

TESTING BRIEF
Winter 2008 Grade 8 Writing Assessment
January 16 -17, 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 purpose of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment is to assess student achievement in the Georgia Performance Standards in writing and to improve writing and writing instruction. The Grade 8 Writing Assessment provides predictive information to eighth graders about their future writing performance in advance of taking the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT).

The percentage of student examinees achieving the Meets and Exceeds standards in 2008 ranged from 7 percent for Mild Intellectually Disabled students to 89 percent for Asian students. The mean scale scores for student examinees in 2008 ranged from a 148 for students with Mild Intellectual Disability to a 227 for Asian students. Gains in percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Standards increased from 2007 in all groups, with the greatest gains in English Language Learner (ELL) and Hispanic students (15 percentage points) followed by Special Education and Male students (14 percentage points). The greatest scale score increase from 2007 was with ELL students (174 to 184).

The scale score range for the Grade 8 Writing Assessment is 100 to 350. Writing scores are also reported in the following performance levels: Does Not Meet (100-199), Meets (200-249), and Exceeds (250-350).

KEY FINDINGS

- A total of **119,716** students were assessed in the 2008 Grade 8 Writing Assessment. **Seventy-seven (77)** percent of all students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scale score of **212**. This group includes all students with scorable papers.
- A total of **12,617** Special Education students were assessed in writing. Forty-one (**41**) percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scale score of **185**.
- A total of **2,604** English Language Learner students were assessed in writing. **Forty (40)** percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scale score of **184**.

Table 1

Percent of Meets and Exceeds Standards – Winter 2007 and 2008 Administrations
All Standard Administrations

	2007	2008	Change 2007 -2008
All Students Tested:	67	77	+10
Regular Program	72	82	+10
Asian	81	89	+8
Black	58	69	+11
Hispanic	56	71	+15
Native American/Alaskan	63	76	+13
White	76	85	+9
Multi Ethnic	74	83	+9
Female	76	84	+8
Male	58	72	+14
Special Education	27	41	+14
English Language Learner	25	40	+15

Table 2

Mean Scale Scores for the Grade 8 Writing Assessment – Winter 2007 and 2008 Administrations
All Standard Administrations

	2007	2008	Change 2007-2008
All Students Tested:	207	212	+5
Regular Program	211	215	+4
Asian	221	227	+6
Black	200	204	+4
Hispanic	197	205	+8
Native American/Alaskan	205	211	+6
White	214	218	+4
Multi Ethnic	211	215	+4
Female	213	217	+4
Male	201	207	+6
Special Education	177	185	+8
English Language Learner	174	184	+10