Overview of DRC BEACON for Georgia

What is DRC BEACON?

DRC BEACON is a system that:

- Offers an online, computer-adaptive assessment multiple times a year, aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) for grades 3–8.
- Offers full tests or shorter testlets that can be combined for a full test score.
- Is aligned with Georgia Milestones, including standards, item types, delivery platform, accessibility tools, and accommodations.
- Is administered on the user-friendly DRC INSIGHT platform; the same platform used for Georgia Milestones.
- Generates detailed, near-immediate reports (within an hour) of student results to inform instruction. The reporting and testlet categories for Mathematics are: Algebra, Number & Quantity, Measurement & Data, and Geometry. The ELA categories are: Key Ideas & Details, Craft & Structure/Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Vocabulary/Acquisition & Use, Informational Text, Literary Text, Text Types & Purposes, Research, and Conventions of Standard English.
- Collects student data throughout the year to estimate student performance on Georgia Milestones (beginning in 2021–2022).
- Allows educators the opportunity to monitor student performance throughout the year and to make informed decisions to promote academic growth.

What is a computer-adaptive test (CAT)?

When taking a CAT, the difficulty of each question is based on how a student answers previous questions. As the student answers correctly, questions become more difficult. If the student answers incorrectly, the questions become easier. A CAT can give detailed achievement information about students who are high/low performers. Once the student has completed the CAT, the difficulty level achieved by the student will become that student's starting point on the next CAT. It can adapt to two grade levels above/below the student's current grade level in order to provide appropriate content for all students.

Does Georgia require districts to adopt the DRC BEACON assessment system?

No, the DRC BEACON assessment system is an optional, state-funded formative assessment provided by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to Georgia public school districts and schools *at no cost*.

How do districts set up DRC BEACON?

- All Georgia school district System Test Coordinators have access to DRC BEACON and can assign permissions to other users.
- DRC BEACON enables Georgia to use the same DRC INSIGHT functionality that is used in the Georgia Milestones program, with a single landing page.
- Self-guided training and support materials targeting different user roles, including new users, are found in the DRC INSIGHT Portal.
- Student uploads and test setup are managed in the same DRC INSIGHT Portal that is used for Georgia Milestones.
- DRC has worked to make the experience for users consistent with the users' current experience with DRC INSIGHT.
- DRC will continue to introduce enhancements and new capabilities.

What do educators like about DRC BEACON?

- **Choice**. Testlets, (domain-specific), or full tests (content-area specific), are available for administration throughout the year.
- **Adaptability**. The adaptive format yields detailed information about student performance while using less testing time.
- **Reports**. Both the Individual Student Report and the Interactive Reporting platform provide useful information for planning, including "off-grade" performance information, growth, and predictive measures.

DRC BEACON

GaDOE Georgia Department of Education

What is the student experience like with DRC BEACON?

How long does it take to complete the full test?

Typically, students can complete the full test in one class period. It is untimed. Students may complete 32 to 52 items for the total content-area test, or 10 to 28 items for the domain tests.

Can DRC BEACON be taken in multiple sessions?

Yes. DRC BEACON may be administered in multiple testing sessions. Testing sessions may be paused and restarted at a later time.

How many times can DRC BEACON be administered?

There is no set limit; however, three times per year is suggested for full content-area assessments.

Can accommodations be used during the DRC BEACON assessments?

The adaptive nature of the assessment makes it appropriate for students with a wide range of skills and needs. Tests are untimed, and industry-leading accommodations are available, like those for Georgia Milestones.

Do all students in the same grade take the same test?

No. DRC BEACON assessments are designed to target a student's academic performance and are tailored to students' current achievement levels.

What is the educator experience like with DRC BEACON?

Where do the items for DRC BEACON come from, and how well are they aligned to Georgia standards?

DRC BEACON items come from the DRC College- and Career-Ready (CCR) item bank and are aligned with the Georgia Standards of Excellence for Mathematics and ELA, so the results will be helpful in monitoring student learning against the Georgia Standards of Excellence. Educators were involved in writing the items.

What reports are available?

A static Individual Student Report (ISR) is available, while other reports are interactive. These allow drill-down into the data from dashboards. All dashboards may also be printed as PDFs and data exported for local use.

Do Georgia educators pick the items themselves from a bank to include on an assessment?

No. Students are assigned secure assessments or testlets by teachers or system administrators that are aligned to Georgia state standards.

Is this a norm-referenced test (NRT) or a criterion-referenced test (CRT)?

DRC BEACON is a CRT. It gauges student progress toward grade-specific expectations of performance.

How quickly are student results available?

DRC BEACON provides student results following the completion of an assessment (within an hour), as the items are computer scored.

Does DRC BEACON predict student Georgia Milestones success?

DRC BEACON provides predictive Georgia Milestones scores beginning in Fall 2021. By providing a predictive score to the Georgia Milestones, DRC BEACON points to areas of need which can be addressed prior to a summative test. Using the instructional strategies which are linked to CCR standards, teachers can use focused instruction for building effective interventions.

What are the advantages of using DRC BEACON?

- Quality DRC BEACON content is aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence
- Quick results with either testlets or full content-area tests
- Computer-adaptive test for grades 3–8
- Information on student growth throughout the year
- DRC INSIGHT portal familiarity for educators and students, including accommodation features
- Predictive Georgia Milestones scores allow for monitoring and support for targeted instruction
- Provided at no cost to schools or districts

For more information, visit drcbeacon.com
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