

TESTING BRIEF
Georgia High School Writing Test
October 2012

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.

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-three (93) percent of all students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point increase from ninety-one (91) percent in 2011.
- Since 2007 the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by five (5) percentage points from eighty-eight (88) percent in 2007 to ninety-three (93) percent in 2012.
- Ninety-five (95) percent of all grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point increase from ninety-three (93) percent in 2011.
- Since 2007 the percentage of all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by six (6) percentage points from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2007 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2012.
- The 2012 mean scale score for all grade eleven first-time test takers was 226, representing an increase of two (2) scale score points over the 2011 administration’s mean scale score of 224.
- The 2012 mean scale score of 226 for all grade eleven first-time test takers shows an increase of eight (8) scale score points over the 2007 administration’s mean scale score of 218.

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 2011.
- The percentage of Asian students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by four (4) percentage points from ninety (90) percent in 2007 to ninety-four (94) percent in 2012.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Asian students was 236, a four (4) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 232 for the 2011 administration.
- The 2012 mean scale score of 236 for Asian students is a twelve (12) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 224.

Black Students

- Ninety (90) percent of Black students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a three (3) percentage point increase from eighty-seven (87) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of Black students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by seven (7) percentage points from eighty-three (83) percent in 2007 to ninety (90) percent in 2012.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Black students was 218, a three (3) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 215 for the 2011 administration.
- The 2012 mean scale score of 218 for Black students shows a six (6) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 212.

KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

Hispanic Students

- Ninety-one (91) percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point increase from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of Hispanic students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eleven (11) percentage points from eighty (80) percent in 2007 to ninety-one (91) percent in 2012.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 220, a two (2) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 218 in the 2011 administration.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 220, a ten (10) scale score point increase over the 2007 administration's mean scale score of 210.

White Students

- Ninety-six (96) percent of White students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point increase from ninety-five (95) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of White students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from ninety-three (93) percent in 2007 to ninety-six (96) percent in 2012.
- The 2012 mean scale score for White students was 229, a one (1) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 228 in the 2011 administration.
- The 2012 mean scale score for White students was 229, a seven (7) point increase from the mean scale score of 222 in the 2007 administration.

KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

Regular Program Students

- Ninety-seven (97) percent of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point increase from ninety-five (95) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by five (5) percentage points from ninety-two (92) percent in 2007 to ninety-seven (97) percent in 2012.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 228, a three (3) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 225 in the 2011 administration.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 228, an eight (8) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 220 in the 2007 administration.

Special Education Students

- Seventy-two (72) percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a six (6) percentage point increase from sixty-six (66) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by seventeen (17) percentage points from fifty-five (55) percent in 2007 to seventy-two (72) percent in 2012.
- The mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 205 in 2012, a three (3) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 202 in 2011.
- The 2012 mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 205, an eleven (11) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in the 2007 administration.

English Learners

- Seventy-one (71) percent of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one (1) percentage point increase from seventy (70) percent in 2011.
- The percentage of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eighteen (18) percentage points from fifty-three (53) percent in 2007 to seventy-one (71) percent in 2012.
- The mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202, which was the same as in 2011.
- The 2012 mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 202, an eight (8) scale score point increase from the mean scale score of 194 in 2007.

KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

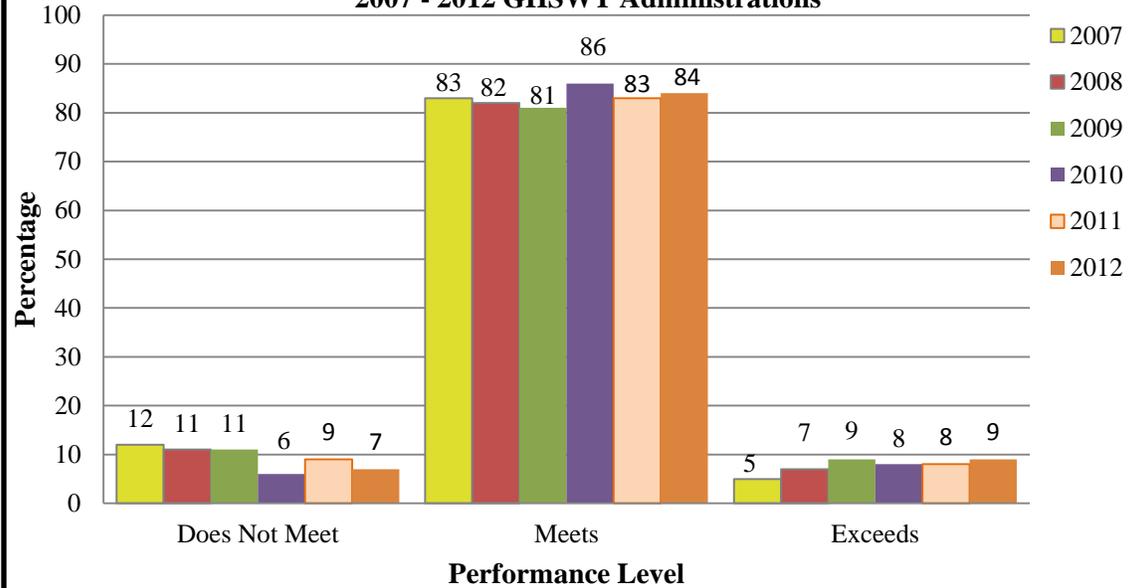
- When comparing the percentage of students meeting or exceeding the standard on the 2012 administration of the GHSWT to the 2011 administration, every student group either showed improvement or stayed the same. Additionally, the change over six years exhibits improvement in the percentages of students meeting or exceeding the standard in every student group. When comparing the 2012 results to 2007, 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 four (4) percentage points from 10% to 6%. 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 eight (8) percentage points from 13% 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 English Learner grade eleven first-time test takers and all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard has decreased by twelve (12) percentage points from 36% to 24%. This trend can be categorized as Very Positive Narrowing, wherein gains were made by both groups, but the gains made by English Learner grade eleven first-time test takers exceeded those made by all grade eleven first-time test takers.
 - 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 eleven (11) percentage points from 34% to 23%. 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 Hispanic and White students has decreased by three (3) scale score points, from a difference of twelve (12) in 2007 to nine (9) in 2012.
 - 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-four (24) in 2007 to twenty-one (21) in 2012.

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

Student Groups	2007			2008			2009			2010			2011			2012		
	DNM	M	E															
All Students Tested	12	83	5	11	82	7	11	81	9	6	86	8	9	83	8	7	84	9
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	11	84	5	9	83	8	9	82	9	5	87	8	7	84	9	5	85	10
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	8	86	6	6	86	8	6	84	10	3	88	9	5	85	10	3	86	11
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	45	54	1	40	59	1	39	60	2	25	73	1	34	65	1	28	71	1
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	47	53	0	35	64	1	34	66	0	21	77	2	30	69	1	29	70	0
Asian	10	79	12	9	76	15	8	73	19	4	77	19	6	75	20	6	71	23
Black	17	81	2	15	81	3	15	81	4	9	88	3	13	83	3	10	86	4
Hispanic	20	78	2	18	79	4	14	81	5	9	87	4	11	84	5	9	86	6
Native American/Alaskan	11	83	6	11	79	10	15	79	7	7	86	7	9	81	9	9	81	10
White	7	86	7	7	83	10	7	81	12	4	85	11	5	82	12	4	83	13
Multi Ethnic	8	85	7	7	85	9	7	83	10	4	87	9	6	84	10	4	85	11
Female	8	86	6	8	84	9	8	83	9	4	87	9	6	84	9	4	85	11
Male	15	81	4	14	80	6	14	78	8	8	85	7	12	81	8	9	83	8

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

**Figure 1. All Students by Performance Level:
2007 - 2012 GHSWT Administrations**



**Figure 2. Performance Level by Race/Ethnicity:
2012 GHSWT Administration**

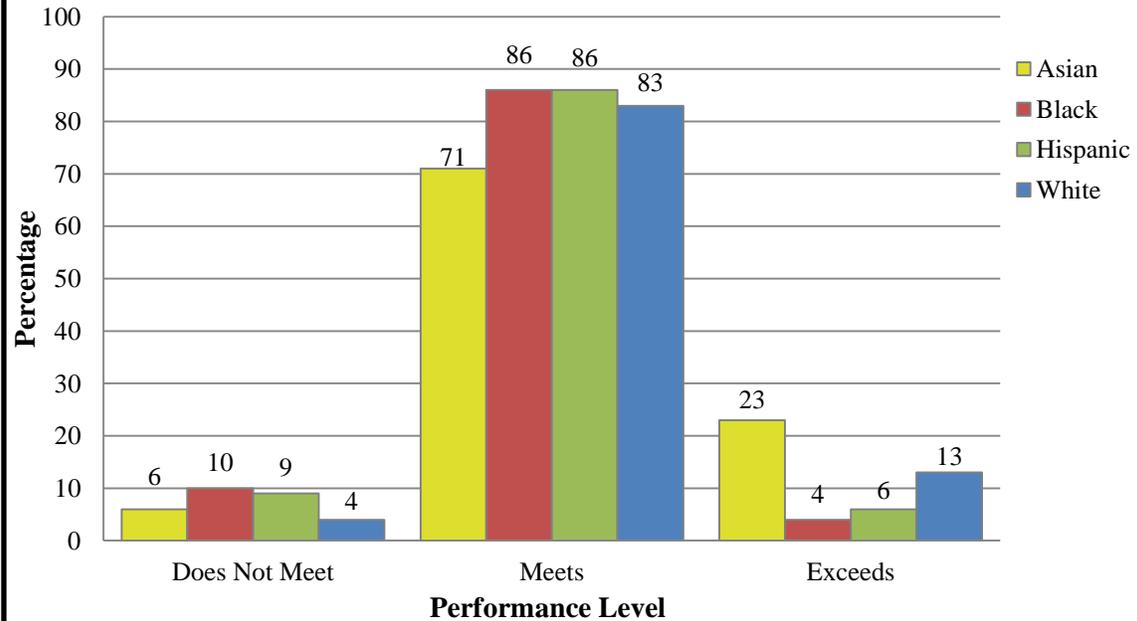


Figure 3. Performance Level of Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Student Program: 2012 GHSWT Administration

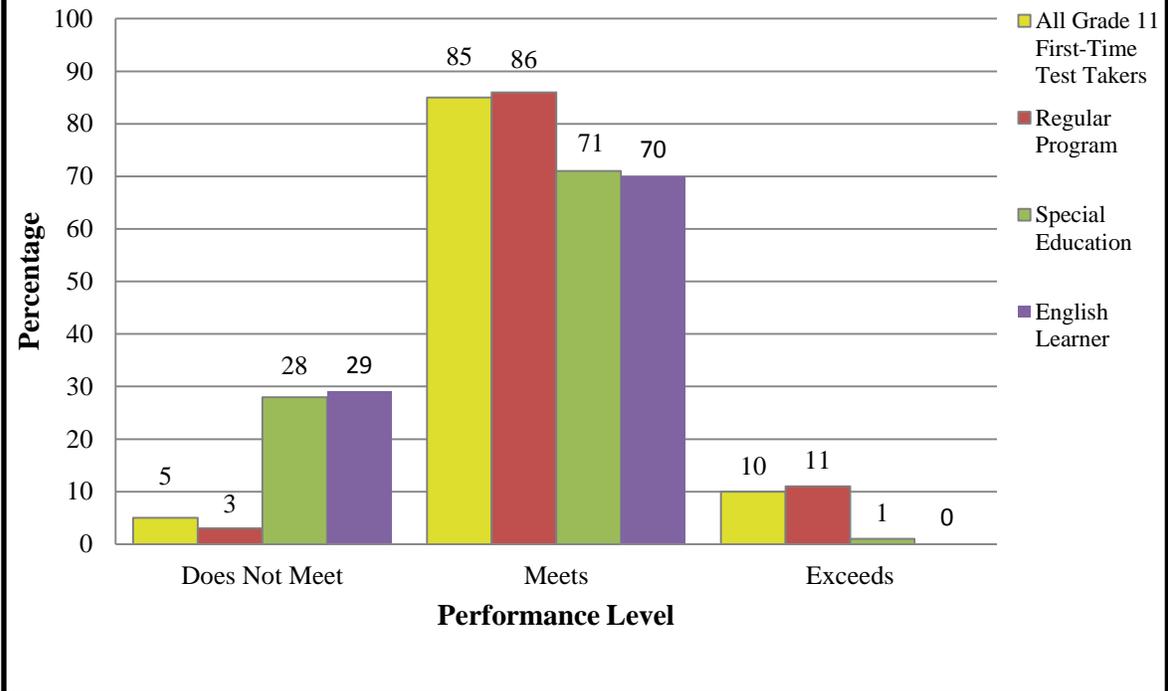


Table 2. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for GHSWT

Student Groups	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2007 to 2012
	Meets and Exceeds							
All Students Tested	88	89	89	94	91	93	+2	+5
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	89	91	91	95	93	95	+2	+6
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	92	94	94	97	95	97	+2	+5
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	55	60	61	75	66	72	+6	+17
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	53	65	66	79	70	71	+1	+18
Asian	90	91	92	96	94	94	0	+4
Black	83	85	85	91	87	90	+3	+7
Hispanic	80	82	86	91	89	91	+2	+11
Native American/Alaskan	89	89	85	93	91	91	0	+2
White	93	93	93	96	95	96	+1	+3
Multi Ethnic	92	93	93	96	94	96	+2	+4
Female	92	92	92	96	94	96	+2	+4
Male	85	86	86	92	88	91	+3	+6

Figure 4. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2007-2012 GHSWT Administrations

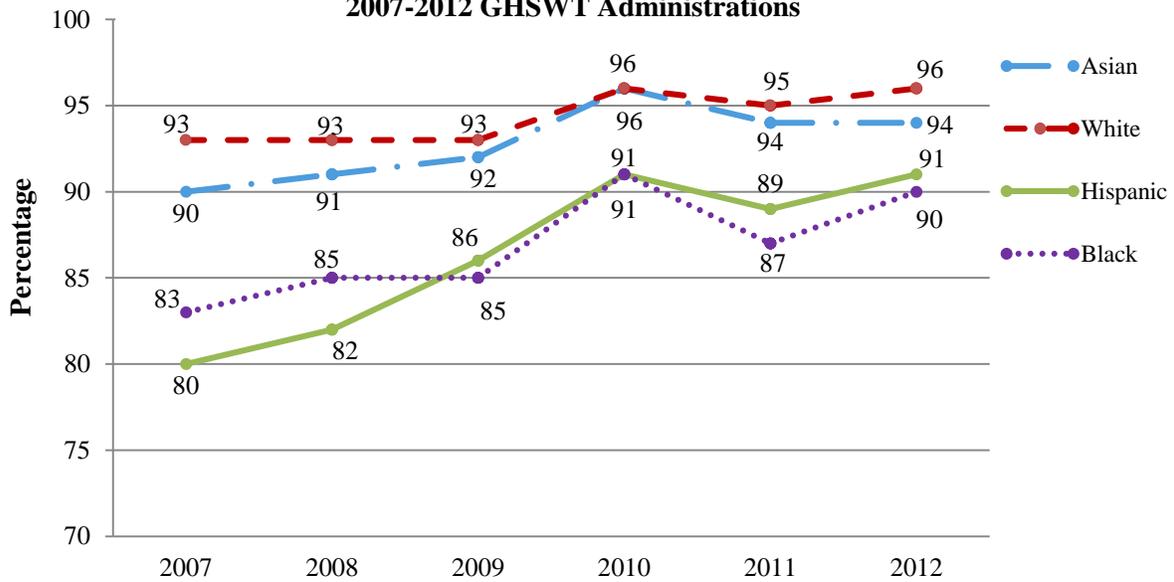


Figure 5. Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers Meeting and Exceeding Standard by Program: 2007-2012 GHSWT Administrations

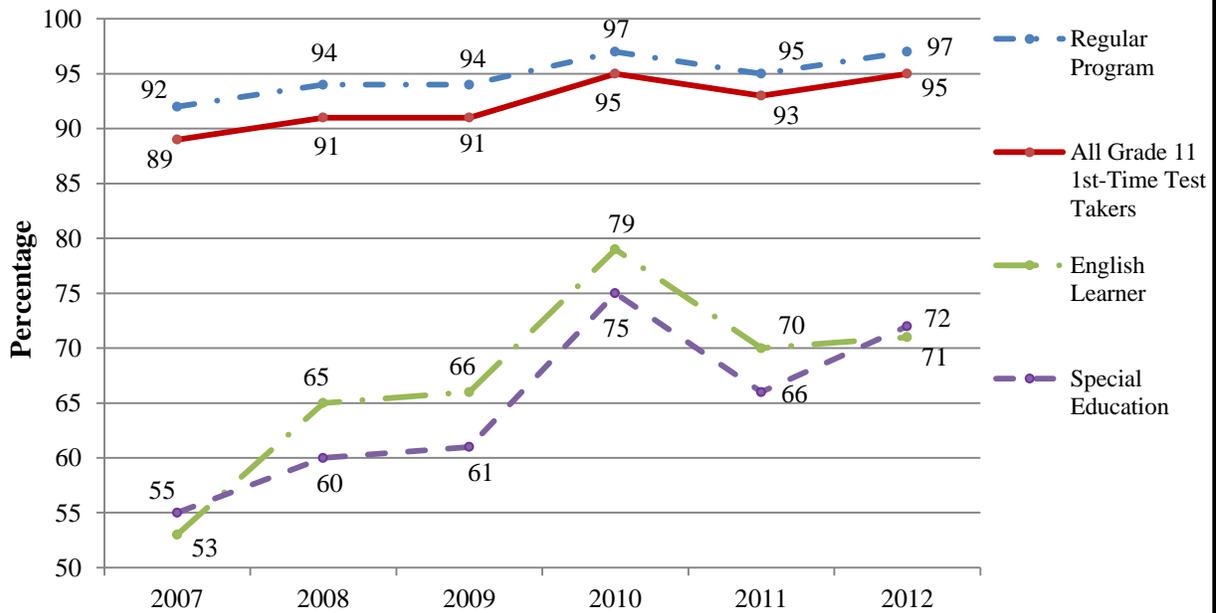
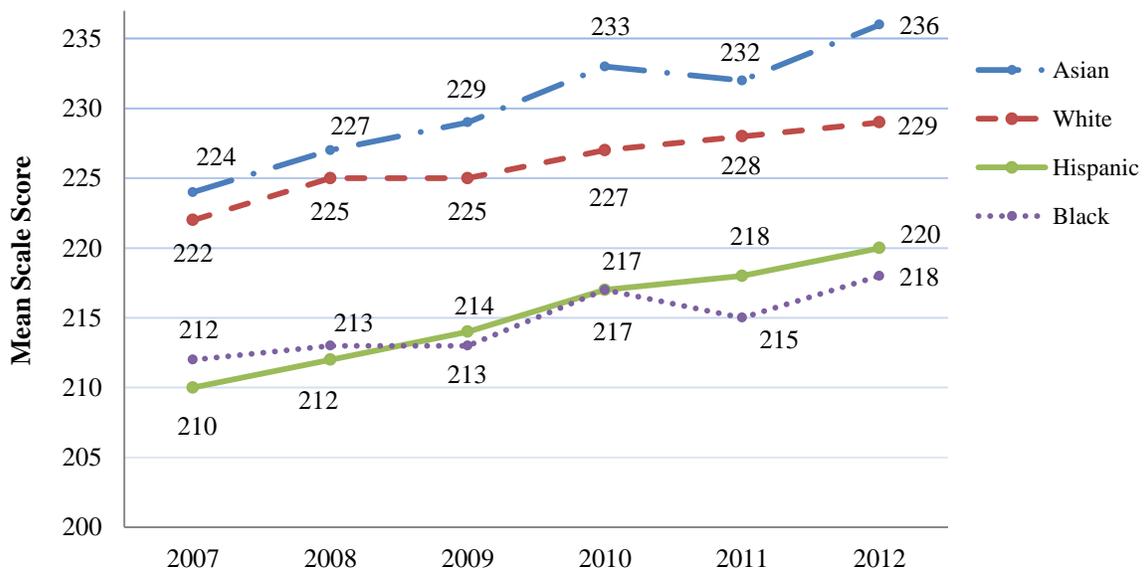


Table 3. Mean Scale Scores for the GHSWT: 2007-2012 Administrations

Student Groups	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Change from 2011 to 2012	Change from 2007 to 2012
All Students Tested	217	219	219	222	222	224	+2	+7
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	218	221	221	224	224	226	+2	+8
Regular Program Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	220	223	223	225	225	228	+3	+8
Special Education Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	194	198	198	205	202	205	+3	+11
English Learner Grade 11 First Time Test Takers	194	200	199	208	202	202	0	+8
Asian	224	227	229	233	232	236	+4	+12
Black	212	213	213	217	215	218	+3	+6
Hispanic	210	212	214	217	218	220	+2	+10
Native American/Alaskan	218	219	216	222	219	223	+4	+5
White	222	225	225	227	228	229	+1	+7
Multi Ethnic	221	223	222	225	225	227	+2	+6
Female	220	222	221	225	225	227	+2	+7
Male	215	216	217	220	220	221	+1	+6

**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**

