

TESTING BRIEF
Georgia High School Writing Test
September 2011

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 2011 marks the fifth 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-one (91) percent of all students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a three (3) percentage point decrease from ninety-four (94) percent in 2010.
- 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 three (3) percentage points from eighty-eight (88) percent in 2007 to ninety-one (91) percent in 2011.
- Ninety-three (93) percent of all grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from ninety-five (95) percent in 2010.
- 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 four (4) percentage points from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2007 to ninety-three (93) percent in 2011.
- The 2011 mean scale score for all grade eleven first-time test takers was 224, which was the same as 2010.
- The 2011 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.

KEY FINDINGS : BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

Asian Students

- Ninety-four (94) percent of Asian students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from ninety-six (96) percent in 2010.
- 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 four (4) percentage points from ninety (90) percent in 2007 to ninety-four (94) in 2011.
- The 2011 mean scale score for Asian students was 232, a one (1) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 233 for the 2010 administration.
- The 2011 mean scale score of 232 for Asian students is an eight (8) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 224.

Black Students

- Eighty-seven (87) percent of Black students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a four (4) percentage point decrease from the ninety-one (91) percent in 2010.
- 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 four (4) percentage points from eighty-three (83) percent in 2007 to eighty-seven (87) percent in 2011.
- The 2011 mean scale score for Black students was 215, a two (2) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 217 for the 2010 administration.
- The 2011 mean scale score of 215 for Black students shows a three (3) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 212.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

Hispanic Students

- Eighty-nine (89) percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from ninety-one (91) percent in 2010.
- 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 nine (9) percentage points from eighty (80) percent in 2007 to eighty-nine (89) percent in 2011.
- The 2011 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 218, a one (1) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 217 in the 2010 administration.
- The 2011 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 218, an eight (8) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 210.

White Students

- Ninety-five (95) percent of White students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-six (96) percent in 2010.
- 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 two (2) percentage points from ninety-three (93) percent in 2007 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2011.
- The 2011 mean scale score for White students was 228, a one (1) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 227 in the 2010 administration.
- The 2011 mean scale score for White students was 228, which shows a six (6) point increase from the mean scale score of 222 in the 2007 administration.

KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

Regular Program Students

- Ninety-five (95) percent of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from ninety-seven (97) percent in 2010.
- 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 three (3) percentage points from ninety-two (92) percent in 2007 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2011.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, which was the same as in the 2010 administration.
- The 2011 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

- Sixty-six (66) percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a nine (9) percentage point decrease from seventy-five (75) percent in 2010.
- 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 eleven (11) percentage points from fifty-five (55) percent in 2007 to sixty-six (66) percent in 2011.
- The mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202 in 2011, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 205 in 2010.
- The 2011 mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202, an eight (8) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in the 2007 administration.

English Language Learners

- Seventy (70) percent of English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a nine (9) percentage point decrease from seventy-nine (79) percent in 2010.
- 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 seventeen (17) percentage points from fifty-three (53) percent in 2007 to seventy (70) percent in 2011.
- The mean scale score for English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202, a six (6) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 208 in 2010.
- The 2011 mean scale score for English Language Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202, an eight (8) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in 2007.

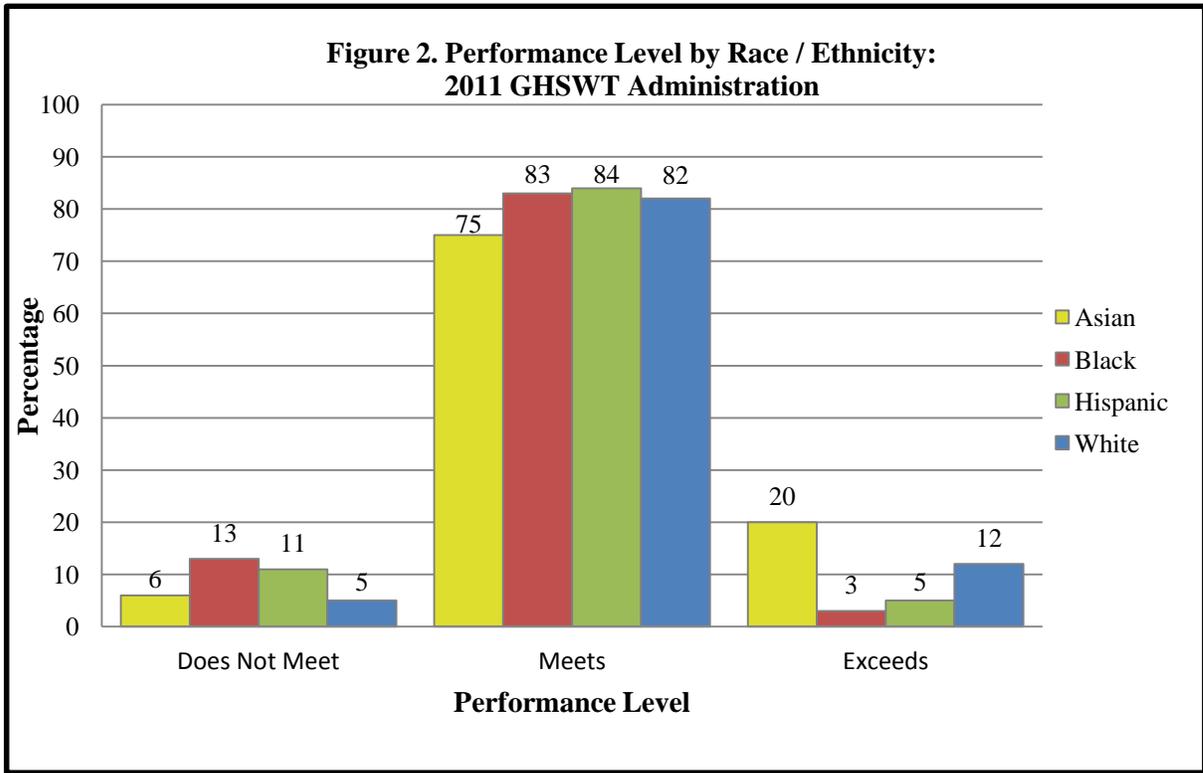
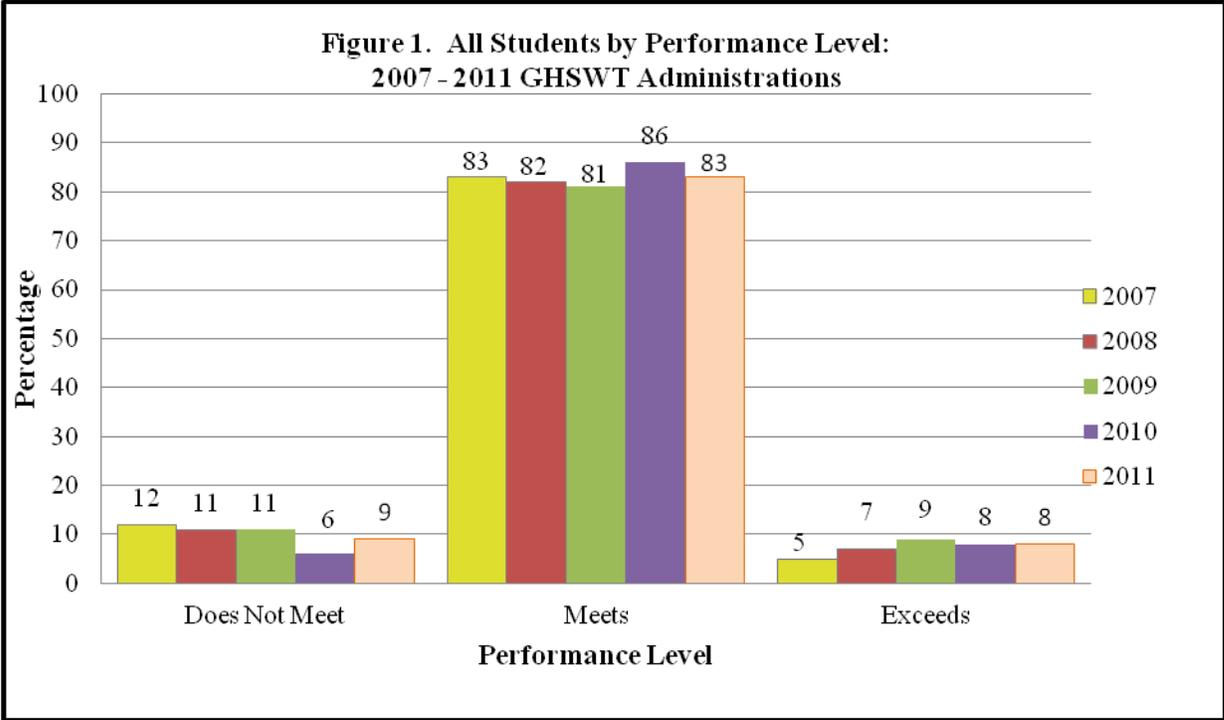
KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

- Decreases were evidenced in each student group on the 2011 administration of the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) when comparing results to the 2010 administration. However, the change over four years exhibits improvement in the percentages of students meeting or exceeding the standard in every student group. When comparing the 2011 results to 2007, a narrowing of the achievement gap is apparent as illustrated below:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by two (2) percentage points from 10% to 8%. 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 meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by seven (7) percentage points from 13% to 6%. 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 meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by thirteen (13) percentage points from 36% to 23%. 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 exceeded those made by 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 meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by seven (7) percentage points from 34% to 27%. 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 exceeded 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 has increased by three (3) scale score points, from a difference of ten (10) in 2007 to thirteen (13) in 2011.
 - 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 2011.
 - 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 two (2) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-four (24) in 2007 to twenty-two (22) in 2011.
 - The achievement gap between Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and All grade eleven first-time test takers has decreased by two (2) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-four (24) in 2007 to twenty-two (22) in 2011.

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

| Student Groups | 2007 | | | 2008 | | | 2009 | | | 2010 | | | 2011 | | |
|--|------|----|----|------|----|----|------|----|----|------|----|----|------|----|----|
| | DNM | M | E |
| All Students Tested | 12 | 83 | 5 | 11 | 82 | 7 | 11 | 81 | 9 | 6 | 86 | 8 | 9 | 83 | 8 |
| All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 11 | 84 | 5 | 9 | 83 | 8 | 9 | 82 | 9 | 5 | 87 | 8 | 7 | 84 | 9 |
| Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 8 | 86 | 6 | 6 | 86 | 8 | 6 | 84 | 10 | 3 | 88 | 9 | 5 | 85 | 10 |
| Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 45 | 54 | 1 | 40 | 59 | 1 | 39 | 60 | 2 | 25 | 73 | 1 | 34 | 65 | 1 |
| English Language Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 47 | 53 | 0 | 35 | 64 | 1 | 34 | 66 | 0 | 21 | 77 | 2 | 30 | 69 | 1 |
| Asian | 10 | 79 | 12 | 9 | 76 | 15 | 8 | 73 | 19 | 4 | 77 | 19 | 6 | 75 | 20 |
| Black | 17 | 81 | 2 | 15 | 81 | 3 | 15 | 81 | 4 | 9 | 88 | 3 | 13 | 83 | 3 |
| Hispanic | 20 | 78 | 2 | 18 | 79 | 4 | 14 | 81 | 5 | 9 | 87 | 4 | 11 | 84 | 5 |
| Native American/Alaskan | 11 | 83 | 6 | 11 | 79 | 10 | 15 | 79 | 7 | 7 | 86 | 7 | 9 | 81 | 9 |
| White | 7 | 86 | 7 | 7 | 83 | 10 | 7 | 81 | 12 | 4 | 85 | 11 | 5 | 82 | 12 |
| Multi Ethnic | 8 | 85 | 7 | 7 | 85 | 9 | 7 | 83 | 10 | 4 | 87 | 9 | 6 | 84 | 10 |
| Female | 8 | 86 | 6 | 8 | 84 | 9 | 8 | 83 | 9 | 4 | 87 | 9 | 6 | 84 | 9 |
| Male | 15 | 81 | 4 | 14 | 80 | 6 | 14 | 78 | 8 | 8 | 85 | 7 | 12 | 81 | 8 |

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



**Figure 3. Performance Level of Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers
by Student Program: 2011 GHSWT Administration**

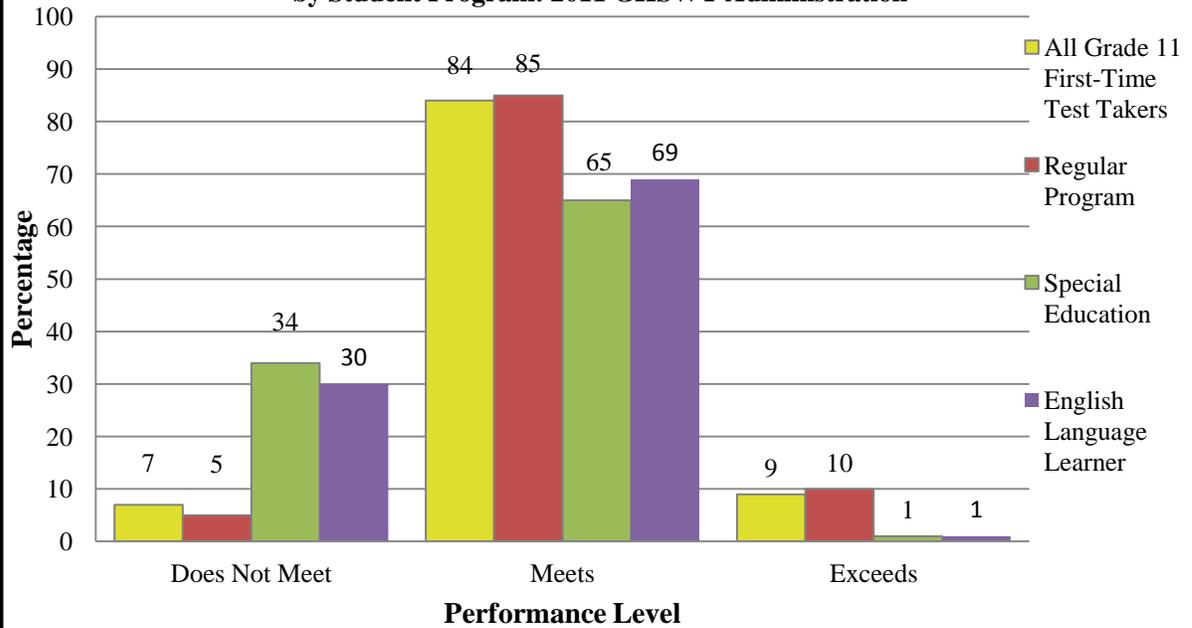


Table 2 : Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for GHSWT

| Student Groups | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 1-Year Change from 2010 to 2011 | 5-Year Change from 2007 to 2011 |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| | Meets and Exceeds | Meets and Exceeds | Meets and Exceeds | Meets and Exceeds | Meets and Exceeds | | |
| All Students Tested | 88 | 89 | 89 | 94 | 91 | -3 | +3 |
| All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 89 | 91 | 91 | 95 | 93 | -2 | +4 |
| Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 92 | 94 | 94 | 97 | 95 | -2 | +3 |
| Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 55 | 60 | 61 | 75 | 66 | -9 | +11 |
| English Language Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 53 | 65 | 66 | 79 | 70 | -9 | +17 |
| Asian | 90 | 91 | 92 | 96 | 94 | -2 | +4 |
| Black | 83 | 85 | 85 | 91 | 87 | -4 | +4 |
| Hispanic | 80 | 82 | 86 | 91 | 89 | -2 | +9 |
| Native American/Alaskan | 89 | 89 | 85 | 93 | 91 | -2 | +2 |
| White | 93 | 93 | 93 | 96 | 95 | -1 | +2 |
| Multi Ethnic | 92 | 93 | 93 | 96 | 94 | -2 | +2 |
| Female | 92 | 92 | 92 | 96 | 94 | -2 | +2 |
| Male | 85 | 86 | 86 | 92 | 88 | -4 | +3 |

Figure 4. Students Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2007-2011 GHSWT Administrations

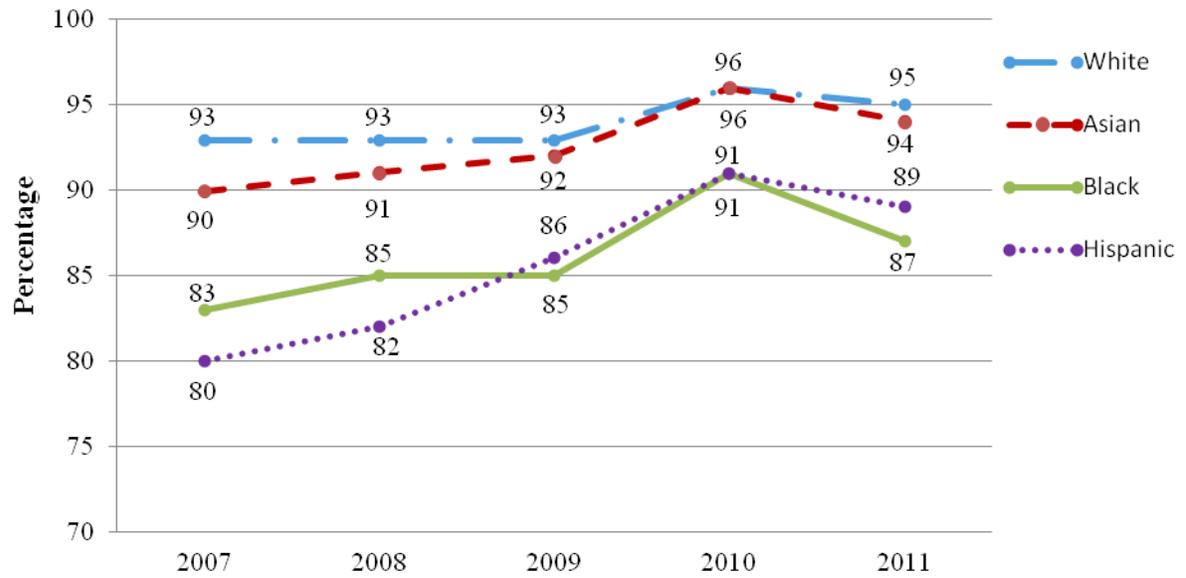


Figure 5. Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Program: 2007-2011 GHSWT Administrations

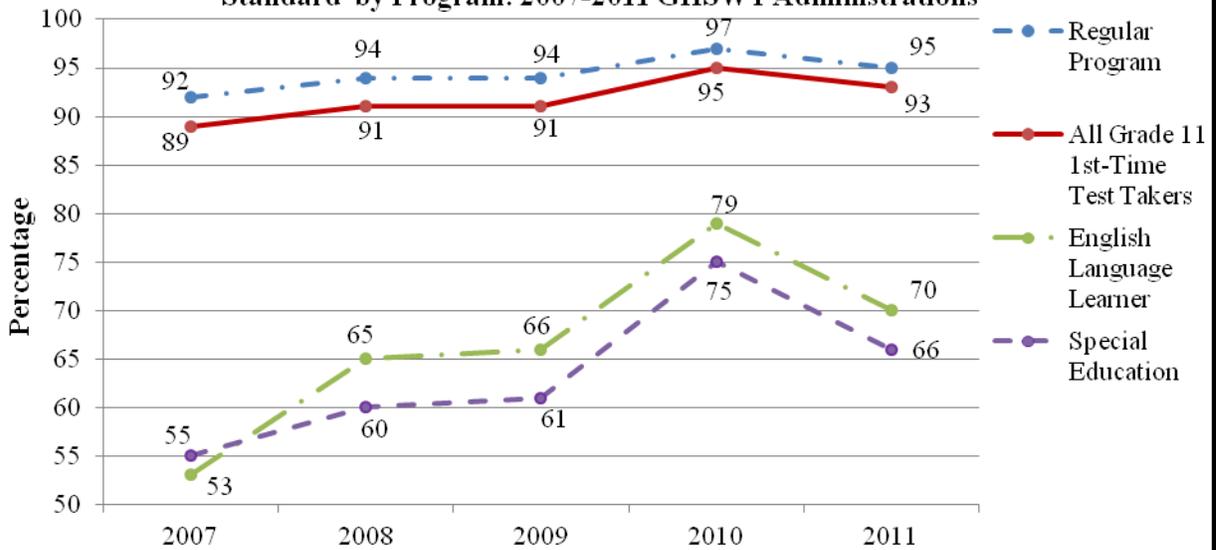


Table 3. Mean Scale Scores for the GHSWT: 2007-2011

| Student Groups | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 1-Year Change from 2010 to 2011 | 5-Year Change from 2007 to 2011 |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| All Students Tested | 217 | 219 | 219 | 222 | 222 | 0 | +5 |
| All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers | 218 | 221 | 221 | 224 | 224 | 0 | +6 |
| Regular Program Grade 11 First Time Test Takers | 220 | 223 | 223 | 225 | 225 | 0 | +5 |
| Special Education Grade 11 First Time Test Takers | 194 | 198 | 198 | 205 | 202 | -3 | +8 |
| English Language Learner Grade 11 First Time Test Takers | 194 | 200 | 199 | 208 | 202 | -6 | +8 |
| Asian | 224 | 227 | 229 | 233 | 232 | -1 | +8 |
| Black | 212 | 213 | 213 | 217 | 215 | -2 | +3 |
| Hispanic | 210 | 212 | 214 | 217 | 218 | +1 | +8 |
| Native American/Alaskan | 218 | 219 | 216 | 222 | 219 | -3 | +1 |
| White | 222 | 225 | 225 | 227 | 228 | +1 | +6 |
| Multi Ethnic | 221 | 223 | 222 | 225 | 225 | 0 | +4 |
| Female | 220 | 222 | 221 | 225 | 225 | 0 | +5 |
| Male | 215 | 216 | 217 | 220 | 220 | 0 | +5 |

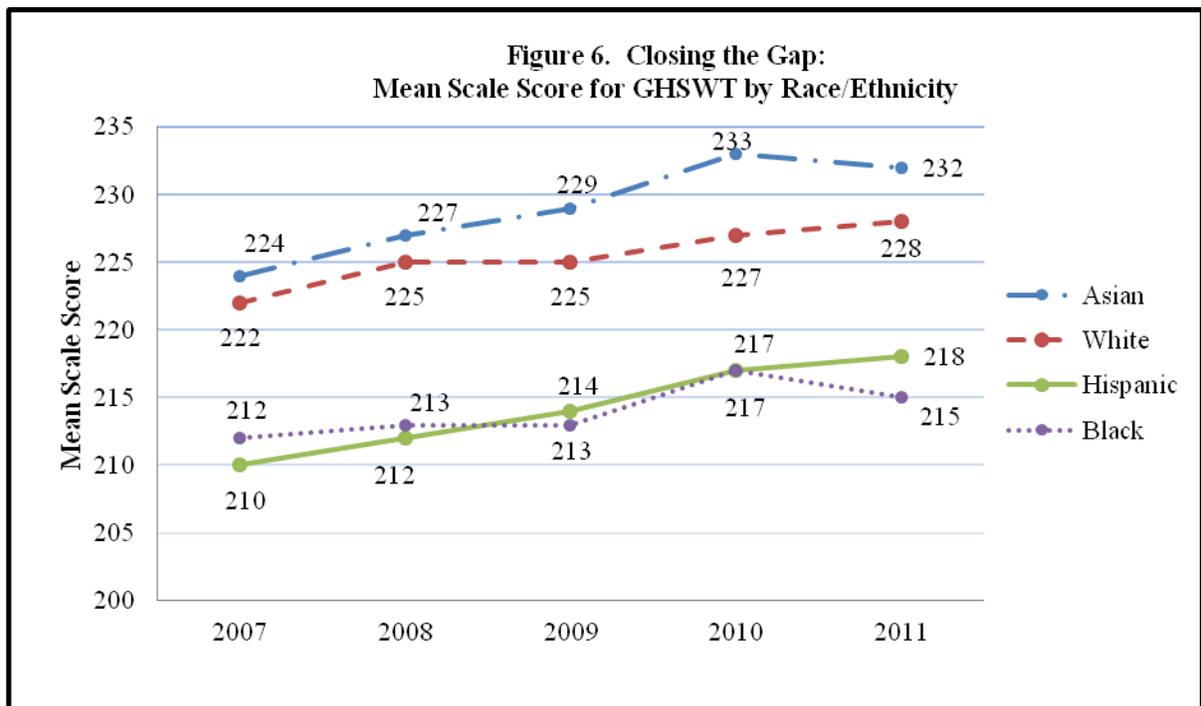


Figure 7. Closing the Gap: Mean Scale Score on GHSWT for Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Program

