

Assessment Plan for Guam Public Middle Schools

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## Guam Department of Education Mission and Vision Statement

The mission statement of the Guam Department of Education holds firm to its goal, that is, to prepare ALL students for life, promote excellence, and provide support. The vision statement is to educate ALL students to be responsible, respectful, and ready for life.

(Fernandez, 2018)

## Background

Prior to Guam Department of Education’s adoption of Common Core State Standards, the annual assessment for students was the SAT10. While this is a recognized and often-used national assessment, GDOE realized that there were several problems with its use that were negatively impacting public school students. Some of those issues were that the SAT10 did not align with the curriculum and instructional standards, nor did it take into account those courses students were enrolled in for the given school year (GDOE, 2014). At this same time, another major issue was “the graduation rate was as low as 69%” (Eugenio, 2017). A change was necessary.

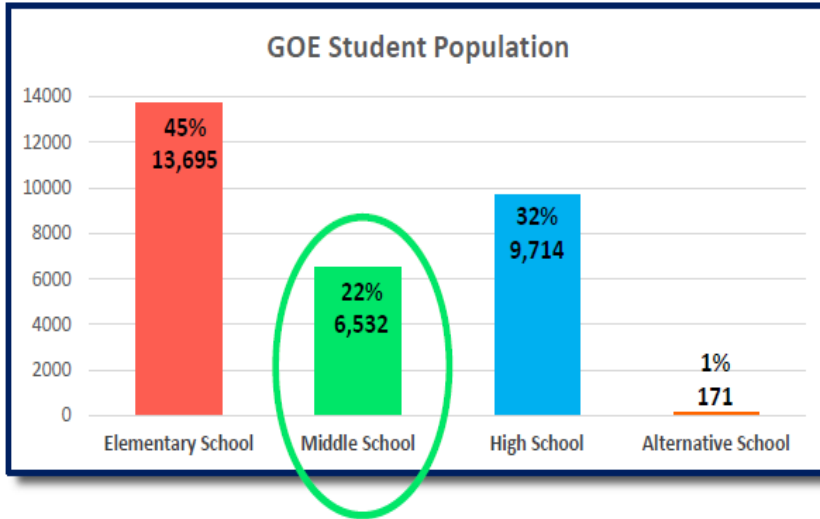
## Assessment Plan Purpose

Morrison, Ross, Kalman, and Kemp (2013) state, “evaluating learning is essential in the instructional design process... you must develop the testing instruments and materials to measure the degree to which learners have acquired the knowledge, can perform the skills, and exhibit changes in attitudes as required by the objectives” (p. 252). This assessment plan will incorporate demographics, required assessments, learning objectives, and desired analytics associated with middle school students in Guam’s public school system.

The Guam Department of Education (GDOE) describes its approach to preparing students academically through standard curriculum, instruction, assessment, and intervention:

In February 2012, the Guam Education Board adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The CCSS is a set of high quality academic standards that ensure all students are ready for success after high school through clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade... The Comprehensive Student Assessment System (CSAS) is a combination of standards-based formative assessments administered throughout the school year and district wide summative assessments administered toward the end of the school year. (Fernandez, 2018, p. 5).

Demographics

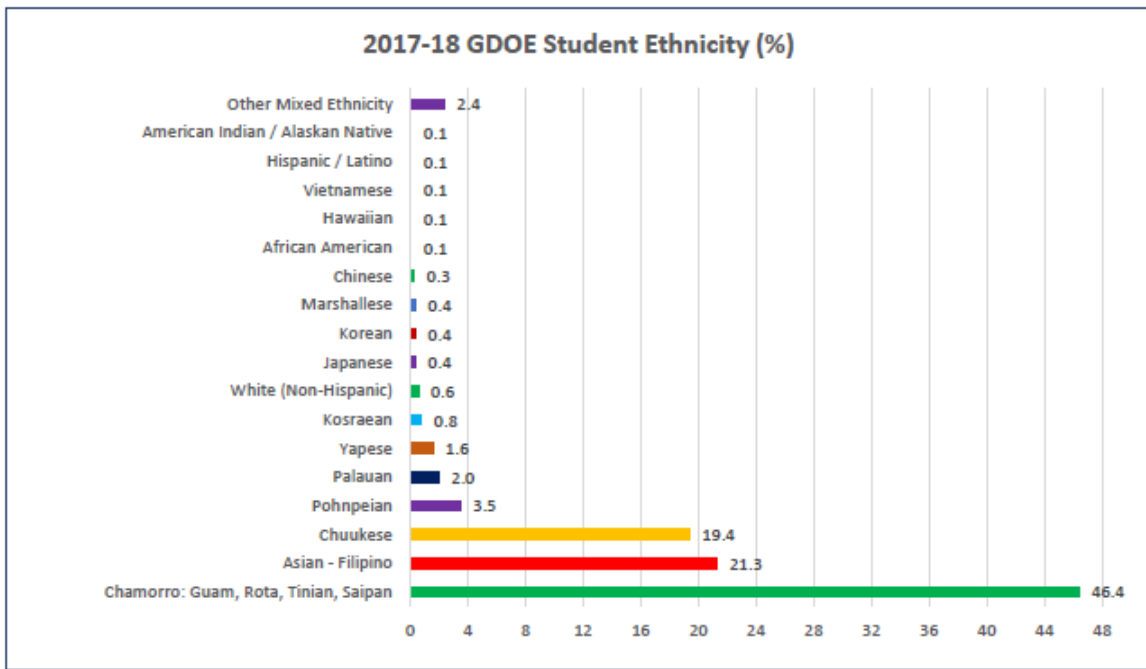


Total GDOE Students: **30,112**

Middle Schools: **8**

Middle School Students: **6,532**

- 6<sup>th</sup> grade: 2,139
- 7<sup>th</sup> grade: 2,159
- 8<sup>th</sup> grade: 2,234



[Charts created using demographic data from the 2017-2018 GDOE Annual state of public education report]

## Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

The State Strategic Plan, “20/20: A Clear Vision for Education on Guam,” developed by the Guam Department of Education (2014) outlines the following educational goals, objectives, and strategies:

<b>Goal #1: All Guam Department of Education students will graduate from high school prepared to pursue post-secondary education on- or off-island or to assume gainful employment within the public or private sector.</b>
• Objective 1.1: By Year 2020, the GDOE will have a cohort graduation rate of at least 80%.
• Objective 1.2: By Year 2020, at least 80% of HS students will be proficient in English Language Arts and Math as measured by the Department’s State-wide Assessment.
• Objective 1.3: By Year 2020, at least 80% of HS students will be proficient in Science and Social Studies as measured by the Department’s State-wide Assessment.
• Objective 1.4: By Year 2020, the percentage of public school students testing into remedial reading and math courses at the University of Guam and the Guam Community College will be less than 30%.
• Objective 1.5: By Year 2016-17 (Year 3), all graduating seniors will score a bronze or higher on the ACT Work Keys Assessment (or equivalent work readiness assessment) with at least 50% scoring Gold or higher.
• Objective 1.6: By School Year 2016-17 (Year 3), at least 50% of the students taking an Advanced Placement (AP) exam will receive a passing score. By SY2019-20 (Year 6), at least 80% will receive a passing score.
(GDOE, 2014)

Note: While Goal #1 and its associated objectives deal with high school students’ performance and graduation rates, middle school students’ performances on assessments directly impact the success of this goal.

<b>Goal #2: All Guam Department of Education students will successfully progress from grade to grade and from one level of schooling to another in order to maximize the opportunities to successfully graduate from high school.</b>
• Objective 2.1: By Year 2020, at least 80% of students at each grade level will be proficient in English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies as measured by the Department’s State-wide summative assessment.
• Objective 2.2: By Year 2020, at least 80% of students in grades K-8 will reach benchmark in Reading and Math as measured by the Department’s Interim assessments.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Objective 2.3 By Year 2020, at least 80% of students will be receiving a passing semester grade in Reading, Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies. (Used as an indicator for earned credit in secondary schools, not necessarily achievement)</li> </ul>
(GDOE, 2014)

Assessment Strategies

<p><b>Implement the Guam Comprehensive Student Assessment System (CSAS):</b>  <b>This system is designed to be timely and directly aligned to the content standards taught in order to provide teachers, administrators, and instructional and support personnel with the student achievement information needed to determine interventions or to make instructional or management decisions.</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administer annual standards based assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards and the GDOE Standards in Science and Social Studies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide teachers with ongoing training in the development and use of formative assessments</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide teachers with training in the analysis and use of student data in the development of lessons and interventions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a data analysis framework at the district and school levels to facilitate the timely use of student assessment data</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and move towards a standards-based grading system</li> </ul>
(GDOE, 2014)

Desired Analytics

Learning analytics is defined as “the measurement, collection, analysis and reporting of data about learners and their contexts, for purposes of understanding and optimizing learning and the environments in which it occurs” (Siemens & Long, 2011). Sanchez (2014) lists the following items which can be classified as analytics:

- ACT Aspire results will be reported on a new 3-digit score scale. We will also report an “ACT Readiness Benchmark” for English, math, reading, and science at each grade to provide additional perspectives on student readiness.

- Users will be able to use the new ACT Readiness Benchmarks from grades 3–10 to determine if students are on track for readiness at the appropriate grade/subject levels.
- A Composite score will be provided for all students who receive scores in English, math, reading, and science beginning at grades 9–10 (ACT Aspire Early High School).

GDOE Assessments for Middle School Students

The following table contains information from the GDOE Comprehensive Student Assessment System (CSAS) Assessment Framework developed by the Guam Education Board (2014). The assessments listed below are those which specifically impact middle school students in Guam’s public school system:

Summative End-of-Year Assessments	
<p><b>Common Core Summative Assessment ACT ASPIRE</b></p> <p><i>English Language Arts (ELA), Math</i> Grades: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup></p>	<p><b>Common Core Summative Assessment National Center and State Collaborative</b></p> <p><i>English Language Arts (ELA), Math Alternative Assessment</i> Selected Students in Grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, HS</p>
<p><b>Description:</b> The summative assessments noted above are going to be the official state-wide assessments for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Math for Guam Department of Education Students. The grades levels tested are those required by the No Child Left Behind act and include students in grades 3 to 10. Students in non-tested grades for ELA &amp; Math and in the content areas of Social Studies and Science will be taking the Guam Standards Based Assessment.</p>	
<p><b>Test Window:</b> Given the last 6 weeks of the school year. (April 8 – May 17, 2019)</p> <p><b>Test Timing:</b> ACT ASPIRE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English: 35 minutes (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders)</li> <li>• Writing: 35 minutes (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders)</li> <li>• Reading: 60 minutes (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders)</li> <li>• Math: 60 minutes (6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> graders); 65 minutes (8<sup>th</sup> graders)</li> <li>• Science: 55 minutes (6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> graders)</li> </ul>	
<p>(Timing values from Sanchez, 2014, p. 8)</p>	

### Summative End-of-Year Assessments

#### Guam Standards Based Assessments (Locally-developed, Criterion-Referenced Tests)

##### *English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies*

ELA, Math (Grades: 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and HS - specific courses)  
Social Studies, Science (Grades: 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>)

**Description:** The Guam Standards Based Assessments will be administered to students who are in the non-tested grades of the ACT Aspire in ELA and Math as well as 1st to 12th grades in the content areas of Science and Social Studies. In ELA and Math, the assessments are aligned to the Common Core. In the areas of Science and Social Studies, they are aligned to the GDOE Standards. Students take the SBA tests based on the courses in which they are currently enrolled.

**Test Window:** Given the last 6 weeks of the school year. (April 8 – May 17, 2019)

### Within-Year (Interim) Assessments

These assessments are given throughout the course of the school year in order to track student progress with the purpose of providing interventions to struggling students.

#### District and School Level Interim Assessment AIMS Web-Criterion Based Measure, general screener

*ELA (Reading, Writing, and Early Literacy), and Math*  
Grades: K – 8<sup>th</sup>

**Test Window:** Screeners given at the Beginning, Mid, and End of Year.  
Additional assessments for closer progress monitoring available to schools as needed.

### ACT ASPIRE – Optional assessments and teacher resources

*English Language Arts (ELA), Math*  
Grades: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup>

**Test Window:** School and Classroom-based Modules and Assessments, as needed and/or requested.

### School-Based Common Formative Assessments

*English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, Social Studies*  
Grades: 1<sup>st</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>

**Test Window:** Throughout the school year.



### Known Issues

The following issues and concerns are often mentioned within the Guam Department of Education administration and teachers, among parents, and by local news outlets. These issues are potential barriers to providing the necessary instruction, assessment, and intervention for students:

- Teacher shortage: In *The Guam Daily Post*, O'Connor (2018) reported, "With a little more than 300 teacher vacancies to fill next school year, education Superintendent Jon Fernandez is hoping an upcoming job fair will help narrow the gap. 'The department faces a teacher shortage every year... we are doing everything we can to place qualified instructors in every classroom.'" There were 2,457 GDOE teachers among all grade levels during the 2017-2018 school year (Fernandez, 2018, p. 43). With at least 300 vacancies, this represents a shortage of 12.2% of the required teachers to meet the needs of students in Guam's public schools.
- Language barrier: In his message as Superintendent of Education, Fernandez (2018) states, "I want to point out that across the nation [U.S.], Guam has the highest percentage of students (52%) identified as English Language Learners (ELL's)."
- High-risk status: In the *Pacific Daily News*, Sablan (2018) reported, "U.S. DOE designated Guam DOE a high-risk grantee status, for nearly 15 years now, due to past improper management of federal education funds. As part of its high risk status, Guam DOE has a special condition which U.S. DOE required it to hire a third party to manage federal funds it receives, as a condition of continuing to receive the funds."
- Culture and Curriculum: In the *Pacific Daily News*, Cruz (2018) reported, "Textbooks used in the island's public schools 'don't do our students justice'" according to GDOE

deputy superintendent Joe Sanchez. Sanchez goes on to say, “When you’re using textbooks, particularly in social studies, that have a national or international scope, information about Guam and Micronesia is very limited...Guam is only mentioned three times as simply a U.S. territory ‘with a substantial military presence.’” Cruz (2018) shared, “Guam DOE is working with the University of Guam Press on the development of a Guam-centered curriculum, though the project has met a stumbling block with ongoing GovGuam budget cuts.”

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