

**TESTING BRIEF**  
**Georgia High School Writing Test**  
**September 2014**

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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 2014 marks the eighth 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-five (95) percent of all students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a three (3) percentage point increase from ninety-two (92) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by six (6) percentage points from eighty-nine (89) percent in 2009 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2014.
- Ninety-six (96) 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-four (94) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of all grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by five (5) percentage points from ninety-one (91) percent in 2009 to ninety-six (96) percent in 2014.
- The 2014 mean scale score for all grade eleven first-time test takers was 225, representing an increase of one (1) scale score point over the 2013 administration’s mean scale score of 224.
- The 2014 mean scale score of 225 for all grade eleven first-time test takers shows an increase of four (4) scale score points over the 2009 administration’s mean scale score of 221.

## KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS

### Asian Students

- Ninety-five (95) percent of Asian students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a one percentage point increase from ninety-four (94) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percent of Asian students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by three (3) percentage points from ninety-two (92) percent in 2009 to ninety-five (95) percent in 2014.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Asian students was 234, a one (1) scale score point decrease from the mean scale score of 235 for the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score of 234 for Asian students is a five (5) scale score point increase over the 2009 administration's mean scale score of 229.

### Black Students

- Ninety-three (93) percent of Black students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a five (5) percentage point increase from eighty-eight (88) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of Black students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eight (8) percentage points from eighty-five (85) percent in 2009 to ninety-three (93) percent in 2014.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Black students was 218, a two (2) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 216 for the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score of 218 for Black students shows a five (5) scale score point increase over the 2009 administration's mean scale score of 213.

## KEY FINDINGS: BY RACE/ETHNICITY GROUPS (CONTINUED)

### Hispanic Students

- Ninety-four (94) percent of Hispanic students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a four (4) percentage point increase from ninety (90) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percent of Hispanic students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eight (8) percentage points from eighty-six (86) percent in 2009 to ninety-four (94) percent in 2014.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 220, a two (2) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 218 in the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Hispanic students was 220, a six (6) scale score point increase over the 2009 administration's mean scale score of 214.

### White Students

- Ninety-seven (97) percent of White students met or exceeded the standard for the test, a two (2) percentage point increase from ninety-five (95) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percent of White students meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by four (4) percentage points from ninety-three (93) percent in 2009 to ninety-seven (97) percent in 2014.
- The 2014 mean scale score for White students was 227, a one (1) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 226 in the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score for White students was 227, a two (2) point increase over the mean scale score of 225 in the 2009 administration.

## KEY FINDINGS: BY PROGRAM

### Regular Program Students

- Ninety-eight (98) 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-six (96) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by four (4) percentage points from ninety-four (94) percent in 2009 to ninety-eight (98) percent in 2014.
- The mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 226, a one (1) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 225 in the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Regular Program grade eleven first-time test takers was 226, a three (3) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 223 in the 2009 administration.

### Special Education Students

- Seventy-nine (79) percent of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, a nine (9) percentage point increase from seventy (70) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by eighteen (18) percentage points from sixty-one (61) percent in 2009 to seventy-nine (79) percent in 2014.
- The mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 208 in 2014, a four (4) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 204 in 2013.
- The 2014 mean scale score for Special Education grade eleven first-time test-takers was 208, a ten (10) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 198 in the 2009 administration.

### English Learners

- Seventy-one (71) percent of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers met or exceeded the standard for the test, an eleven (11) percentage point increase from sixty (60) percent in 2013.
- Since 2009, the percentage of English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers meeting or exceeding the standard for the test has increased by five (5) percentage points from sixty-six (66) percent in 2009 to seventy-one (71) percent in 2014.
- The mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 201 in 2014, a three (3) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 198 in the 2013 administration.
- The 2014 mean scale score for English Learner grade eleven first-time test-takers was 201, a two (2) scale score point increase over the mean scale score of 199 in 2009.

## KEY FINDINGS: CLOSING THE GAP

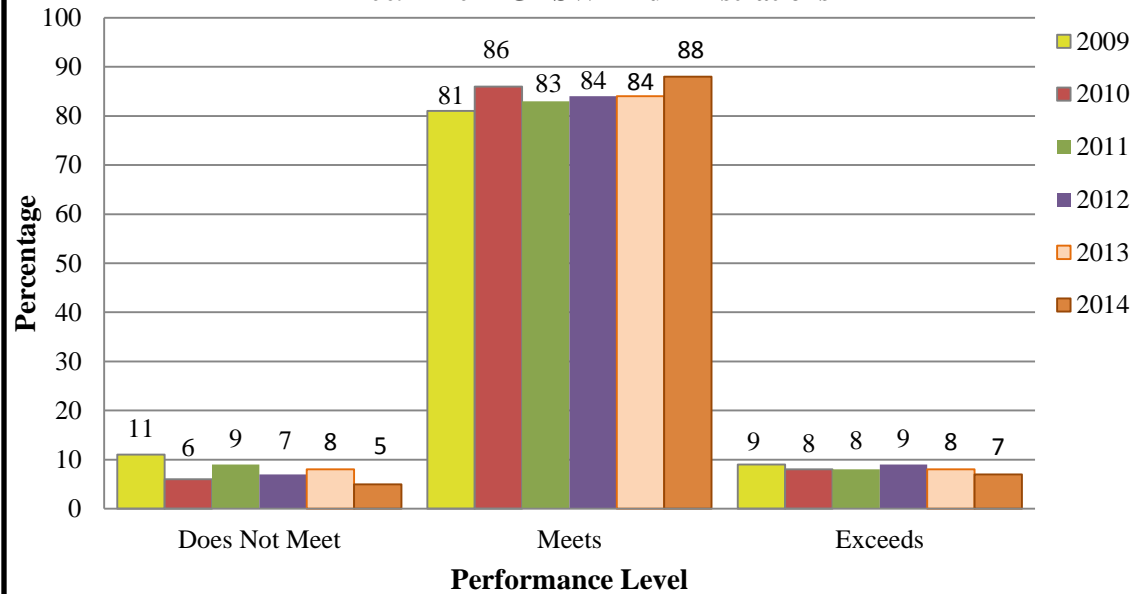
- Increases were evidenced for every student group on the 2014 administration of the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) when comparing results to the 2013 administration as well as when comparing results to the 2009 administration. When comparing the 2014 results to 2009, a narrowing of the achievement 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 8% to 4%. 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 four (4) percentage points from 7% to 3%. 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 thirteen (13) percentage points from 30% to 17%. 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 three (3) scale score points, from a difference of twelve (12) in 2009 to nine (9) in 2014.
  - The achievement gap between Hispanic and White students has decreased by four (4) scale score points, from a difference of eleven (11) in 2009 to seven (7) in 2014.
  - The achievement gap between Special Education grade eleven first-time test takers and all grade eleven first-time test takers has decreased by six (6) scale score points, from a difference of twenty-three (23) in 2009 to seventeen (17) in 2014.

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

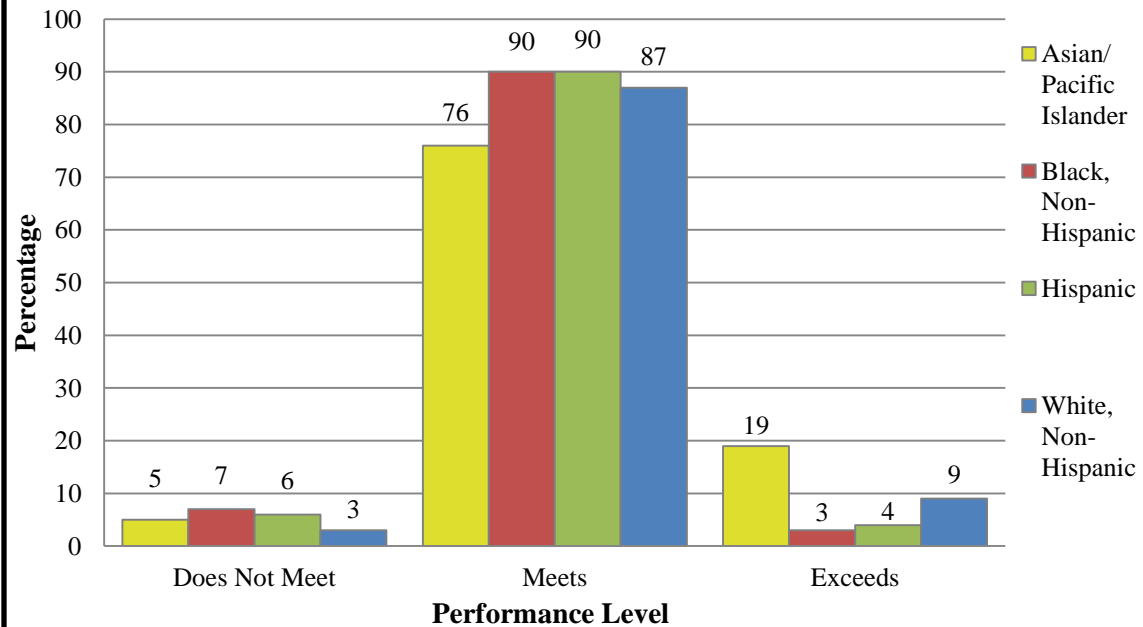
Student Groups	2009			2010			2011			2012			2013			2014		
	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E	DNM	M	E
All Students Tested	11	81	9	6	86	8	9	83	8	7	84	9	8	84	8	5	88	7
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	9	82	9	5	87	8	7	84	9	5	85	10	6	85	9	4	89	7
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	6	84	10	3	88	9	5	85	10	3	86	11	4	87	9	2	90	8
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	39	60	2	25	73	1	34	65	1	28	71	1	30	69	1	21	78	1
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	34	66	0	21	77	2	30	69	1	29	70	0	40	60	0	29	71	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	8	73	19	4	77	19	6	75	20	6	71	23	6	71	23	5	76	19
Black, Non-Hispanic	15	81	4	9	88	3	13	83	3	10	86	4	12	85	3	7	90	3
Hispanic	14	81	5	9	87	4	11	84	5	9	86	6	10	85	5	6	90	4
American Indian/Alaskan Native	15	79	7	7	86	7	9	81	9	9	81	10	9	83	8	7	89	5
White, Non-Hispanic	7	81	12	4	85	11	5	82	12	4	83	13	5	84	11	3	87	9
Multiracial	7	83	10	4	87	9	6	84	10	4	85	11	6	85	9	3	89	8
Female	8	83	9	4	87	9	6	84	9	4	85	11	5	85	9	3	89	8
Male	14	78	8	8	85	7	12	81	8	9	83	8	11	83	7	7	88	5

\*Performance levels include Does Not Meet (DNM), Meets (M), and Exceeds (E). Due to rounding, performance levels may not sum to 100%.

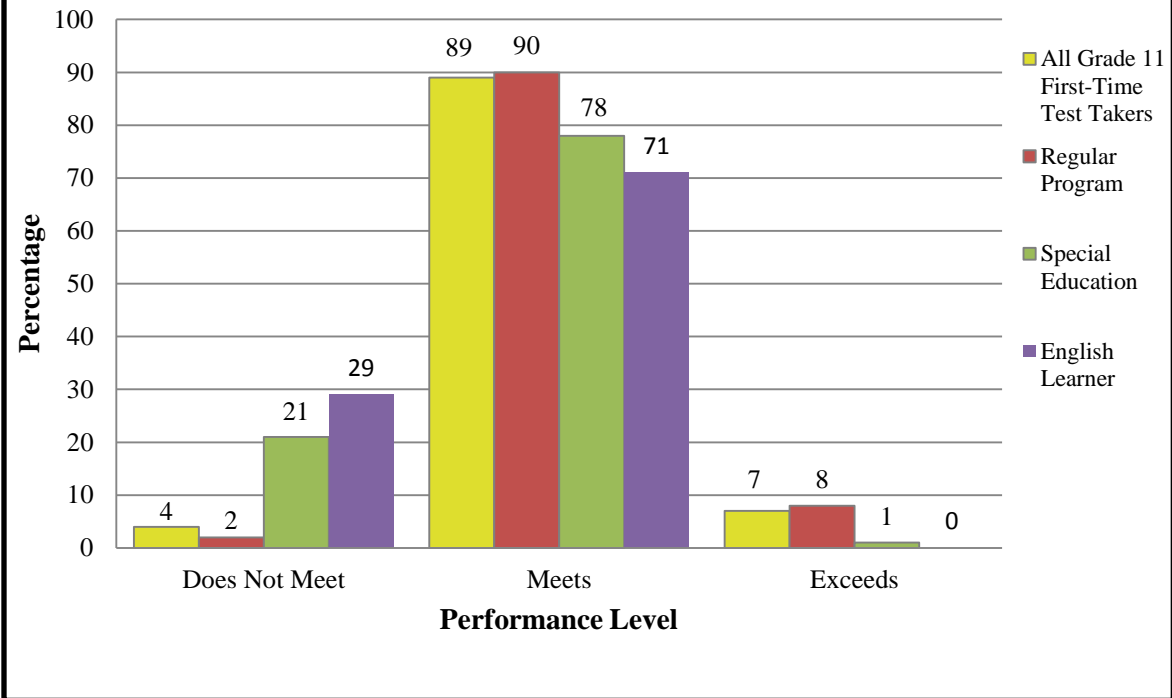
**Figure 1. All Students by Performance Level:  
2009 – 2014 GHSWT Administrations**



**Figure 2. Performance Level by Race/Ethnicity:  
2014 GHSWT Administration**



**Figure 3. Performance Level of Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers by Student Program: 2014 GHSWT Administration**



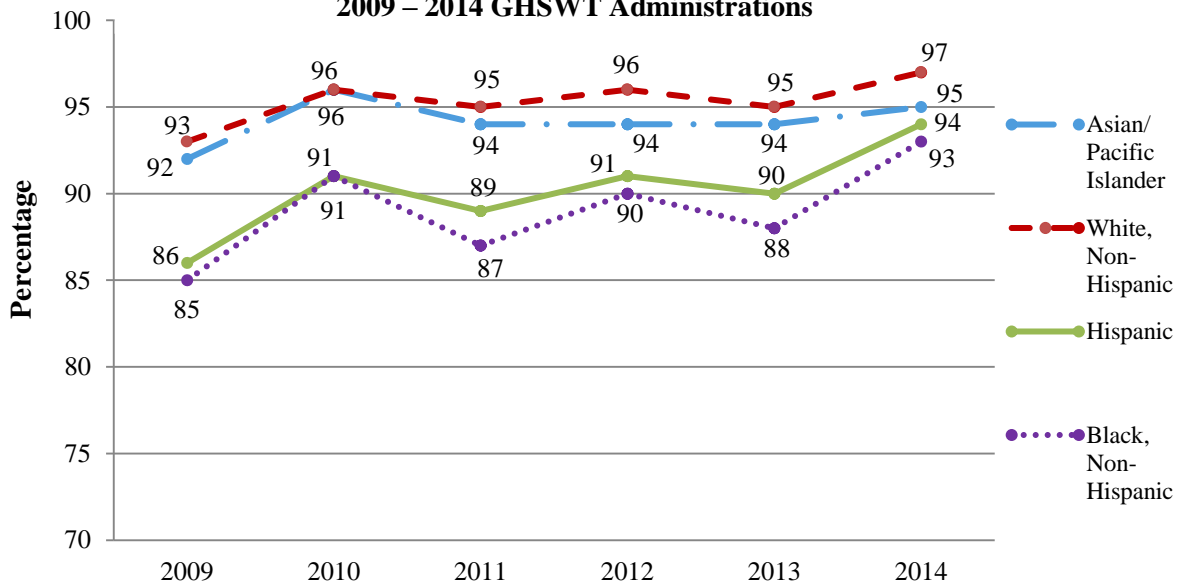


**Table 2. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard for GHSWT**

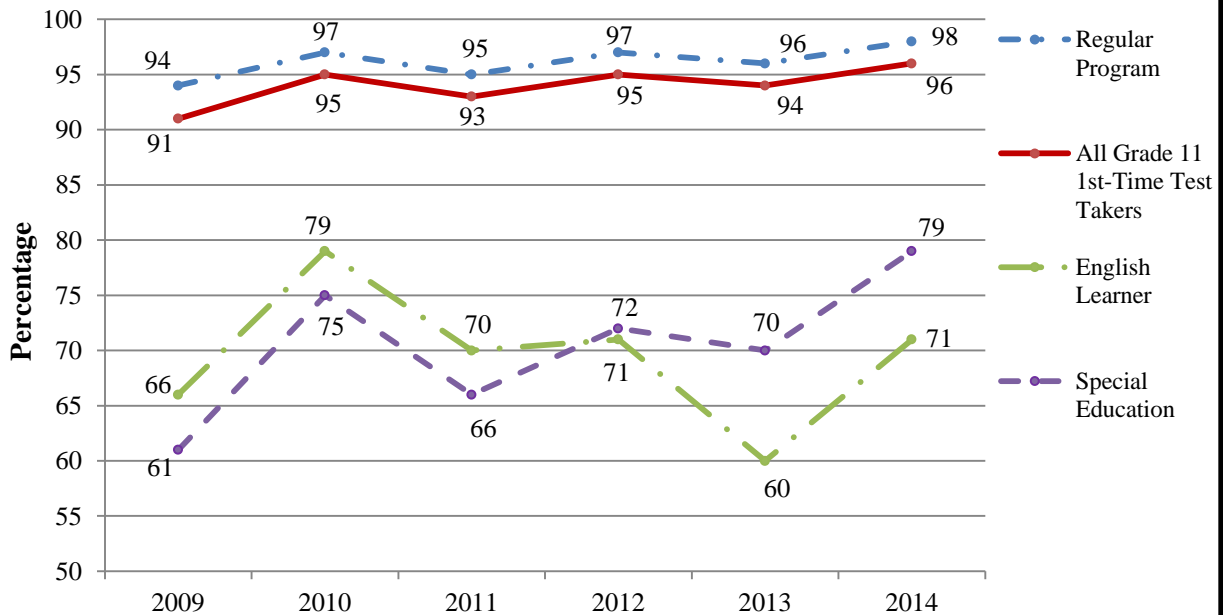
Student Groups	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change from 2013 to 2014	Change from 2009 to 2014
	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds	Meets and Exceeds		
All Students Tested	89	94	91	93	92	95	+3	+6
All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	91	95	93	95	94	96	+2	+5
Regular Program Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	94	97	95	97	96	98	+2	+4
Special Education Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	61	75	66	72	70	79	+9	+18
English Learner Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers	66	79	70	71	60	71	+11	+5
Asian/ Pacific Islander	92	96	94	94	94	95	+1	+3
Black, Non-Hispanic	85	91	87	90	88	93	+5	+8
Hispanic	86	91	89	91	90	94	+4	+8
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	85	93	91	91	91	93	+2	+8
White, Non-Hispanic	93	96	95	96	95	97	+2	+4
Multiracial	93	96	94	96	94	97	+3	+4
Female	92	96	94	96	95	97	+2	+5
Male	86	92	88	91	89	93	+4	+7

*Note.* Percent Meets and Exceeds is calculated by 100% minus the percent Did Not Meet.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding the Standard by Race/Ethnicity: 2009 – 2014 GHSWT Administrations**



**Figure 5. Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers Meeting and Exceeding the Standard by Program: 2009 – 2014 GHSWT Administrations**



**Table 3. Mean Scale Scores for the GHSWT: 2009 – 2014 Administrations**

<b>Student Groups</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Change from 2013 to 2014</b>	<b>Change from 2009 to 2014</b>
<b>All Students Tested</b>	219	222	222	224	222	223	+1	+4
<b>All Grade 11 First-Time Test Takers</b>	221	224	224	226	224	225	+1	+4
<b>Regular Program Grade 11 First Time Test Takers</b>	223	225	225	228	225	226	+1	+3
<b>Special Education Grade 11 First Time Test Takers</b>	198	205	202	205	204	208	+4	+10
<b>English Learner Grade 11 First Time Test Takers</b>	199	208	202	202	198	201	+3	+2
<b>Asian/Pacific Islander</b>	229	233	232	236	235	234	-1	+5
<b>Black, Non-Hispanic</b>	213	217	215	218	216	218	+2	+5
<b>Hispanic</b>	214	217	218	220	218	220	+2	+6
<b>American Indian/Alaskan Native</b>	216	222	219	223	221	221	0	+5
<b>White</b>	225	227	228	229	226	227	+1	+2
<b>Multiracial</b>	222	225	225	227	224	226	+2	+4
<b>Female</b>	221	225	225	227	225	226	+1	+5
<b>Male</b>	217	220	220	221	219	221	+2	+4

