. The requirement to pass the HSGQE in order to earn a high school diploma has been in effect since 2004.

How Results AreMeasured

Students are tested on the Alaska Performance Standards in reading, writing, and mathematics. Performance Standards are measurable statements of what students should know and be able to do as a result of their public school experience. For example, in the mathematics content area, part of the Estimation and Computation standard for 10th grade is that a student should be able to add and subtract real numbers using scientific notation, powers, and roots. Alaska teachers developed the Performance Standards for Alaska students. For detailed information on the standards, please access the Department of Education & Early Development (EED) publication, *Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students* available on the EED website at: http://www.eed.state.ak.us/standards/.
Components of the HSGQE

Each content area subtest on the HSGQE contains multiple-choice questions with four possible answer choices. These answers are machine-scored. Constructed-response questions allow students to demonstrate their skills in more complex levels of thinking, and are scored by a professional staff experienced in providing reliable and consistent hand scoring. All constructed-response questions allow for full or partial credit.

The following content areas are covered in the HSGQE:

Reading

The questions on the reading subtest assess skills such as reading comprehension, identification and support for main ideas, application of multi-step directions, ability to make and support assertions, and analysis and evaluation of themes. Multiple-choice questions target specific skills, and constructed-response items allow students to elaborate on and make comparisons among various aspects of the texts. Excerpts from published literature are the basis for evaluating reading skills.

Writing

The writing skills assessed on this examination include writing compositions, using conventions of standard English (spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation), and revising writing to improve expression. Multiple-choice questions evaluate specific aspects of writing skill, and constructed-response writing prompts ask students to write and edit narrative, descriptive, and persuasive essays on various topics.

Mathematics

The questions on the mathematics subtest assess computation skills. Many questions are set in realistic situations to provide students with a sense of familiarity. Procedures such as estimation and mental computation are interwoven throughout this examination. Reading, interpreting, and constructing graphs, and principles of geometry and measurement are also assessed. Additionally, students use a ruler and a protractor for a portion of the test.
Reading the Student Report

**A** Presents student demographics.

**B** Indicates the student’s scale score on the three subtests of reading, writing, and mathematics, as well as the student’s proficiency level. Also specifies the overall scale score needed to achieve proficiency in each content area. This section may also indicate why a student did not receive a score.

- **ABS** = absent
- **ILL** = illness during administration
- **INV** = invalid
- **MOD** = modified examination that is not approved by EED
- **NOA** = subtest not attempted
- **OTH** = other (reason for marking other should be documented)
- **PRF** = parent refusal
- **SRF** = student refusal

**C** Describes the proficiency levels reported in section B.
Describes the scale scores reported in section B.

Lists the Performance Standard categories grouped by the three content subtests.

Lists the total points possible for the Performance Standard categories on the subtests. The sum of the points for the Performance Standard categories in mathematics is greater than 70 due to the fact that some items are reported in two of the Performance Standard categories.

Lists the points earned by the student for the Performance Standards in each subtest. Points earned are not valid for comparisons across grades, subjects, and/or standards due to variations among tests. The same raw score on two standards usually results in two different scale scores depending on the number of items and the difficulty of the items. For this reason, you cannot divide the points earned by the points possible to determine accurate percentages.

Lists the scale score equivalent for points earned.

Explains the information found in the probable scale score range chart.

Graphically illustrates the student’s scale score (♦), the student’s 80% confidence interval, and the proficiency cut score for Performance Standards and subtests.