

TESTING BRIEF
Georgia High School Writing Test
September 2010

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 main administration of the GHSWT is for eleventh or twelfth grade students who are testing for the first time. Students who previously attempted the test but did not pass may retest during this administration as well.

The scale score range for the 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 2010 marks the fourth main administration of the GHSWT based on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

KEY FINDINGS: ALL STUDENTS AND ALL GRADE 11 FIRST-TIME TEST TAKERS

- Ninety-four (94) percent of all students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a five (5) percentage point increase from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Georgia High School Writing Test as a GPS-based test in 2007, the percent of all students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by six (6) percentage points from eighty-eight (88) percent in 2007 to ninety-four (94) percent in 2010.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of all grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a four (4) percentage point increase from ninety-one (91) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Georgia High School Writing Test as a GPS-based test in 2007, the percent of all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by six (6) percentage points from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2007 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for all grade eleven first-time test takers was 224, a three (3) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 221 in 2009.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 224 for all grade eleven first-time test takers shows an increase of six (6) scale score points over the 2007 administration’s mean scale score of 218.
- The 2009-2010 Strategic Plan target for the GHSWT was ninety-three (93) percent of grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard. The 2010 target was met.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

Asian Students

- Ninety-six percent (96) of Asian students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a four (4) percentage point increase from ninety-two (92) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of Asian students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by six (6) percentage points from ninety (90) percent in 2007 to ninety-six (96) in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Asian students was 233, a four (4) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 229 for the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 233 for Asian students is a nine (9) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 224.

Black Students

- Ninety-one (91) percent of Black students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a six (6) percentage point increase from the eighty-five (85) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of Black students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eight (8) percentage points from eighty-three (83) percent in 2007 to ninety-one (91) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Black students was 217, a four (4) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 213 for the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 217 for Black students shows a five (5) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 212.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

Hispanic Students

- Ninety-one (91) percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a five (5) percentage point increase from eighty-six (86) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of Hispanic students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eleven (11) percentage points from eighty (80) percent in 2007 to ninety-one (91) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 217, a three (3) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 214 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 217, a seven (7) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 210.

White Students

- Ninety-six (96) percent of White students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a three (3) percentage point increase from ninety-three (93) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of White students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from ninety-three (93) percent in 2007 to ninety-six (96) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for White students was 227, a two (2) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 225 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for White students was 227, which shows a five (5) point increase from the mean scale score of 222 in the 2007 administration.

KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

Regular Program Students

- Ninety-seven (97) percent of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a three (3) percentage point increase from ninety-four (94) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by five (5) percentage points from ninety-two (92) percent in 2007 to ninety-seven (97) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, a two (2) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 223 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, a five (5) scale point increase from the mean scale score of 220 in the 2007 administration.

Special Education Students

- Seventy-five (75) percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a fourteen (14) percentage point increase from sixty-one (61) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by twenty (20) percentage points from fifty-five (55) percent in 2007 to seventy-five (75) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 205 in 2010, a seven (7) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 198 in 2009.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 205, an eleven (11) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in the 2007 administration.

English Language Learners

- Seventy-nine (79) percent of English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a thirteen (13) percentage point increase from sixty-six (66) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the GHSWT as a GPS-based test, the percent of English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by twenty-six (26) percentage points from fifty-three (53) percent in 2007 to seventy-nine (79) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 208, a nine (9) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 199 in 2009.
- The 2010 mean scale score for English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 208, a fourteen (14) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in 2007.

KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

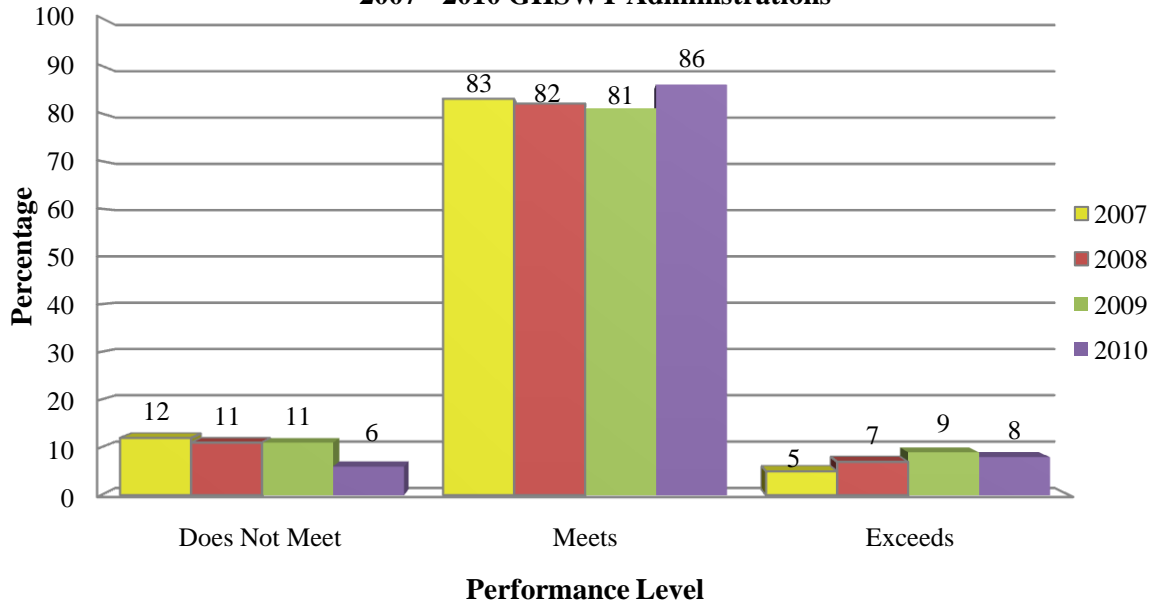
- Improvement was seen by every student group on the 2010 administration of the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) when comparing results to the 2009 administration. Additionally, the change over four years exhibits improved percentages in the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard in every student group. When comparing the 2010 results to 2007, a narrowing of the achievement gap is apparent as illustrated below:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students has decreased by five (5) percentage points from 10% to 5%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but gains made by Black students exceeded those made by White students.
 - The achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased by eight (8) percentage points from 13% to 5%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but gains made by Hispanic students exceeded those made by White students.
 - The achievement gap between English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test takers and All grade eleven first-time test takers has decreased by twenty (20) percentage points from 36% to 16%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but the gains made by English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test takers exceed those made by the All grade eleven first-time test takers.
 - The achievement gap between Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and All grade eleven first-time test takers students has decreased by fourteen (14) percentage points from 34% to 20%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but the gains made by Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers exceed those made by the All grade eleven first-time test takers group.
- Relative to mean scale scores:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students is unchanged when comparing 2007 to 2010.
 - The achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased by two (2) scale score points, from a difference of twelve (12) in 2007 to ten (10) in 2010.
 - The achievement gap between English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers and All grade eleven first-time test-takers students has decreased by eight (8) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-four (24) in 2007 to sixteen (16) in 2010.
 - The achievement gap between Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and All grade eleven first-time test takers has decreased by five (5) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-four (24) in 2007 to nineteen (19) in 2010.

Table 1. Percentage of Students by Performance Levels* on the GHSWT for Student Groups

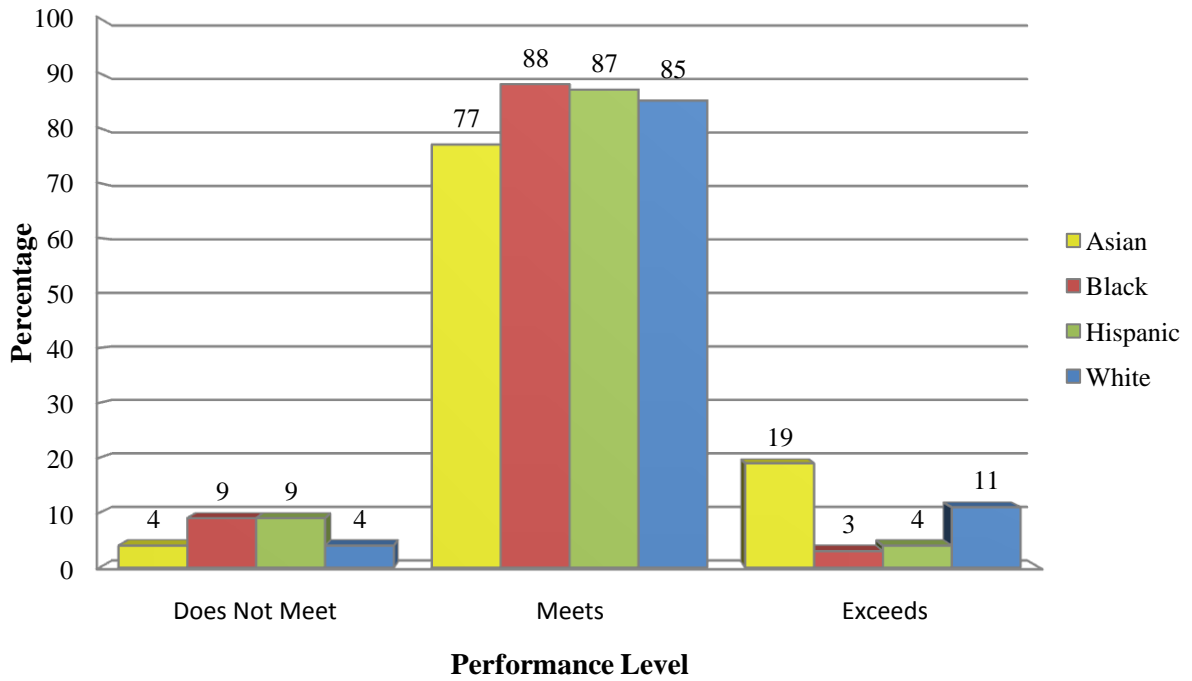
Student Groups	2007			2008			2009			2010		
	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E
All Students Tested	12	83	5	11	82	7	11	81	9	6	86	8
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	11	84	5	9	83	8	9	82	9	5	87	8
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	8	86	6	6	86	8	6	84	10	3	88	9
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	45	54	1	40	59	1	39	60	2	25	73	1
English Language Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	47	53	0	35	64	1	34	66	0	21	77	2
Asian	10	79	12	9	76	15	8	73	19	4	77	19
Black	17	81	2	15	81	3	15	81	4	9	88	3
Hispanic	20	78	2	18	79	4	14	81	5	9	87	4
Native American/Alaskan	11	83	6	11	79	10	15	79	7	7	86	7
White	7	86	7	7	83	10	7	81	12	4	85	11
Multi Ethnic	8	85	7	7	85	9	7	83	10	4	87	9
Female	8	86	6	8	84	9	8	83	9	4	87	9
Male	15	81	4	14	80	6	14	78	8	8	85	7

* Performance levels include Does Not Meet (DNM), Meets (M), and Exceeds (E).

**Figure 1. All Students by Performance Level:
2007 - 2010 GHSWT Administrations**



**Figure 2. Performance Level by Race / Ethnicity:
2010 GHSWT Administration**



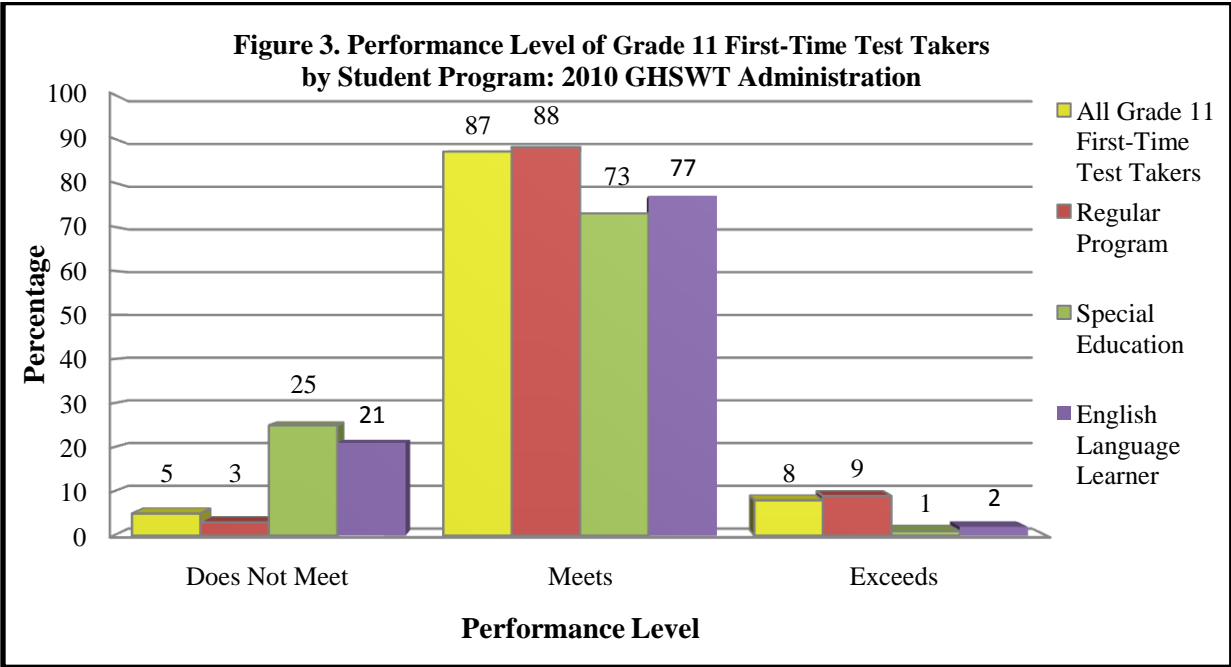


Table 2 : Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for GHSWT

Student Groups	2007	2008	2009	2010	1-Year Change from 2009-10	4-Year Change from 2007-10
	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds		
All Students Tested	88	89	89	94	+ 5	+ 6
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	89	91	91	95	+ 4	+ 6
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	92	94	94	97	+ 3	+ 5
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	55	60	61	75	+ 14	+ 20
English Language Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	53	65	66	79	+ 13	+ 26
Asian	90	91	92	96	+ 4	+ 6
Black	83	85	85	91	+ 6	+ 8
Hispanic	80	82	86	91	+ 5	+ 11
Native American/Alaskan	89	89	85	93	+ 8	+ 4
White	93	93	93	96	+ 3	+ 3
Multi Ethnic	92	93	93	96	+ 3	+ 4
Female	92	92	92	96	+ 4	+ 4
Male	85	86	86	92	+ 6	+ 7

Figure 4. Students Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2007-2010 GHSWT Administrations

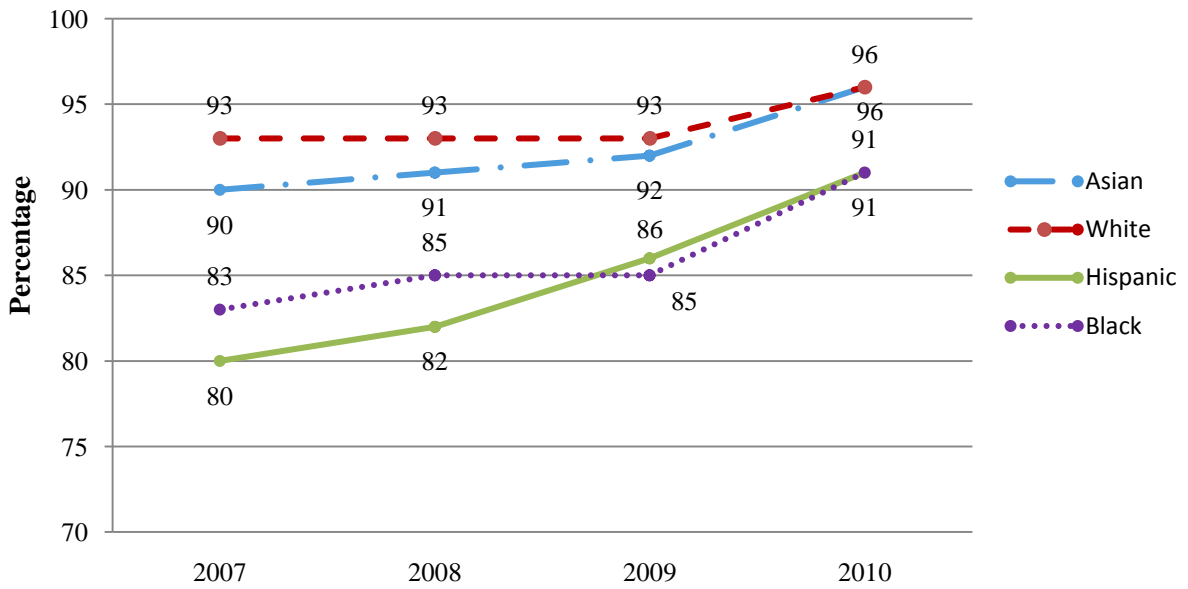


Figure 5. Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Program: 2007-2010 GHSWT Administrations

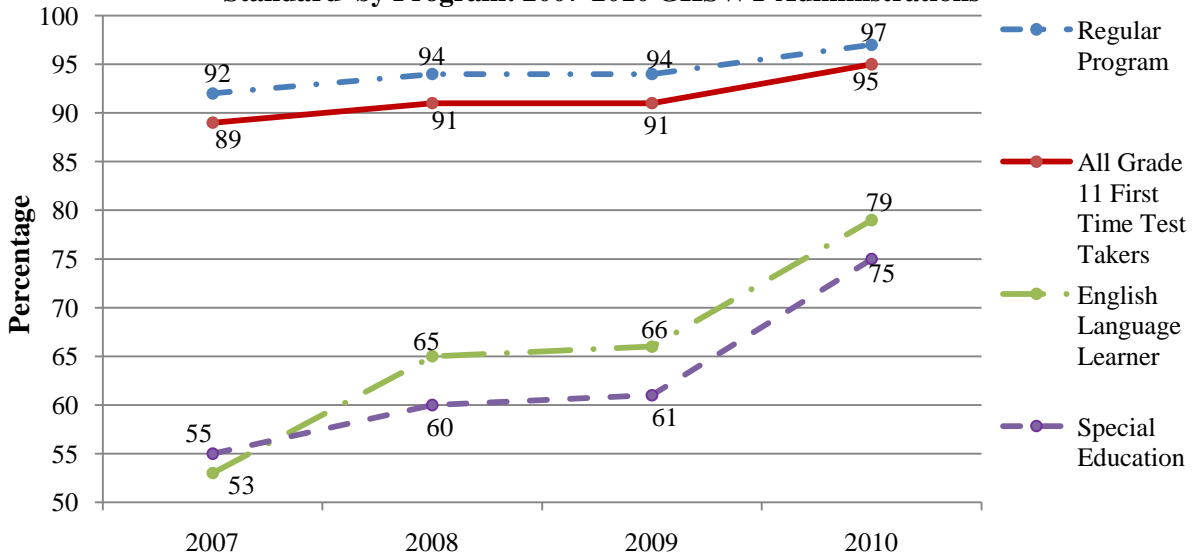


Table 3. Mean Scale Scores for the GHSWT: 2007-2010

Student Groups	2007	2008	2009	2010	1-Year Change from 2009 to 2010	4-Year Change from 2007 to 2010
All Students Tested	217	219	219	222	+ 3	+ 5
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	218	221	221	224	+ 3	+ 6
Regular Program Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	220	223	223	225	+ 2	+ 5
Special Education Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	194	198	198	205	+ 7	+ 11
English Language Learner Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	194	200	199	208	+ 9	+ 14
Asian	224	227	229	233	+ 4	+ 9
Black	212	213	213	217	+ 4	+ 5
Hispanic	210	212	214	217	+ 3	+ 7
Native American/Alaskan	218	219	216	222	+ 6	+ 4
White	222	225	225	227	+ 2	+ 5
Multi Ethnic	221	223	222	225	+ 3	+ 4
Female	220	222	221	225	+ 4	+ 5
Male	215	216	217	220	+ 3	+ 5

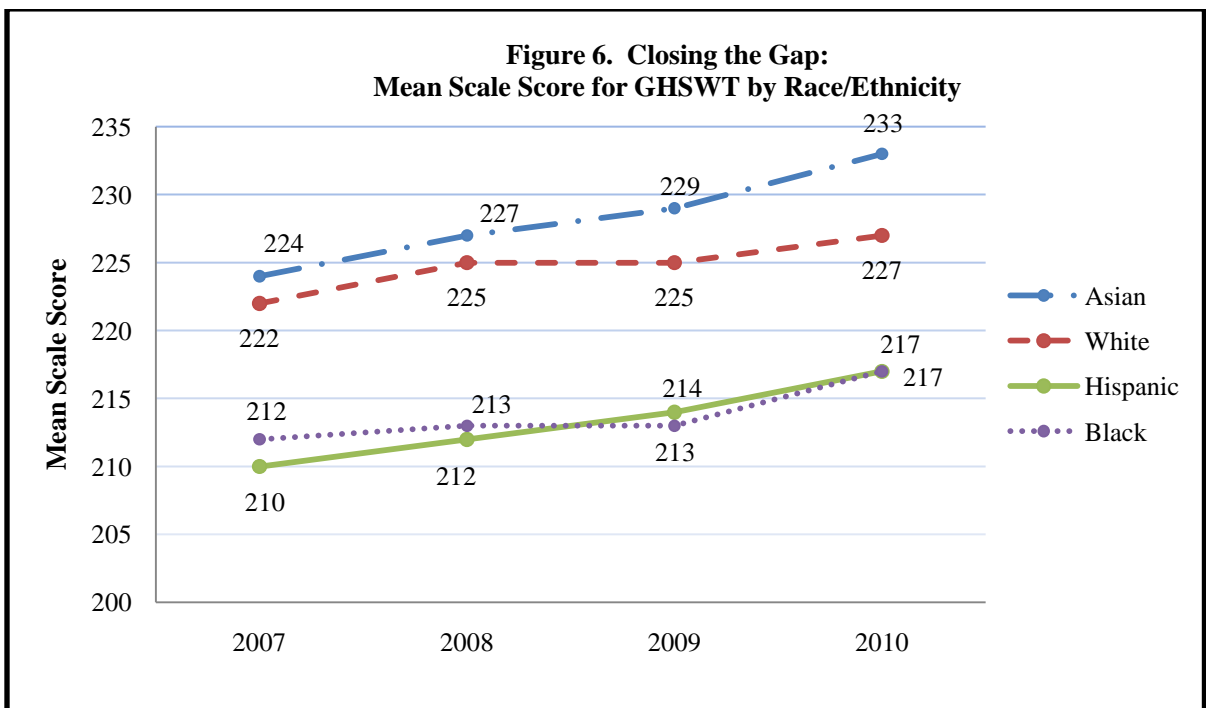


Figure 7. Closing the Gap: Mean Scale Score on GHSWT for Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Program

