

TESTING BRIEF
Winter 2009 Grade 8 Writing Assessment
January 21-22, 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 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).

Administration of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment supports Goal 5 of the Superintendent’s Strategic Plan: Improve the SAT, ACT, and achievement scores of Georgia students. This is achieved through providing an effective curriculum and assessment system designed to improve student achievement. The 2009 target for eighth grade writing was 80 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards based on historical data from 2007 and 2008 in which 67 and 77 percent of students met or exceeded standards, respectively. The 2009 target was not met. Seventy-five (75) percent of all eighth graders met or exceeded the target, down two percentage points from the 2008 administration.

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 FOR 2009

- A total of **119,435** students were assessed in the 2009 Grade 8 Writing Assessment. **Seventy-five (75)** percent of all students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard set for writing with a mean scale score of **210**. This group includes all students with scorable papers.
- A total of **12,186** Special Education students were assessed in writing. Thirty - eight (**38**) percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard set for writing with a mean scale score of **184**.
- A total of **2,457** English Language Learner students were assessed in writing. **Forty (40)** percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standard set for writing with a mean scale score of **187**.

Table 1. Percent of Meets and Exceeds Standard: 2007 - 2009 Administrations

	2007	2008	2009	Gains 2007-2009
All Students Tested:	67	77	75	+8
Regular Program	72	82	79	+7
Asian	81	89	89	+8
Black	58	69	66	+8
Hispanic	56	71	70	+14
Native American/Alaskan	63	76	77	+14
White	76	85	82	+6
Multi Ethnic	74	83	79	+5
Female	76	84	83	+7
Male	58	72	67	+9
Special Education	27	41	38	+11
English Language Learner	25	40	40	+15

Table 2. Mean Scale Scores for the Grade 8 Writing Assessment: 2007 - 2009

	2007	2008	2009	Gains 2007-2009
All Students Tested:	207	212	210	+3
Regular Program	211	215	213	+2
Asian	221	227	227	+6
Black	200	204	204	+4
Hispanic	197	205	205	+8
Native American/Alaskan	205	211	210	+5
White	214	218	216	+2
Multi Ethnic	211	215	213	+2
Female	213	217	216	+3
Male	201	207	205	+4
Special Education	177	185	184	+7
English Language Learner	174	184	187	+13