

TESTING BRIEF

Grade 5 Writing Assessment

March 3-4, 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 purpose of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment is to assess student achievement on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) in writing and to improve writing and writing instruction. The Grade 5 Writing Assessment provides predictive information to fifth graders about their future writing performance in advance of taking the Grade 8 Writing Assessment. The assessment consists of an evaluation of each student response to a randomly assigned prompt. Students are assigned a topic from a prompt bank representing three genres: narrative, informational, and persuasive. Students are allowed approximately 120 minutes to write their essays.

The scale score range for the Grade 5 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).

Administration of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment supports Goal 5 of the Superintendent’s Strategic Plan: Improve the SAT, ACT, and achievement scores of Georgia students. This is accomplished through providing an effective curriculum and assessment system designed to improve student achievement.

KEY FINDINGS: ALL STUDENTS

- Seventy-three (73) percent of all students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard set for writing, a five (5) percentage point decrease from seventy-eight (78) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test in 2007, the percent of all students achieving the Meets or Exceeds standard set for writing has increased by three (3) percentage points from seventy (70) percent in 2007 to seventy-three (73) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for all students was 210, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 213 in 2009.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 210 for all students shows an increase of one (1) scale score point over the 2007 administration’s mean scale score of 209.
- The 2009-2010 Strategic Plan target for fifth grade writing was eighty-two (82) percent of students meeting or exceeding standards. The 2010 target was not met.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

Asian Students

- Eighty-nine percent (89) of Asian students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety (90) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of Asian students meeting or exceeding has increased by four (4) percentage points from eighty-five (85) percent in 2007 to eighty-nine (89) in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Asian students was 228, a four (4) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 232 for the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 228 for Asian students is a two (2) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 226.

Black Students

- Sixty-five (65) percent of Black students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a six (6) percentage point decrease from the seventy-one (71) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of Black students meeting or exceeding has increased by three (3) percentage points from sixty-two (62) percent in 2007 to sixty-five (65) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Black students was 203, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 206 for the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score of 203 for Black students shows a one (1) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 202.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

Hispanic Students

- Seventy-two (72) percent of Hispanic students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a four (4) percentage point decrease from seventy-six (76) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of Hispanic students meeting or exceeding has increased by ten (10) percentage points from sixty-two (62) percent in 2007 to seventy-two (72) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 207, a one (1) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 208 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 207, a six (6) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 201.

White Students

- Seventy-eight (78) percent of White students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a four (4) percentage point decrease from eighty-two (82) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of White students meeting or exceeding has increased by two (2) percentage points from seventy-six (76) percent in 2007 to seventy-eight (78) percent in 2010.
- The 2010 mean scale score for White students was 215, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 218 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for White students was 215, which shows no change from the 2007 administration's mean scale score.

KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

Regular Program Students

- Seventy-seven (77) percent of Regular Program students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a five (5) percentage point decrease from eighty-two (82) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of regular program students meeting or exceeding has increased by two (2) from seventy-five (75) percent in 2007 to seventy-seven (77) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program students was 213, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 216 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Regular Program students was 213, which shows no change from the 2007 administration.

Special Education Students

- Thirty-eight (38) percent of Special Education students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a six (6) percentage point decrease from forty-four (44) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of Special Education students meeting or exceeding has increased by three (3) from thirty-five (35) percent in 2007 to thirty-eight (38) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for Special Education students was 182, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 185 in the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for Special Education students was 182, a one (1) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 181.

English Language Learners

- Fifty-three (53) percent of English Language Learners achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard for writing, a two (2) percentage point decrease from fifty-five (55) percent in 2009.
- Since the inception of the Grade 5 Writing Assessment as a GPS-based test, the percent of English Language Learners meeting or exceeding has increased by ten (10) from forty-three (43) percent in 2007 to fifty-three (53) percent in 2010.
- The mean scale score for English Language Learners was 194, which shows no change from the 2009 administration.
- The 2010 mean scale score for English Language Learners was 194, an eight (8) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 186.

KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

- While there was some decline in performance from the 2009 results for almost every student group, there is some evidence that certain minority and special population students continue to close the gap on the 5th Grade Writing Assessment. When comparing the 2010 results to 2007, notable closing of the gaps are found in terms of the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the passing standard:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students has decreased by one (1) percentage point from 14% to 13%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the passing standard. 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 14% to 6%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the passing standard. 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 Learners (ELL) and All students has decreased by seven (7) percentage points from 27% to 20%, in terms of the number of students meeting or exceeding the passing standard. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but the gains made by English Language Learners exceed those made by the All student group.
 - There was no trend toward closing the achievement gap between Special Education and All students. The gap for this sub-population pair remained the same over time, a thirty-five (35) percentage point difference.
- Similar comparisons can be made between the mean scale scores of various groups:
 - Black: White Students – The achievement gap between Black and White students has decreased by one (1) scale score point, from a difference of thirteen (13) in 2007 to twelve (12) in 2010.
 - Hispanic: White Students – The achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased by six (6) scale score points, from a difference of fourteen (14) in 2007 to eight (8) in 2010.
 - English Language Learners (ELL): All Students – The achievement gap between ELL and All students has decreased by seven (7) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-three (23) in 2007 to sixteen (16) in 2010.
 - There was no trend toward closing the achievement gap between Special Education and All students. The gap of twenty-eight (28) scale score points for this sub-population pair remained the same over time.

Table 1. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Passing Standard

Student Groups	Combined Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for Grade 5 Writing					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change from 2009-2010	Change from 2007-2010
	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds		
All Students Tested	70	77	78	73	-5	+3
Regular Program	75	82	82	77	-5	+2
Special Education	35	43	44	38	-6	+3
English Language Learner	43	53	55	53	-2	+10
Asian	85	90	90	89	-1	+4
Black	62	71	71	65	-6	+3
Hispanic	62	73	76	72	-4	+10
Native American/Alaskan	77	73	80	73	-7	-4
White	76	81	82	78	-4	+2
Multi Ethnic	76	81	81	76	-5	0
Female	78	84	85	80	-5	+2
Male	62	71	70	66	-4	+4

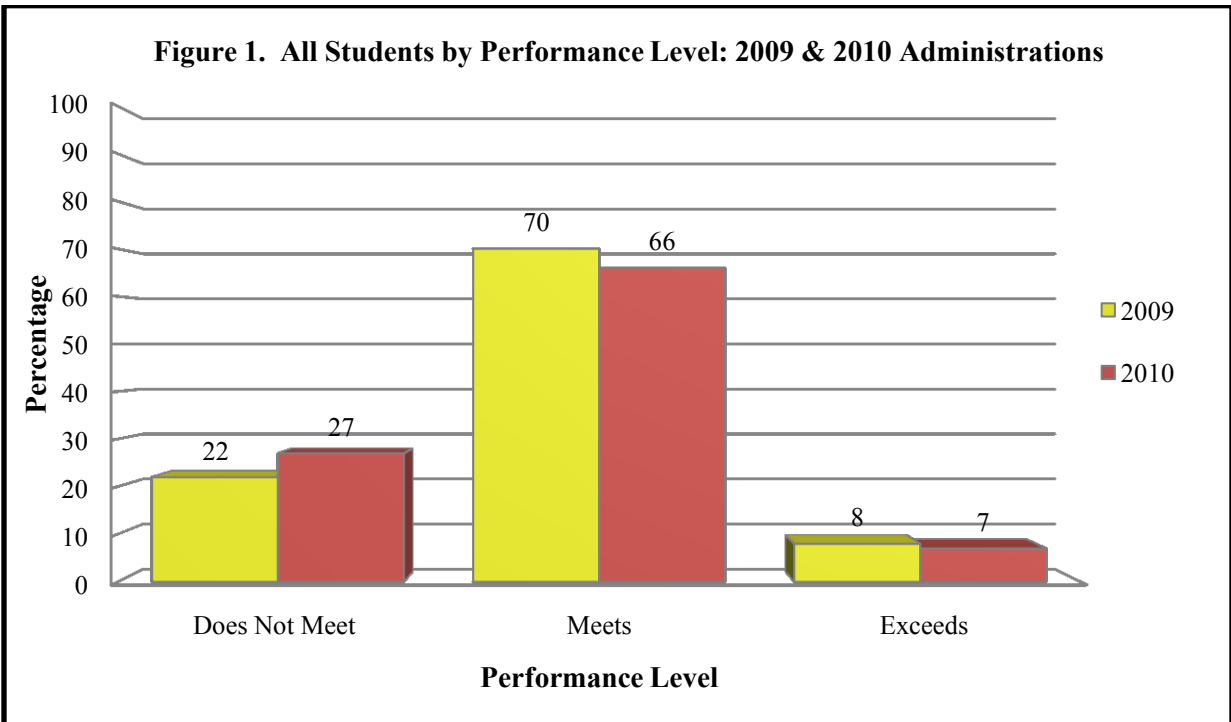


Figure 2. Performance Level by Race / Ethnicity: 2010 Administration

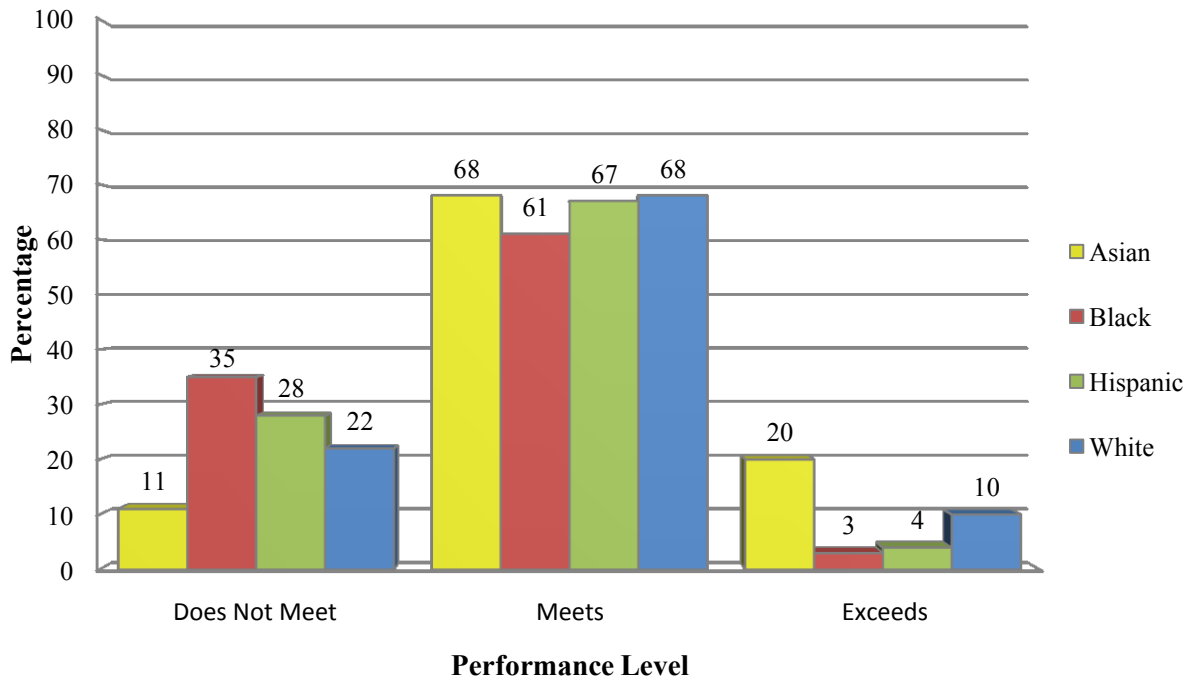


Figure 3. Performance Level by Student Program: 2010 Administration

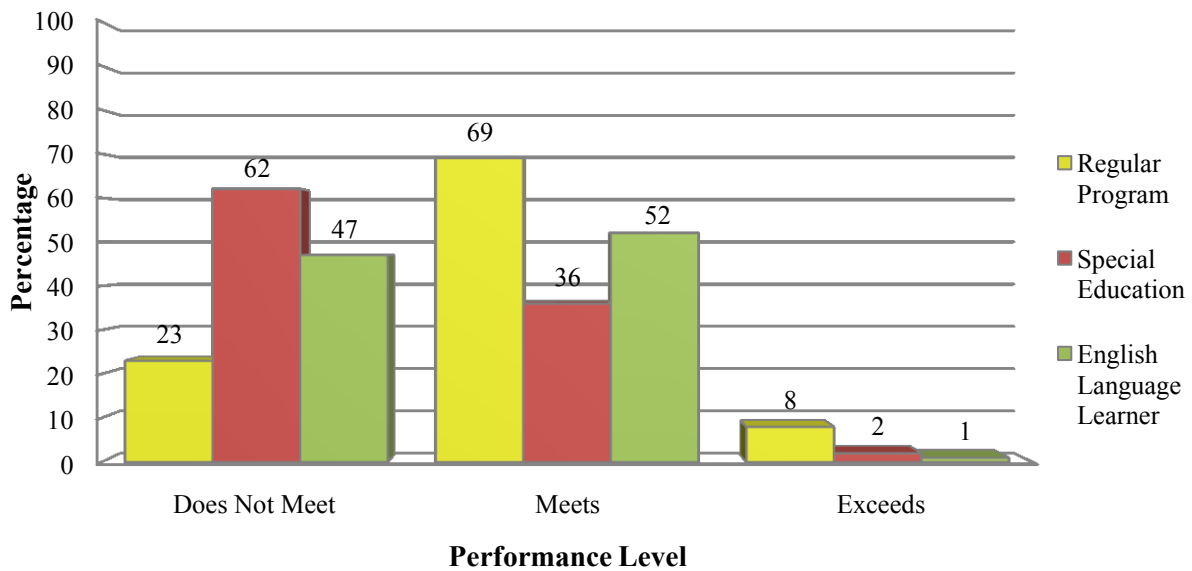


Figure 4. Students Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2007-2010

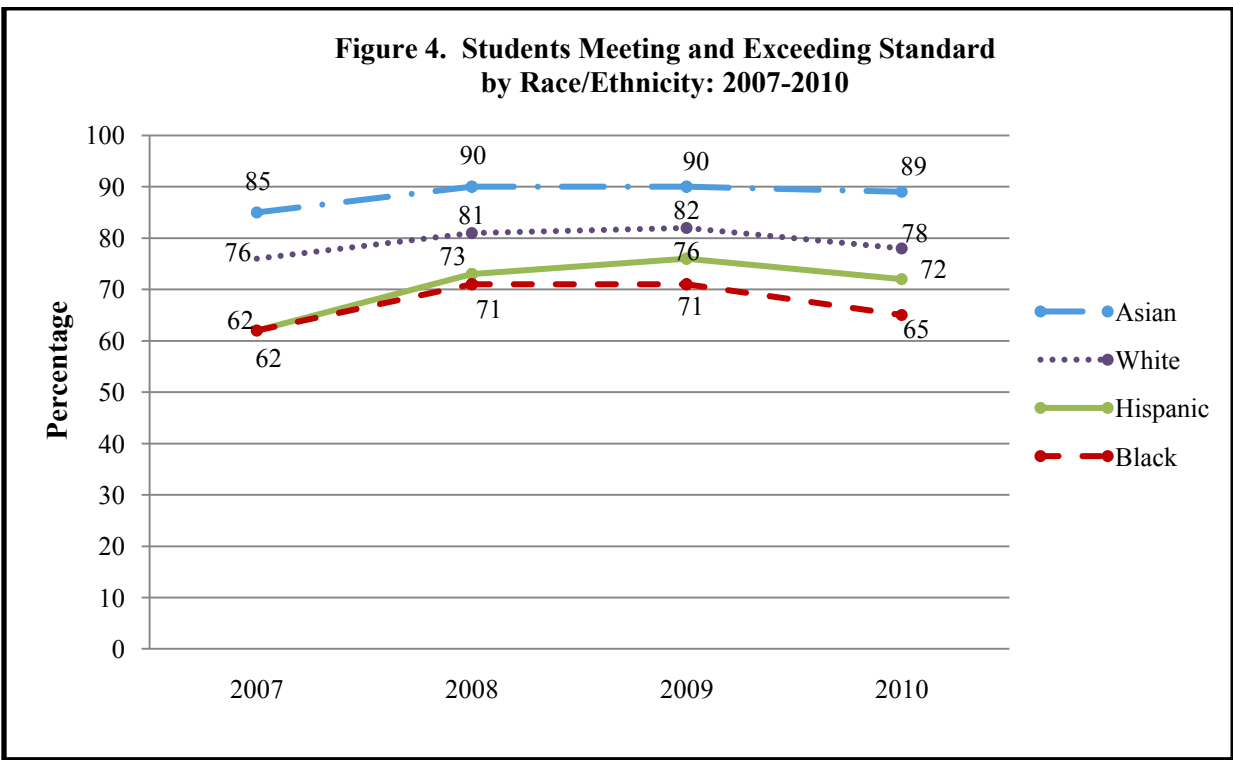


Figure 5. Students Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Program: 2007-2010

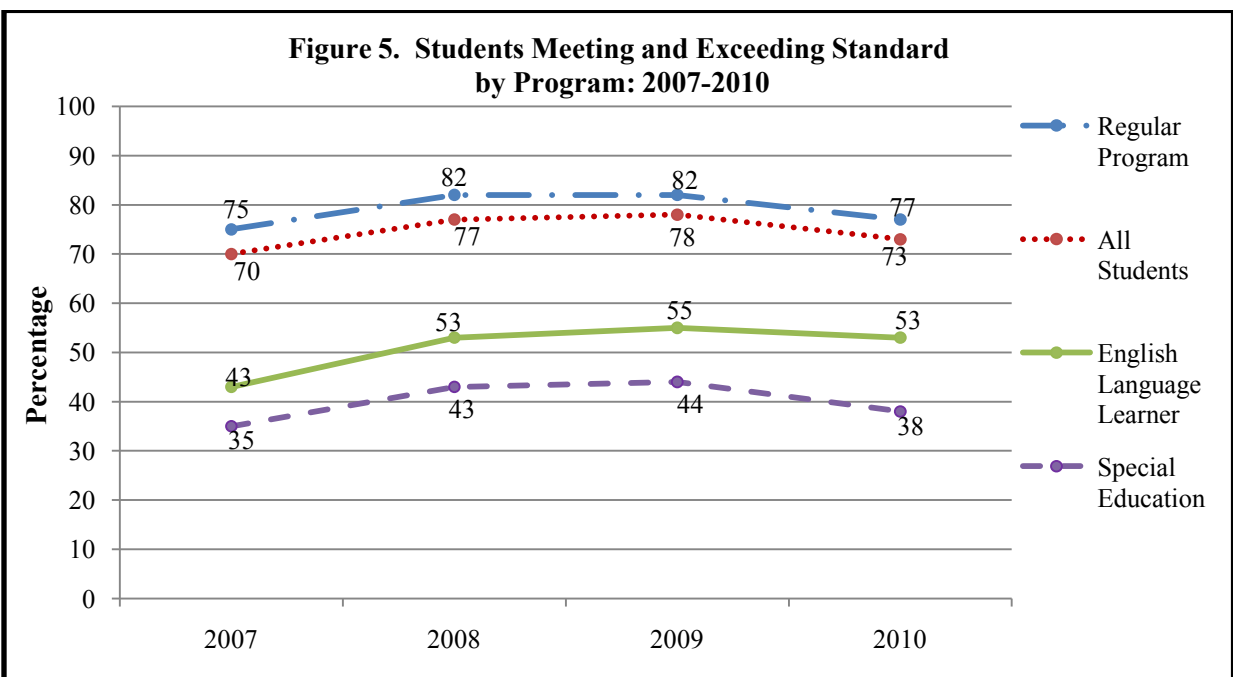
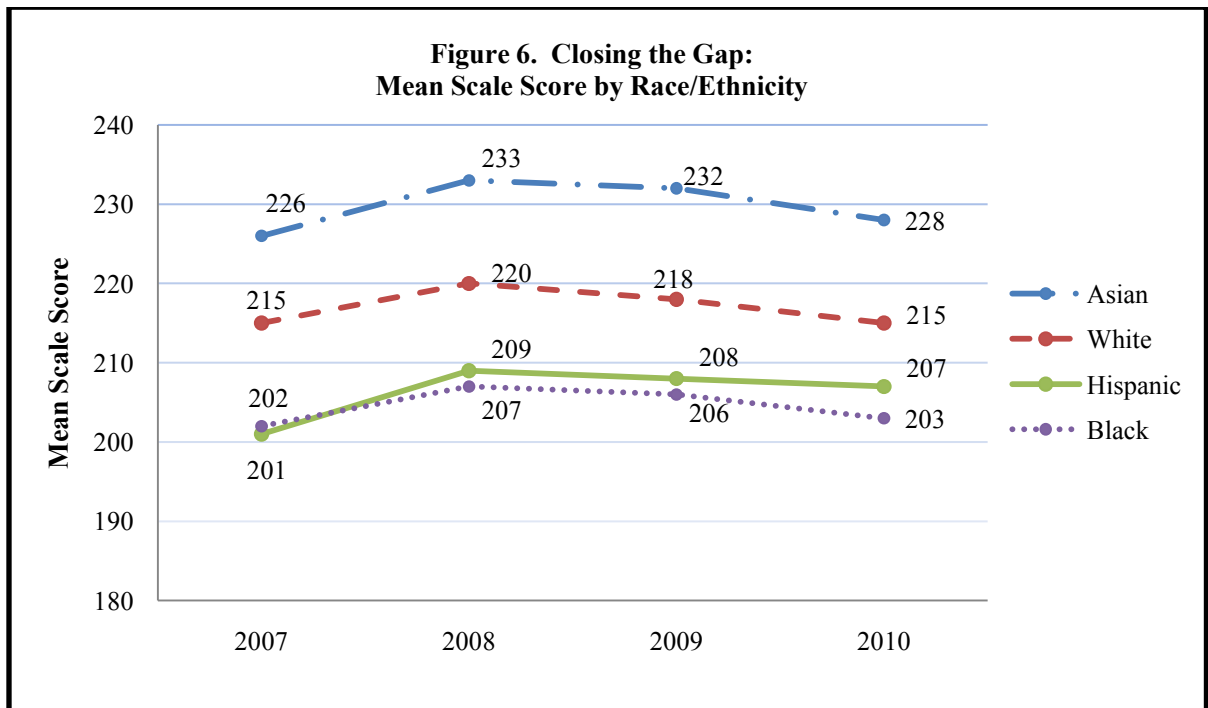


Table 2. Mean Scale Scores for the Grade 5 Writing Assessment: 2007-2010

Student Groups	2007	2008	2009	2010	Change from 2009 to 2010	Change from 2007 to 2010
All Students Tested	209	214	213	210	-3	+1
Regular Program	213	218	216	213	-3	0
Special Education	181	185	185	182	-3	+1
English Language Learner	186	193	194	194	0	+8
Asian	226	233	232	228	-4	+2
Black	202	207	206	203	-3	+1
Hispanic	201	209	208	207	-1	+6
Native American/Alaskan	214	214	212	211	-1	-3
White	215	220	218	215	-3	0
Multi Ethnic	212	218	216	213	-3	+1
Female	216	220	219	216	-3	0
Male	203	209	207	204	-3	+1



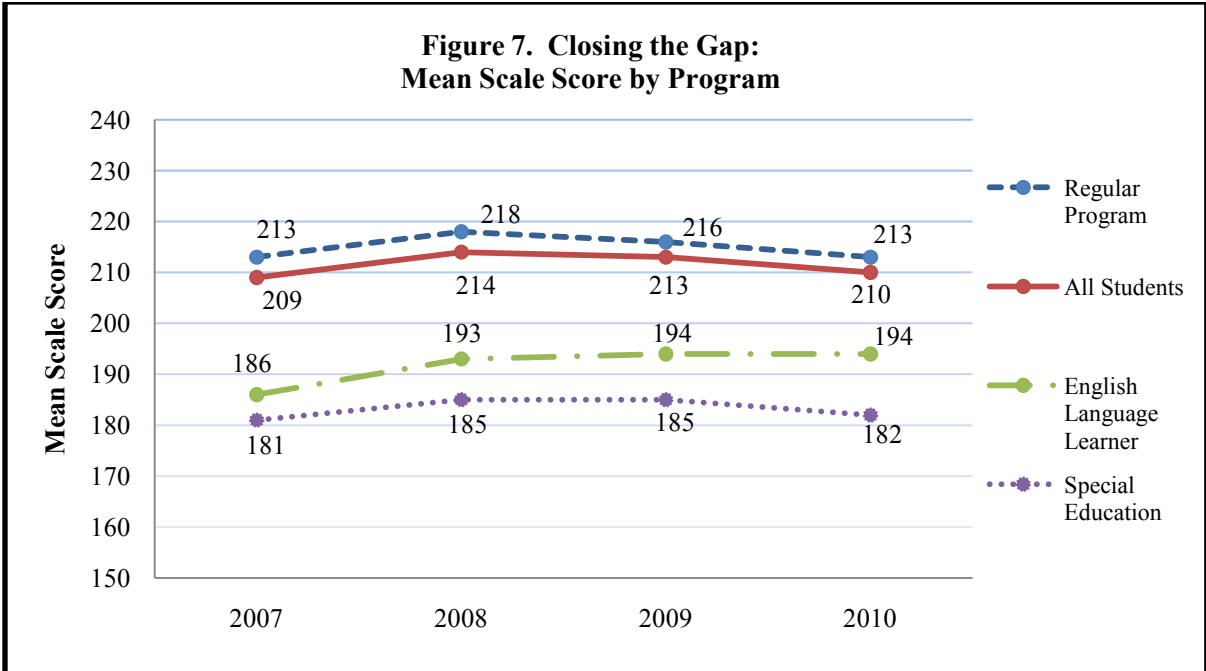


Table 3. Number of Students Tested by Program: 2007-2010

Year	All Students	Regular Program	Special Education	English Language Learner
2007	118,383	103,183	15,200	4,085
2008	119,140	104,981	14,159	3,799
2009	122,977	109,154	13,823	3,491
2010	123,929	111,069	12,860	3,578

Table 4: Number of Students Tested by Race/Ethnicity: 2007-2010

Year	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Native American / Alaskan	White	Multi-Ethnic
2007	3,542	44,376	11,430	159	55,258	3,326
2008	3,708	44,410	11,689	175	55,139	3,744
2009	3,854	45,980	12,318	199	56,177	4,150
2010	3,921	45,873	14,185	290	56,138	3,335