

**TESTING BRIEF**  
**Spring 2008 Georgia High School Graduation Tests**  
**in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science**  
**March 17 – April 4, 2008**

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Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-281 G, (a) mandates that a “curriculum-based assessment be administered in grade 11 for graduation purposes” and (c) “that the State Board of Education shall have the authority to condition the awarding of a high school diploma to a student upon achievement of satisfactory scores on instruments or tests adopted and administered by the State board pursuant to (a) of this code.” The law further provides opportunities for students with disabilities “to take any test adopted by the State Board as a condition for awarding of a high school diploma” and to receive accommodations specified in their IEP as necessary for participation.

The Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHS GT) assess only a sample of the knowledge and skills that educators agree comprise a complete high school education. Georgia students have opportunities to learn – and are expected to master – much more than the tests address. The state adopted curriculum is the source of the knowledge and skills assessed on the graduation tests.

Students take the GHS GT for the first time in the spring of the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Schools use the results to identify students who need additional instruction in the academic content determined by Georgia educators as necessary for a high school diploma. Students who do not succeed on their first attempt have four additional opportunities to meet the standards prior to completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Tests based solely on the Georgia Performance standards (GPS) were administered in English Language Arts and Science to grade 11 first time test takers in the Spring 2008 Administration. New cut scores, new scale scores, and new performance descriptions were established for these tests. Comparisons cannot be drawn between 2008 ELA and Science GPS scores and older QCC scores.

Grade 11 first time test takers also took a Social Studies test dually aligned to the GPS and the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) and a Math test based on the older QCC. Both Social Studies and Math were scored and equated to the QCC score scale. These tests can be compared to tests from previous years.

### KEY FINDINGS

#### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- A total of **93,536** Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the ELA test. **Eighty-nine (89)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **235**.
- A total of **85,981** Regular Program Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the ELA test. **Ninety-three (93)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **238**.
- A total of **7,555** Special Education Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the ELA test. **Fifty-seven (57)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **202**.
- A total of **1,438** English Language Learner Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the ELA test. **Fifty-three (53)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **200**.

**MATHEMATICS**

- A total of **93,746** Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Mathematics test. **Ninety-three (93)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **534**.
- A total of **86,136** Regular Program Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Mathematics test. **Ninety-five (95)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **537**. This number **remains at the level achieved in 2007**.
- A total of **7,610** Special Education Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Mathematics test. **Fifty-nine (59)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **505**. This is a increase **from 2007 of 2 percentage points** in the number of students passing on the first attempt.
- A total of **1,486** English Language Learner Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Mathematics test. **Eighty (80)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **517**. This is an **increase from 2007 of 2 percentage points** in the number of students passing on the first attempt.

**SOCIAL STUDIES**

- A total of **93,358** Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Social Studies test. **Eighty-six (86)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **521**.
- A total of **85,803** Regular Program Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Social Studies test. **Eighty-nine (89)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **522**. This is a **decrease from 2007 of 2 percentage points** in the number of students passing on the first attempt.
- A total of **7,555** Special Education Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Social Studies test. **Fifty-three (53)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **503**. **There is no change from 2007 to 2008**.
- A total of **1,454** English Language Learner Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Social Studies test. **Fifty-one (51)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **501**. This is a **decrease from 2007 of 4 percentage points** in the number of students passing on the first attempt.

**SCIENCE**

- A total of **93,405** Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Science test. **Eighty-six (86)** percent met the passing standard (Basic Proficiency) with a mean scale score of **235**.
- A total **85,896** of Regular Program Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Science test. **Eighty-nine (89)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **238**.
- A total of **7,509** Special Education Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Science test. **Fifty-two (52)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **205**.
- A total of **1,474** English Language Learner Grade 11 First-time Test Takers took the Science test. **Fifty-nine (59)** percent met the passing standard with a mean scale score of **207**.

Figure 1  
 Percent Grade 11 First-time Test Takers Passing GHS GT English Language Arts GPS, Spring Administration 2008

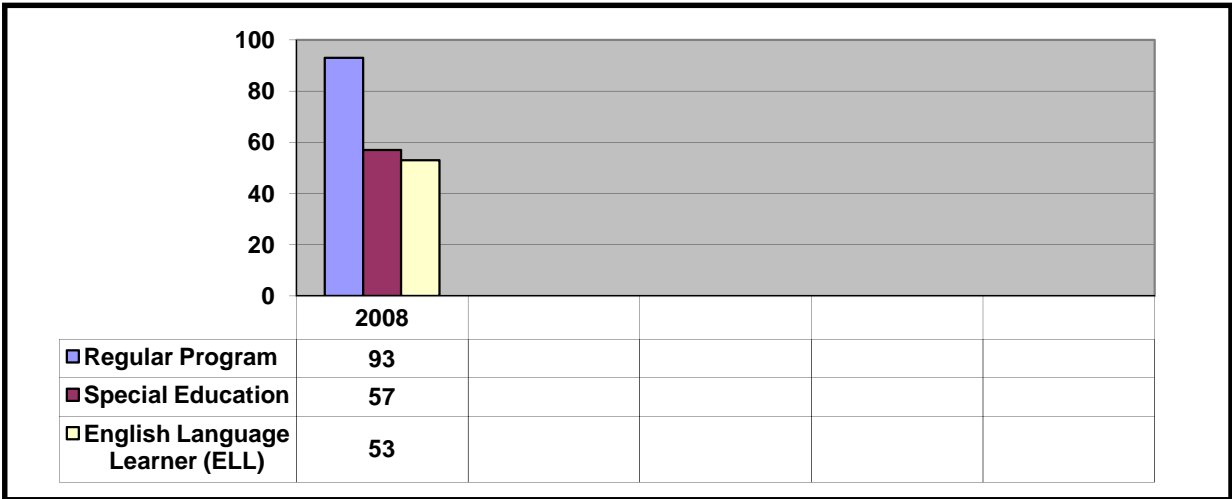


Table 1  
 GHS GT English Language Arts GPS - Percent Passing 2008

Student Category	2008
Grade 11 Regular Program, First-time Test Takers	<b>93%</b>
Grade 11 Special Education, First-time Test Takers	<b>57%</b>
Grade 11 ELL, First-time Test Takers	<b>53%</b>
All Test Takers by Ethnic Group:	
Asian	<b>90%</b>
Black	<b>84%</b>
Hispanic	<b>80%</b>
Native American	<b>89%</b>
White	<b>94%</b>
Multi Ethnic	<b>93%</b>

Figure 2

Percent Grade 11 First-time Test Takers Passing GHSMT Mathematics, Spring Administration 2004 - 2008

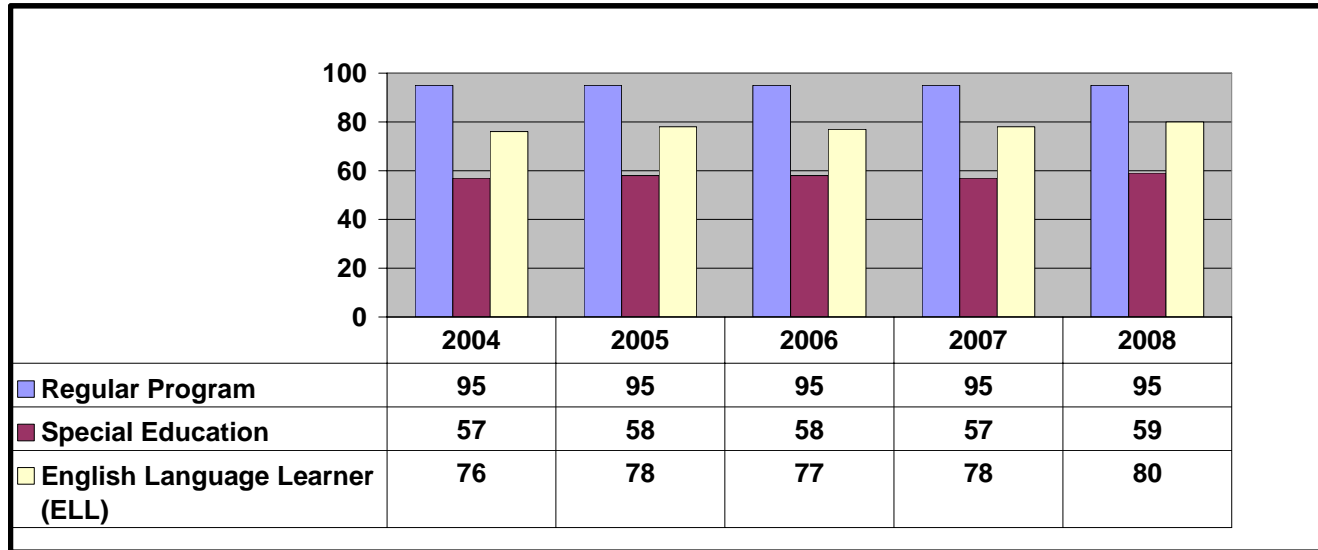


Table 2

GHSMT Mathematics, Percent Passing and Five Year Gain Scores by Group, 2004 - 2008

Student Category	Percent Passing by Test Year					Differences from 2008 and 2004*
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Grade 11 Regular Program, First-time Test Takers	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	0
Grade 11 Special Education, First-time Test Takers	57%	58%	58%	57%	59%	+2
Grade 11 ELL, First-time Test Takers	76%	78%	77%	78%	80%	+4
All Test Takers by Ethnic Group:						
Asian	96%	97%	96%	96%	96%	0
Black	81%	80%	81%	81%	82%	+1
Hispanic	82%	84%	85%	86%	87%	+5
Native American	88%	88%	86%	89%	88%	0
White	95%	95%	95%	95%	95%	0
Multi Ethnic	91%	91%	90%	90%	93%	+2

\* Differences are calculated as [Percent Passing for 2008 – Percent Passing for 2004] and are reported as percentage point increase or decrease. A zero (0) represents no change.

Figure 3

Percent Grade 11 First-time Test Takers Passing GHSGT Social Studies Transitional, Spring Administration 2004 - 2008

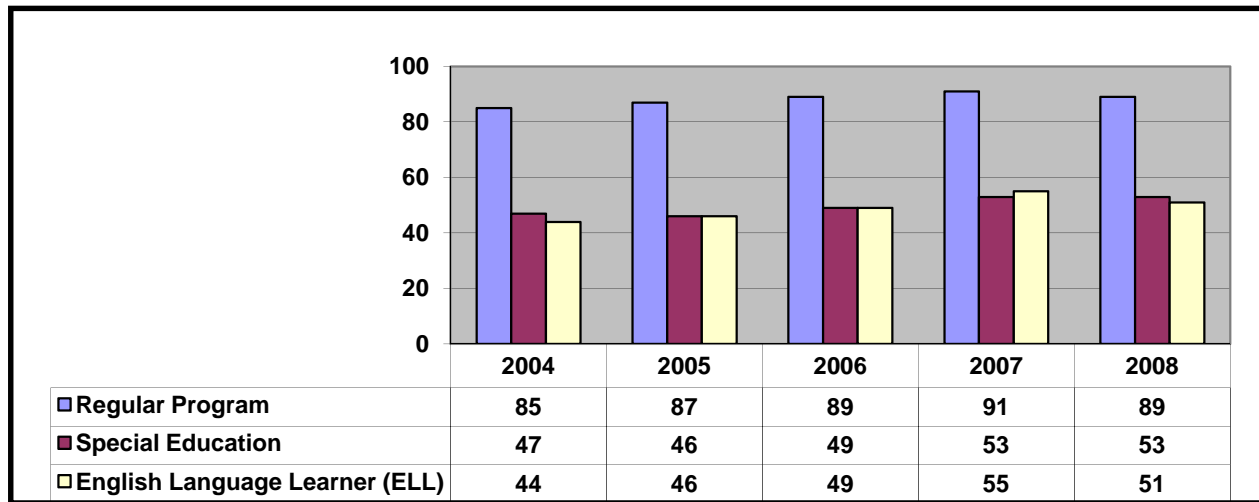


Table 3

GHSGT Social Studies, Percent Passing and Five Year Gain Scores by Group, 2004 - 2008

Student Category	Test Year					Differences in 2008 and 2004*
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	
Grade 11 Regular Program, First-time Test Takers	85%	87%	89%	91%	89%	+4
Grade 11 Special Education, First-time Test Takers	47%	46%	49%	53%	53%	+6
Grade 11 ELL, First-time Test Takers	44%	46%	49%	55%	51%	+7
All Test Takers by Ethnic Group:						
Asian	83%	85%	86%	88%	87%	+4
Black	62%	64%	69%	73%	72%	+10
Hispanic	60%	65%	68%	73%	72%	+12
Native American	74%	76%	77%	83%	86%	+12
White	86%	88%	89%	91%	90%	+4
Multi Ethnic	81%	80%	83%	86%	87%	+6

\* Differences between 2008 and 2004 are calculated as [Percent Passing for 2008 – Percent Passing for 2004] and are reported as percentage point increase or decrease. A zero (0) represents no change.

Figure 4  
Percent Grade 11 First-time Test Takers Passing GHS GT Science GPS

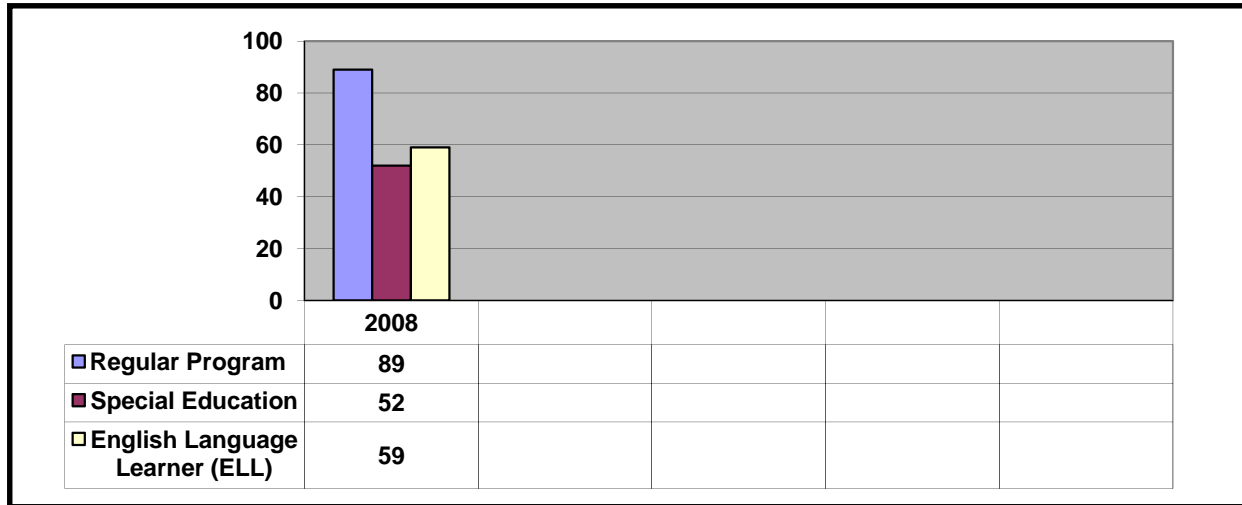


Table 4  
GHS GT Science GPS - Percent Passing

Student Category	2008
Grade 11 Regular Program, First-time Test Takers	89%
Grade 11 Special Education, First-time Test Takers	52%
Grade 11 ELL, First-time Test Takers	59%
All Test Takers by Ethnic Group:	
Asian	91%
Black	76%
Hispanic	77%
Native American	86%
White	93%
Multi Ethnic	89%

Table 5  
 GHSGT – Percent Passing Content Areas by Groups - 2008 Spring Main Administration

Student Category	Percent Passing Content Area			
	English Language Arts	Math	Social Studies	Science
Grade 11 Regular Program, First-time Test Takers	93%	95%	89%	89%
Grade 11 Special Education, First-time Test Takers	57%	59%	53%	52%
Grade 11 ELL, First-time Test Takers	53%	80%	51%	59%
Gender: (All Test Takers Included)				
Female	91%	90%	80%	83%
Male	87%	89%	83%	85%
Ethnic Group: (All Test Takers Included)				
Asian	90%	96%	87%	91%
African American	84%	82%	72%	76%
Hispanic	80%	87%	72%	77%
Native American	89%	88%	86%	86%
White	94%	95%	90%	93%
Multi Ethnic	93%	93%	87%	89%