



# NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 21, 2011**

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## **GCPS 8th graders improve already high scores on writing test**

Traditionally, **Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS)** 8th graders have excelled on the Grade 8 State Writing Test and this year’s group of test takers have raised the bar even more. Close to 12,000 (11,922) students took the test in January of 2011, raising the county’s passing rate across the board. Overall, the school system’s average passing rate increased from 91 percent in 2010 to 93 percent in 2011. Of those students, 14 percent of Gwinnett students scored in the “Exceeds” performance level compared to five percent statewide.

Students	2010	2011	Improvement Over Previous Year
Asian	94%	95%	+1 percentage point
Black	88%	92%	+4 percentage points
Hispanic	83%	87%	+4 percentage points
Native American	93%	98%	+5 percentage points
Multi-Ethnic	92%	95%	+3 percentage points
White	95%	96%	+1 percentage point
Special Needs	62%	69%	+7 percentage points
ELL (English Language Learners)	57%	66%	+ 9 percentage points
<b>All Students</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>+ 2 percentage points</b>

This writing assessment represents essential literacy skill development in the four domains for ideas, organization, style, and conventions from either an expository or persuasive prompt. Therefore, GCPS views the results as a reflection of academic rigor across the curriculum through integration of comprehension, creativity, and fluency of written expression, incorporating analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking. These fundamental literacy skills are an essential part of an academic program of college and career readiness. The skills reflected in the content of the test are included in the GCPS Academic Knowledge and Skills curriculum.

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**THE MISSION OF GWINNETT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*is to pursue excellence in academic knowledge, skills, and behavior for each student, resulting in measured improvement against local, national, and world-class standards.*

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2010 Winner of



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In Gwinnett, the state writing test serves as a local promotion requirement for 8th grade students. They must “meet” or “exceed” state standards in order to earn promotion to 9th grade. In addition, Gwinnett 8th graders must pass five of their six courses—including language arts and math—and must meet state standards on the CRCT to earn promotion to 9th grade.

Students who did not pass this first administration of the 8th Grade Writing Test, but who are required to pass to earn promotion, have the opportunity to receive extra help in preparation for a retest. The results from the retest will be available prior to the beginning of summer school. If a student is not successful on the retest, he or she could attend summer school to improve their writing skills in preparation for another retest at the end of summer school.