

TESTING BRIEF
Fall 2008 Georgia High School Writing Test
September 24-25, 2008

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-281) states “writing assessments shall be administered to students in grades three, five, eight, and eleven.” The results of the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) are used to identify students who may need additional instruction in academic content and skills considered essential for a high school diploma.

The fall administration is the main administration of the GPS version of the GHSWT for 11th graders who are testing for the first time or students new to Georgia who enrolled after the summer administration. Eleventh and twelfth grade students who failed the test prior to fall 2007 were administered the QCC version of the GHSWT. This report does not include QCC results.

The scale score range for the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) is 100 to 350. A scale score of 200 is required for passing and is one criterion for diploma eligibility. Writing scores are also reported in the following performance levels: Does Not Meet (100-199), Meets (200-249), and Exceeds (250-350). Fall 2008 marks the second main administration of the GPS-based GHSWT. The results of the 2008 GHSWT show that student achievement either increased or were maintained in each population group examined.

KEY FINDINGS

- A total of **106,152** students were assessed in the 2008 Georgia High School Writing Test. **Eighty-nine (89) percent** of all students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scale score of **219**. This group includes all students (first time testers and retesters) with scorable papers.
- A total of **96,444** students were grade eleven first time test takers. **Ninety-one (91) percent** met or exceeded the standard for Writing with a mean scale score of **221**.
- A total of **88,639** students were grade eleven regular program first time test takers. **Ninety-four (94) percent** met or exceeded the standard set for Writing with a mean scale score of **223**.
- A total of **9,827** Special Education students were assessed in writing. **Fifty-five (55) percent** of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds Standard set for writing with a mean scale score of **195**. Of these, **7,805** were first time test takers and **60%** met or exceeded the standard with a mean scaled score of **198**. **The 2008 results represent a 5 percentage point increase in the number of Special Education students meeting or exceeding standard when compared to 2007 performance.**
- A total of **2,225** English Language Learner (ELL) students were assessed in writing. **Sixty (60) percent** of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds Standard set for writing with a mean scale score of **198**. Of these, **1,601** were first time test takers and **65%** met or exceeded the standard with a mean scaled score of **200**. **The 2008 results represent a 12 percentage point increase in the number of ELL students meeting or exceeding standard when compared to 2007 performance.**

Table 1. Percent of Meets and Exceeds Standard for the Georgia High School Writing Test – Fall 2008 Administration

	Fall 2008	Fall 2007	Gain
All Students	89%	88%	+1
All Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	91%	89%	+2
Regular Program (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	94%	92%	+2
Special Education (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	60%	55%	+5
English Language Learner (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	65%	53%	+12
Asian	91%	90%	+1
Black	85%	83%	+2
Hispanic	82%	80%	+2
Native American/Alaskan	89%	89%	0
White	93%	93%	0
Multi Ethnic	93%	92%	+1
Female	92%	92%	0
Male	86%	85%	+1

Table 2. Mean Scale Scores for the Georgia High School Writing Test – Fall 2008 Administration

	Fall 2008	Fall 2007	Gain
All Students	219	217	+2
All Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	221	218	+3
Regular Program (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	223	220	+3
Special Education (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	198	194	+4
English Language Learner (Grade 11 First Time Test Takers)	200	194	+6
Asian	227	224	+3
Black	213	212	+1
Hispanic	212	210	+2
Native American/Alaskan	219	218	+1
White	225	222	+3
Multi Ethnic	223	221	+2
Female	222	220	+2
Male	216	215	+1