

TESTING BRIEF
Georgia High School Writing Test
September 2013

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 main administration of the GHSWT is for eleventh or twelfth grade students who are testing for the first time. Students who previously attempted the test but did not pass may retest during this administration as well. Fall 2013 marks the seventh main administration of the GHSWT.

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).

KEY FINDINGS: ALL STUDENTS AND ALL GRADE 11 FIRST-TIME TEST TAKERS

- Ninety-two (92) percent of all students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-three (93) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2008 to ninety-two (92) percent in 2013.
- Ninety-four (94) percent of all grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-five (95) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from ninety-one (91) percent in 2008 to ninety-four (94) percent in 2013.
- The 2013 mean scale score for all grade eleven first-time test takers was 224, representing a decrease of two (2) scale score points over the 2012 administration’s mean scale score of 226.
- The 2013 mean scale score of 224 for all grade eleven first-time test takers shows an increase of three (3) scale score points over the 2008 administration’s mean scale score of 221.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

Asian Students

- Ninety-four (94) percent of Asian students met or exceeded the standard for the test, which was the same as 2012.
- Since 2008, the percent of Asian students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from ninety-one (91) percent in 2008 to ninety-four (94) percent in 2013.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Asian students was 235, a one (1) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 236 for the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score of 235 for Asian students is an eight (8) scale score point increase over the 2008 administration's mean scale score of 227.

Black Students

- Eighty-eight (88) percent of Black students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from ninety (90) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of Black students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from eighty-five (85) percent in 2008 to eighty-eight (88) percent in 2013.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Black students was 216, a two (2) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 218 for the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score of 216 for Black students shows a three (3) scale score point increase over the 2008 administration's mean scale score of 213.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

Hispanic Students

- Ninety (90) percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-one (91) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percent of Hispanic students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eight (8) percentage points from eighty-two (82) percent in 2008 to ninety (90) percent in 2013.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 218, a two (2) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 220 in the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 218, a six (6) scale score point increase over the 2008 administration's mean scale score of 212.

White Students

- Ninety-five (95) percent of White students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-six (96) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percent of White students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by two (2) percentage points from ninety-three (93) percent in 2008 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2013.
- The 2013 mean scale score for White students was 226, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 229 in the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score for White students was 226, a one (1) point increase from the mean scale score of 225 in the 2008 administration.

KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

Regular Program Students

- Ninety-six (96) percent of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point decrease from ninety-seven (97) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by two (2) percentage points from ninety-four (94) percent in 2008 to ninety-six (96) percent in 2013.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, a three (3) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 228 in the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, a two (2) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 223 in the 2008 administration.

Special Education Students

- Seventy (70) percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point decrease from seventy-two (72) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by ten (10) percentage points from sixty (60) percent in 2008 to seventy (70) percent in 2013.
- The mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 204 in 2013, a one (1) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 205 in 2012.
- The 2013 mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 204, a six (6) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 198 in the 2008 administration.

English Learners

- Sixty (60) percent of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, an eleven (11) percentage point decrease from seventy-one (71) percent in 2012.
- Since 2008, the percentage of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has decreased by five (5) percentage points from sixty-five (65) percent in 2008 to sixty (60) percent in 2013.
- The mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 198 in 2013, a four (4) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 202 in the 2012 administration.
- The 2013 mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 198, a two (2) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 200 in 2008.

KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

- When comparing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard on the 2013 administration of the GHSWT to the 2012 administration, two student groups stayed steady while the others showed slight decreases. However, when examining data over the past six years, every student group showed improvement in the percentages of students meeting or exceeding the standard, with the exception of the English Learner first-time test takers. When comparing the 2013 results to 2008, a narrowing of the achievement gap is apparent as illustrated below:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by one (1) percentage point from 8% to 7%. 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 meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by six (6) percentage points from 11% to 5%. 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 Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by seven (7) percentage points from 31% to 24%. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but the gains made by Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers exceeded those made by all grade eleven first-time test takers.
- Relative to mean scale scores:
 - The achievement gap between Black and White students has decreased by two (2) scale score points, from a difference of twelve (12) in 2008 to ten (10) in 2013.
 - The achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased by five (5) scale score points, from a difference of thirteen (13) in 2008 to eight (8) in 2013.
 - The achievement gap between Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and all grade eleven first-time test takers has decreased by three (3) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-three (23) in 2008 to twenty (20) in 2013.

Table 1. Percentage of Students by Performance Levels* on the GHSWT for Student Groups

Student Groups	2008			2009			2010			2011			2012			2013		
	DNM	M	E															
All Students Tested	11	82	7	11	81	9	6	86	8	9	83	8	7	84	9	8	84	8
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	9	83	8	9	82	9	5	87	8	7	84	9	5	85	10	6	85	9
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	6	86	8	6	84	10	3	88	9	5	85	10	3	86	11	4	87	9
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	40	59	1	39	60	2	25	73	1	34	65	1	28	71	1	30	69	1
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	35	64	1	34	66	0	21	77	2	30	69	1	29	70	0	40	60	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	9	76	15	8	73	19	4	77	19	6	75	20	6	71	23	6	71	23
Black, Non-Hispanic	15	81	3	15	81	4	9	88	3	13	83	3	10	86	4	12	85	3
Hispanic	18	79	4	14	81	5	9	87	4	11	84	5	9	86	6	10	85	5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	11	79	10	15	79	7	7	86	7	9	81	9	9	81	10	9	83	8
White	7	83	10	7	81	12	4	85	11	5	82	12	4	83	13	5	84	11
Multiracial	7	85	9	7	83	10	4	87	9	6	84	10	4	85	11	6	85	9
Female	8	84	9	8	83	9	4	87	9	6	84	9	4	85	11	5	85	9
Male	14	80	6	14	78	8	8	85	7	12	81	8	9	83	8	11	83	7

*Performance levels include Does Not Meet (DNM), Meets (M), and Exceeds (E).

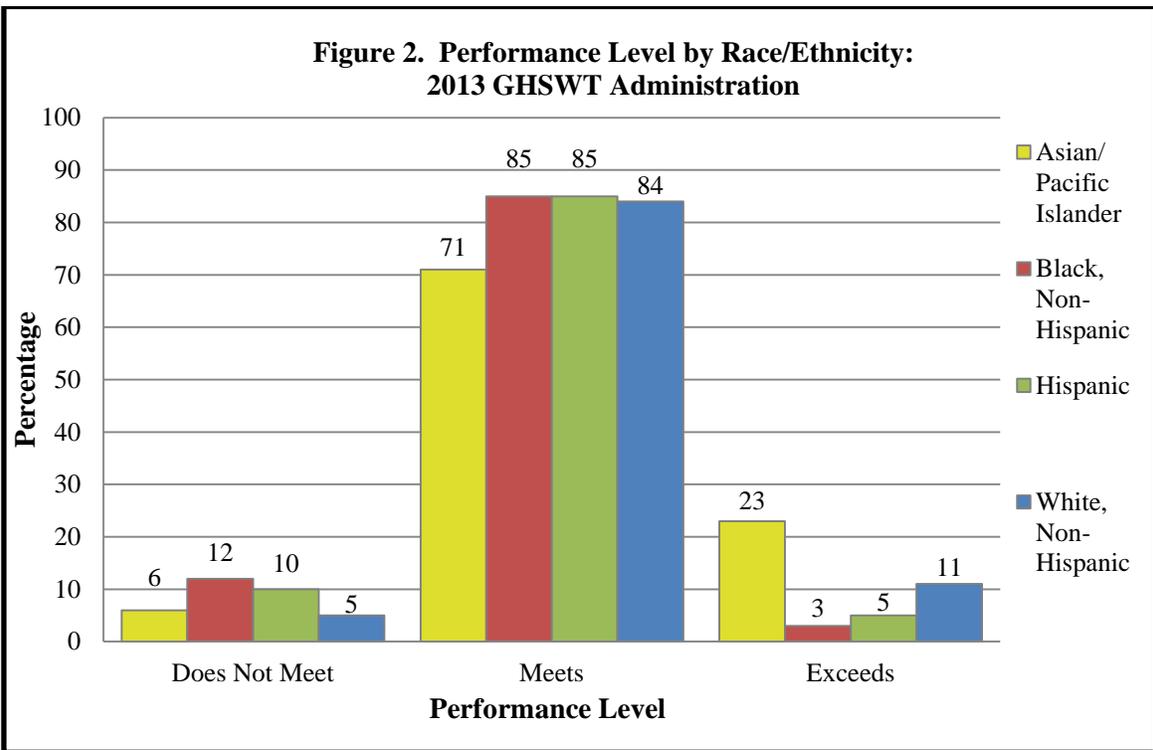
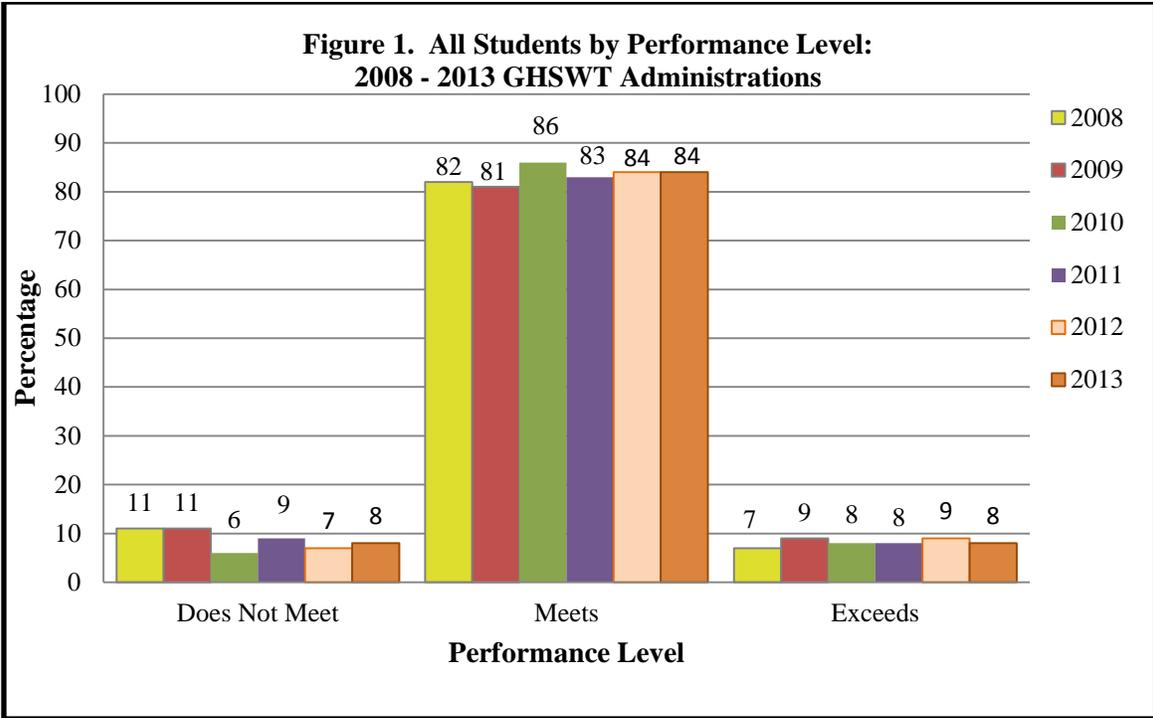


Figure 3. Performance Level of Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Student Program: 2013 GHSWT Administration

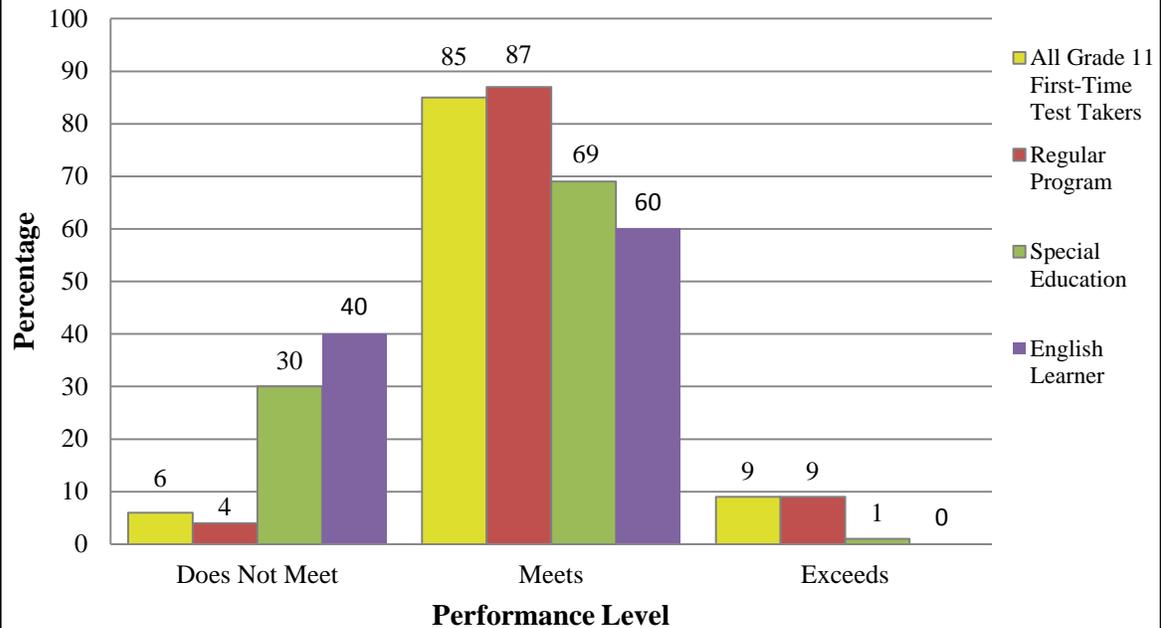


Table 2. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for GHSWT

Student Groups	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change from 2012 to 2013	Change from 2008 to 2013
	Meets and Exceeds							
All Students Tested	89	89	94	91	93	92	-1	+3
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	91	91	95	93	95	94	-1	+3
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	94	94	97	95	97	96	-1	+2
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	60	61	75	66	72	70	-2	+10
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	65	66	79	70	71	60	-11	-5
Asian/Pacific Islander	91	92	96	94	94	94	0	+3
Black, Non-Hispanic	85	85	91	87	90	88	-2	+3
Hispanic	82	86	91	89	91	90	-1	+8
American Indian/Alaskan Native	89	85	93	91	91	91	0	+2
White	93	93	96	95	96	95	-1	+2
Multiracial	93	93	96	94	96	94	-2	+1
Female	92	92	96	94	96	95	-1	+3
Male	86	86	92	88	91	89	-2	+3

Figure 4. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2008-2013 GHSWT Administrations

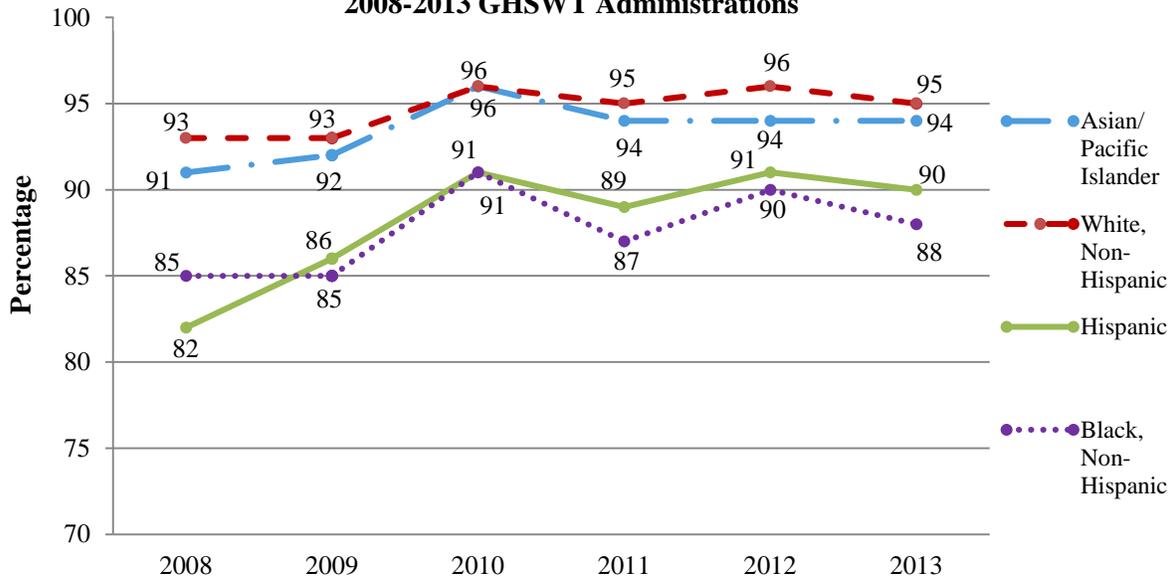


Figure 5. Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers Meeting and Exceeding the Standard by Program: 2008-2013 GHSWT Administrations

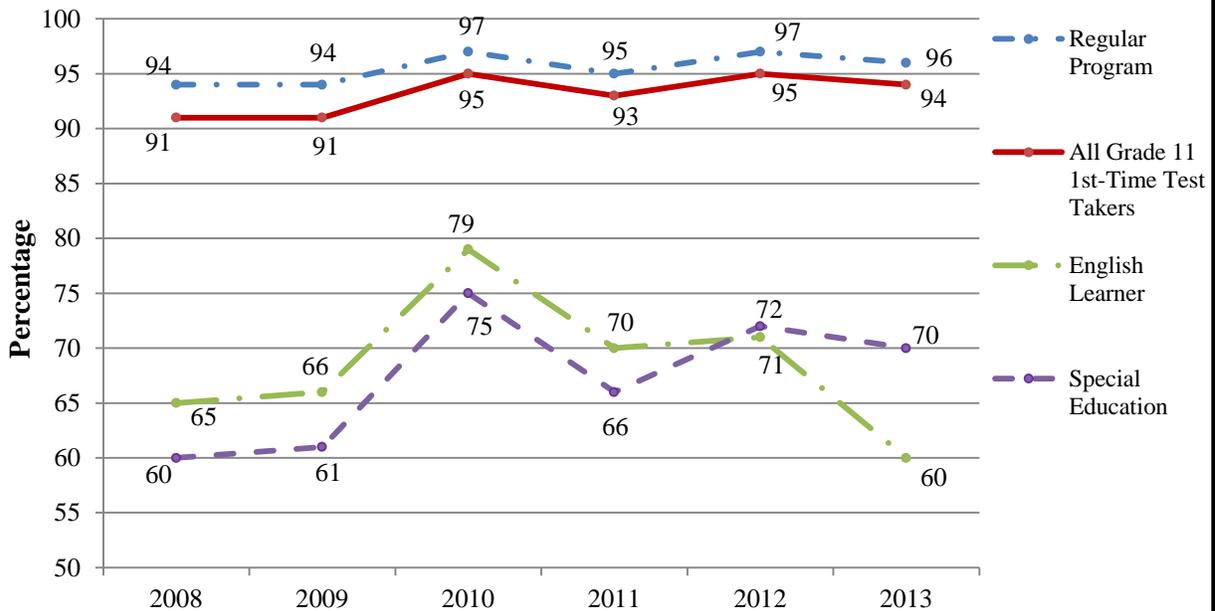
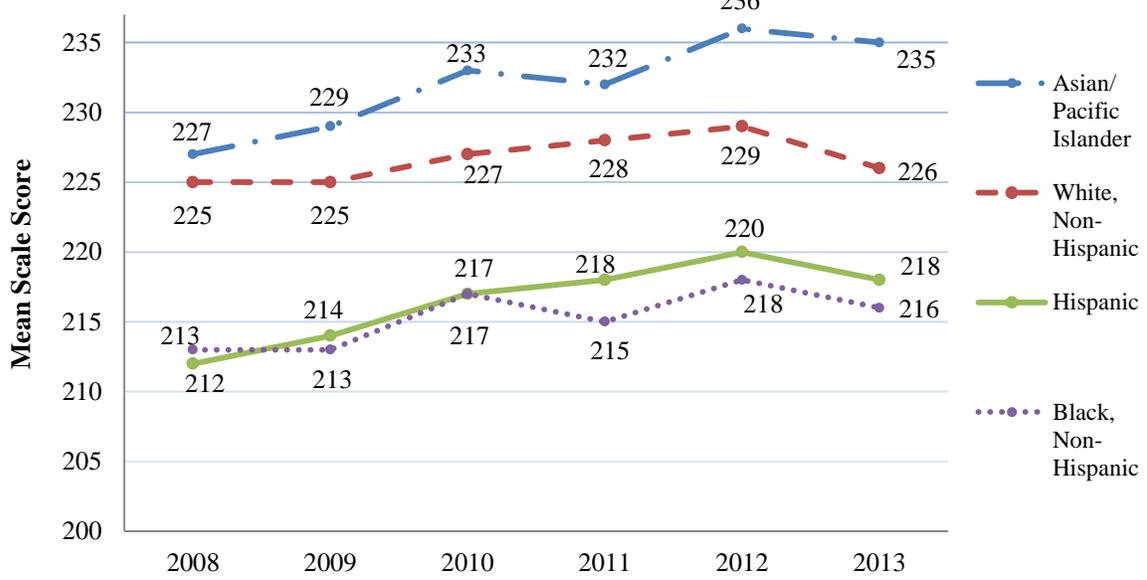


Table 3. Mean Scale Scores for the GHSWT: 2008-2013 Administrations

Student Groups	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Change from 2012 to 2013	Change from 2008 to 2013
All Students Tested	219	219	222	222	224	222	-2	+3
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	221	221	224	224	226	224	-2	+3
Regular Program Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	223	223	225	225	228	225	-3	+2
Special Education Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	198	198	205	202	205	204	-1	+6
English Learner Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	200	199	208	202	202	198	-4	-2
Asian/Pacific Islander	227	229	233	232	236	235	-1	+8
Black, Non-Hispanic	213	213	217	215	218	216	-2	+3
Hispanic	212	214	217	218	220	218	-2	+6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	219	216	222	219	223	221	-2	+2
White	225	225	227	228	229	226	-3	+1
Multiracial	223	222	225	225	227	224	-3	+1
Female	222	221	225	225	227	225	-2	+3
Male	216	217	220	220	221	219	-2	+3

**Figure 6. Closing the Gap:
Mean Scale Score on GHSWT by Race/Ethnicity**



**Figure 7. Closing the Gap: Mean Scale Score on GHSWT
for Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Program**

