

TESTING BRIEF
Georgia High School Writing Test
September 2009

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 fall administration is the main administration of the GHSWT for eleventh-grade students who are testing for the first time or students new to Georgia who enrolled after the summer administration. Students who previously attempted the test but did not pass may retest during this administration.

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 2009 marks the third main administration of the GHSWT based on the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

KEY FINDINGS

- Eighty-nine (89) percent of all students met or exceeded the passing standard for writing with a mean scale score of 219. This group includes all students (first-time testers and retesters) with scorable papers. There was no change from 2008 to 2009.
- Ninety-one (91) percent of grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard set for writing with a mean scale score of 221. There was no change from 2008 to 2009.
- Ninety-four (94) percent of grade eleven Regular Program first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard set for writing with a mean scale score of 223. There was no change from 2008 to 2009.
- Sixty-one (61) percent of grade eleven Special Education first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard with a mean scale score of 198. The 2009 results represent a one percentage point increase in the number of Special Education students meeting or exceeding the passing standard when compared to 2008 performance.
- Sixty-six (66) percent of grade eleven English Language Learner (ELL) first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for writing with a mean scale score of 199. The 2009 results represent a one percentage point increase in the number of ELL students meeting or exceeding the passing standard when compared to 2008 performance.
- The 2009 Strategic Plan target for first-time grade eleven test takers for the GHSWT was ninety-one (91) percent. This goal was met.

Table 1. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Passing Standard

Disaggregated Student Groups	Fall 2009 Meets and Exceeds	Fall 2008 Meets and Exceeds	Fall 2007 Meets and Exceeds	Difference 2009-2007
All Students	89%	89%	88%	+1
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	91%	91%	89%	+2
Regular Program (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	94%	94%	92%	+2
Special Education (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	61%	60%	55%	+6
English Language Learner (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	66%	65%	53%	+13
Asian	92%	91%	90%	+2
Black	85%	85%	83%	+2
Hispanic	86%	82%	80%	+6
Native American/Alaskan	85%	89%	89%	-4
White	93%	93%	93%	0
Multi Ethnic	93%	93%	92%	+1
Female	92%	92%	92%	0
Male	86%	86%	85%	+1

Figure 1: Students Meeting or Exceeding Passing Standard 2007-2009

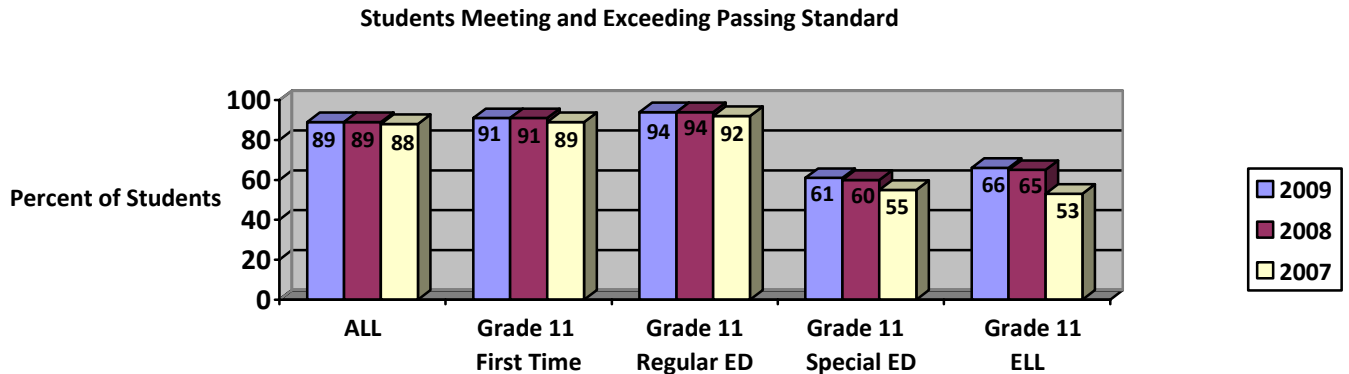


Table 2. Mean Scale Scores for the Georgia High School Writing Test from 2007– 2009 Administration

Disaggregated Student Groups	Fall 2009	Fall 2008	Fall 2007	Difference 2009-2007
All Students	219	219	217	+2
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	221	221	218	+3
Regular Program (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	223	223	220	+3
Special Education (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	198	198	194	+4
English Language Learner (Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers)	199	200	194	+5
Asian	229	227	224	+5
Black	213	213	212	+1
Hispanic	214	212	210	+4
Native American/Alaskan	216	219	218	-2
White	225	225	222	+3
Multi-Ethnic	222	223	221	+1
Female	221	222	220	+1
Male	217	216	215	+2