

**November 19, 2010**

**NCSS ANNOUNCES 2010-2011 GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL WRITING TEST RESULTS**  
***District and All Schools Post Improvements, Match State Averages***

Newton County School System high school students posted gains across the district on the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT) this year, with 95 percent of all first-time test-takers passing the test in 2010-2011. The district's average pass rate matches the state's average this year. Students are required to pass all components of the Georgia High School Graduation Test, including writing, in order to graduate.

"The GHSWT is a persuasive writing assignment and the students have 100 minutes to complete the test," said Dr. Carl Skinner, NCSS Director of Testing, Research, and Evaluation. "Students are assessed analytically in four domains: Ideas, Organization, Style, and Conventions."

According to Dr. Skinner, a total of 1,191 NCSS students took the test earlier this semester and those who did not pass will have an opportunity to retest in February. Although the GHSWT is directed towards eleventh grade students, Dr. Skinner said seniors new to Georgia also take the assessment.

"Students must take and pass the GHSWT as one requirement towards earning a high school diploma," said Skinner. "Overall, Newton County had a 94 percent pass rate of all students that took the GHSWT and a 95% pass rate of first-time test-takers in eleventh grade. Our students are to be commended for their efforts!"

In addition to matching the state's overall pass rate, Newton County students posted a five percent increase in students passing the test. Last year, 90 percent of first-time test-takers passed the writing test in Newton County Schools. By comparison, the state posted a four percent increase on the pass rate in 2010-2011.

In addition to the gains on the district pass rate, each of Newton County's three high schools posted gains on their pass rate this year and each school had an overall pass rate of 95 percent. Alcovy High School saw the largest increase on the pass rate in 2010-2011, going from 89 percent last year to 95 percent this year—a 6 percent increase. Approximately 398 Alcovy students took the test this semester.

Eastside High School students continued to excel on the state writing assessment again this year. For the past 6 years, over 90 percent of first-time test takers passed the Writing test and this year, the school posted a one percent increase on the pass rate, going from 94 percent in 2009-2010 to 95 percent in 2010-2011. Approximately 319 Eastside students took the test this semester.

Students at Newton High School also posted significant gains on the writing test in 2010-2011. The school's 95 percent pass rate marked a 5 percent increase on the number of students passing the test. Last year, 90 percent of Newton's test takers passed the writing test on their first attempt. The school had 456 test-takers this semester.

"This is good news we can build on as writing is so essential to a truly educated student," said Gary Mathews, Superintendent of Newton County Schools. "Given the significant improvements needed now in our college-readiness indicators of ACT and SAT, these GHSWT writing scores are most encouraging and, I trust, a precursor to improved results in the future. Kudos to our students and faculty!"

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