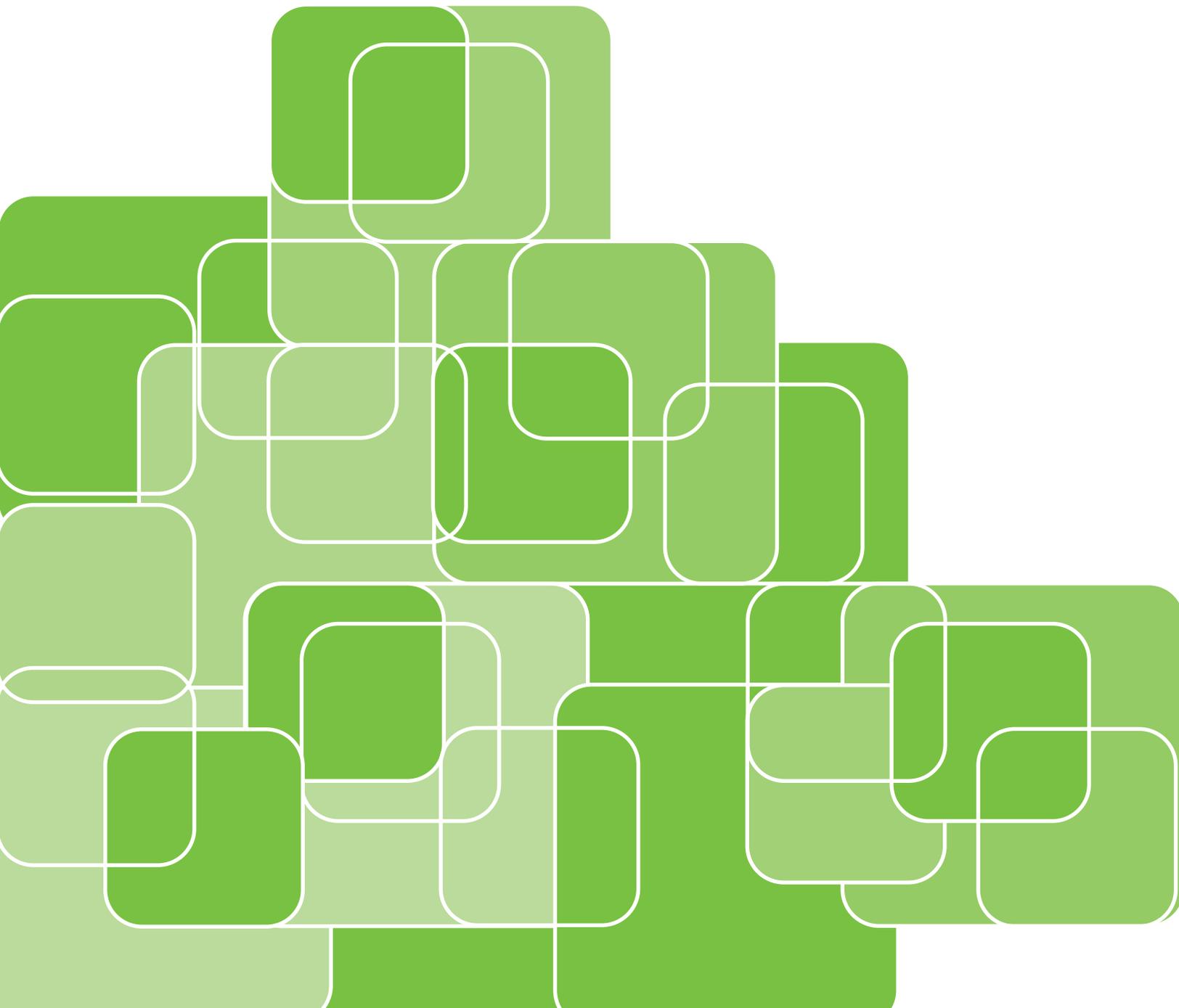


# State High School Exit Exams: Working to Raise Test Scores

September 2007





**Center on Education Policy**

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 522  
Washington, D.C. 20036

tel: 202.822.8065

fax: 202.822.6008

e: [cep-dc@cep-dc.org](mailto:cep-dc@cep-dc.org)

w: [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org)

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# Executive Summary and Conclusions

Since 2002, the Center on Education Policy (CEP), an independent nonprofit organization, has been studying state high school exit examinations—tests students must pass to receive a high school diploma. This is CEP's sixth annual report on our comprehensive study of exit exams. The information in this report comes from several sources: our survey of states that have mandatory exit exams, interviews with state officials, media reports, state Web sites, and case studies of eight districts in five states.

This report focuses on changes that have occurred over the past year in intervention (strategies used to raise initial pass rates) and remediation (strategies used to raise cumulative pass rates) efforts at both state and local levels, and specifically those efforts that address achievement gaps.

## Key Findings

### Impact

- ▶ High school exit examinations have a significant impact on American education. Today, 65% of all students in the nation are in the 22 states with such policies. By 2012, when four more states implement such policies, approximately 76% of all students will be affected.
- ▶ The impact of exit exams is even more striking for students of color. Today, 76% of students of color are in states that require passage of exit exams; by 2012 more than 82% of students of color will be in such states.
- ▶ Exit exams are aligned, for the most part, to grade 10. Although the majority of states (19) currently implementing or planning to implement exit exams use the same exam to fulfill the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) testing requirements, 10 states have lower cut-off scores for their high school graduation requirement than for NCLB purposes.
- ▶ Eighteen states reported that the purpose of the exit exam is to determine mastery of the state curriculum (e.g., standards, curriculum frameworks). Only a few states reported that the purpose is to determine graduates' readiness for entry-level employment (9) or post-secondary education (6). These findings raise questions about the rigor of state standards and exit exams, and highlight a need to re-examine the purpose of state exit exams.

## New Developments

- ▶ Arkansas recently joined the states that will withhold diplomas based on students' achievement on a state-mandated high school exit exam, making it the 26<sup>th</sup> state to require passing an exit exam to obtain a high school diploma. There are now 8 more states that have this requirement than there were in 2002 when the Center released the first annual report on high school exit exams.
- ▶ States with newer exams continue to struggle more than states with older policies. California and Arizona, which now require exit exams, still face legal actions seeking to limit the effects of such exams. Washington State delayed the requirement for passing exams in some subjects, but continued to require passage on others.
- ▶ States continue to move toward end-of-course exams. In 2002, only 2 states were using end-of-course exams. During school year 2006-07, 4 states had policies requiring end-of-course exams. By 2015, 8 states will rely on end-of-course exams and 4 more will implement a dual testing system that includes end-of-course exams. There will be a total of 12 states using end-of-course exams by 2015, an increase of 10 since 2002.

## Achievement Gaps

- ▶ All states with exit exam policies show gaps in passing rates between various groups of students. States identify the gap between students with disabilities and those without disabilities as the most challenging to close. But states also show significant gaps between passing rates of English language learners (ELL) and non-ELLs, white students and African American students, and white students and Latino students.
- ▶ More than half of the states reported providing targeted funding or technical assistance specifically intended to help close achievement gaps in mathematics (14) and reading/language arts (15). Programs included such efforts as funds specifically for the development of programs to help English language learners, students with disabilities, or low-income students.

## General State Assistance

- ▶ All participating states reported providing some technical assistance to help raise pass rates, and the most common form of assistance provided by states aims to assist teachers. This assistance includes help in administering the exam, preparing students for the exam, and helping teachers become more proficient in their content area. The least common forms of technical assistance include support for districts to improve professional development for teachers, formative uses of assessment, and instructional leadership provided by administrators.
- ▶ The most common forms of delivering assistance reported are specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and online assistance. The least-reported forms of delivering assistance are grants to school districts and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.
- ▶ The majority of participating states (17) also indicated they provide other forms of assistance, including exam preparation materials for teachers (17), released test items from prior years (15), and exam preparation materials for students (15).
- ▶ The majority of participating states (17) reported providing assistance or remediation for students who fail the exam on their first attempt. The most commonly reported form of assistance is targeted remediation programs for students (13). The least reported type of assistance or remediation states provide is additional professional development for administrators (4).

## Local Assistance

- ▶ Every state with exit exams except one reported that school districts in their state are using various strategies aimed at raising pass rates on exit exams. The most common strategy reported was offering remediation outside the regular school day, but only two states—California and Florida—require this by law.
- ▶ Our case study research about the impact of state-mandated high school exit exams in five states reveals that high schools and districts implement many different kinds of intervention and remediation strategies to assist students in passing their state’s high school exit exam. Further, these interventions and remediation strategies used by our case study high schools are influencing curriculum and instruction, especially for disadvantaged students.

## Recommendations

- ▶ The effectiveness of state exit exam intervention and remediation strategies is largely unknown, and many states do not have the capacity to evaluate these strategies. States and school districts are putting a lot of time, effort, and resources toward increasing passing rates on these exams; states should also develop methods to evaluate and determine the effectiveness of the various strategies they use.
- ▶ More attention needs to be given to the impact that high school exit exams are having on curriculum and instruction. While intervention and remediation strategies are used by high schools to help students pass the exit exam, we know very little about the impact of these strategies on students’ educational experiences. Therefore, research aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of high school exit exam policy as a tool for shaping and improving instruction and student performance, especially for disadvantaged students, should be undertaken.

## Study Methods

The Center on Education Policy used a variety of methods to identify issues and collect information for this year’s study. In particular, we:

- Conducted a detailed survey of states with current or planned high school exit exams
- Analyzed our local-level work on exit exams conducted over the past five years
- Reviewed major research conducted by others on exit exams
- Kept abreast of important events related to exit exams

## State Survey Methods

As our primary research tool for this year’s study, the Center on Education Policy designed and conducted a survey of state department of education officials, usually officials from the state’s assessment department.

Each year CEP identifies a specific topic as the theme for the report. This year, we designed a study that would explore what kinds of intervention and remediation strategies states are providing to school districts and high schools to help all students pass the exit exam. We also sought to identify whether states were providing targeted assistance to school districts and high schools with significant achievement gaps or overall low passing rates. Finally, we attempted to understand what local school districts are doing to raise their students’ passing rates on the exit exam.

In attempting to address these issues, we first developed a state survey. The survey was reviewed by three experts who have reviewed CEP's previous annual reports on exit exams: Dr. David Conley, Dr. Sherman Dorn, and Katherine Viator. We piloted the revised survey with two states (Alaska and Minnesota) and made further revisions based on comments and suggestions from these states.

In January 2007, we contacted the chief state school officers of 25 states that had current or planned exit exams to request their state's participation. We asked the chiefs to designate a person to work with us in developing the state profiles for this report. CEP staff partially filled in the survey, based on information we had collected and reported in 2006. In March 2007, we contacted these designated officials and asked them to verify, update, and add information to survey forms for their state. In all, 24 of the 26 states that met our criteria (see below) for having an exit exam responded to our survey. We invited Oklahoma to participate, but the state did not submit a verified and completed survey. Arkansas was identified as a state that meets our criteria after we administered the survey to all other states. Due to time limitations the state was not invited to complete a state survey, but will be invited to participate in 2008.

We used the states' survey responses to develop the state profiles at the end of this report. After developing the profiles, we sent a draft back to each state for review to ensure that we had accurately portrayed their testing systems. We also used state survey responses to tally the state exam characteristics, policies, and actions that appear throughout the report.

Some states did not answer all of the survey questions, often simply because the data were not available or their policies were in flux. These policies may be in flux for several reasons. For example, state legislatures are under continuing and significant political pressure to moderate or ameliorate the effects of these exams. We also made several follow-up e-mails and phone calls with each of the states to include the most accurate and up-to-date information we could in this report, but undoubtedly some statistics or policies will have changed soon after publication because events in this field move quickly.

### Analysis of Local Level Work

After studying exit exam policy at the state level for several years, the Center decided to undertake research aimed at investigating the effects of exit exam policies at the local level. To this end, we designed a series of case studies which began in Virginia and Maryland and continued in Texas and Mississippi and, most recently, in Arizona. In all, we have studied 8 school districts and 13 high schools in these five states.

We began this series of studies in Virginia and Maryland in 2004 to better understand what administrators, teachers, and students were saying had been done to implement exit exams in their districts. These exploratory case studies, conducted in two school districts, provided us with concrete examples of what exit exam policies looked like at the ground level. The case studies included interview data and an analysis of relevant district and state policies, and also provided us with direction for future in-depth case studies.<sup>1</sup>

Our second study, which began in 2005, led us to Austin, Texas, and Jackson, Mississippi, to examine how classroom instruction and other initiatives were preparing students for exit exams, as well as how these exams were affecting students' engagement in learning and their plans for post-secondary education.<sup>2</sup> We chose to study the Jackson Public Schools (JPS) and the Austin Independent School District (AISD)<sup>3</sup> because of their substantial experience implementing the exit-level exams. We also wanted to look specifically at how high school exit exams may be affecting students of color. To this end, we conducted interviews

<sup>1</sup> The published report of these case studies, *How Have High School Exit Exams Changed Our Schools: Some Perspectives from Virginia and Maryland*, is available on our Web site at [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org).

<sup>2</sup> The published report of these case studies, "It's Different Now": *How Exit Exams Are Affecting Teaching and Learning in Jackson and Austin*, is available on our Web site at [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org).

<sup>3</sup> While our case studies in Mississippi and Texas reveal the names of the participating school districts, case studies in our other three states—Virginia, Maryland, and Arizona—do not.

with various education stakeholders including teachers, district- and school-level administrators, students, and representatives from post-secondary institutions and community organizations. We also administered a survey to 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students in all six high schools and collected student testing data.

Our third study, a multiple-case study design (Yin, 2003), began in the summer of 2006 and took us to Arizona to examine how exit exam policy was affecting English language learners in five high schools in four school districts. We were interested in finding out how school districts are currently supporting ELLs in passing the exit exam, what challenges school districts face in attempting to raise pass rates, and in what areas they believe they need further assistance to be more successful in this endeavor.

In an attempt to capture divergent perspectives, we conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, parents, and district-level and school-level administrators as well as community education stakeholders and key state-level actors. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed for themes, and coded. In an effort to enhance internal reliability, multiple coders were used for specific material. We also collected internal documents and archival records for each school studied as well as policy documents at the state level. While the report has not yet been published, we present some of our initial findings and analysis in this chapter.

### Other Data Sources

CEP staff and consultants also conducted literature reviews of relevant studies that were either published or publicized during the past year. In addition, we tracked media coverage related to exit exams and searched state department of education Web sites for exit exam developments and information.

### Criteria for Including States in Our Study

This study focuses on mandatory exit exams. Included in the study are states that meet the following criteria:

- States that require students to pass, not just take, state exit exams to receive a high school diploma, even if the students have completed the necessary coursework with satisfactory grades
- States in which the exit exams are a state mandate rather than a local option—in other words, states that require students in all local school districts to pass exit exams, rather than allowing local districts to decide for themselves whether to make the exams a condition of graduation

We also include states that are phasing in mandatory high school exit exams that meet these two criteria. By phasing in, we mean that the state has a legislative or state board directive to have a test in place between 2007 and 2012; has already begun developing the tests; and is trying out the tests with students, although diplomas are not yet being withheld.

A note about terminology: This report often refers to an exit exam in the singular, but actually a state exit exam typically refers to an exam system consisting of multiple tests in different subjects, such as English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies.

**Table 1** summarizes the major characteristics of state exit exams.

Table 1

Major Characteristics of State Exit Exams

State	Current Exam	Consequences Begin/Began for Class of	Subjects Tested	Type of Test	Grade Level of Alignment	Grade Test First Administered	Prior Exit Exam or Exit Exam Being Phased Out
Alabama	Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition	2001	Reading, language, math, science, social studies	Standards-based	11 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Editions
Alaska	Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE)	2004	Reading, writing, math	Standards-based	8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None
Arizona	Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)	2006	Reading, writing, math	Standards-based	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None
Arkansas	Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program	2010	Literacy, Algebra I, geometry	End-of-course	Literacy (11 <sup>th</sup> ), Algebra I and geometry (aligned to course content)	Varies	None
California	California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)	2006	ELA, math	Standards-based	ELA (through 10 <sup>th</sup> ), math (6 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup> and Algebra I)	10 <sup>th</sup>	None
Florida	Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)	2003	Reading, math, and writing (2010)	Standards-based	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	High School Competency Test (HSCT)
Georgia	Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT)	1994	ELA, writing, math, science, social studies	Standards-based	9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	Basic Skills Test
Idaho	Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)	2006	Reading, language usage, math, science	Standards-based	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None
Indiana	Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE)	2000	ELA (through 9 <sup>th</sup> ), math (through pre-algebra and Algebra I)	Standards-based	9 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None

continues ►

State	Current Exam	Consequences Begin/Began for Class of	Subjects Tested	Type of Test	Grade Level of Alignment	Grade Test First Administered	Prior Exit Exam or Exit Exam Being Phased Out
Louisiana	Graduation Exit Examination (GEE)	2003	ELA, math, science, social studies	Standards-based	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	Graduation Exit Exam
Maryland	Maryland High School Assessment (HSA)	2009*	English II, algebra/data analysis, biology, government	End-of-course	10 <sup>th</sup>	Varies	Maryland Functional Tests
Massachusetts	Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)	2003	ELA, math, science (2010), U.S. history (2012)	Standards-based plus end-of-course exams in science (2010) and U.S. history (2012)	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> ; science will vary	None
Minnesota	Graduation Required Assessment for Diploma (GRAD)**	2010	Reading, writing, math	Standards-based	Writing (9 <sup>th</sup> ), reading (10 <sup>th</sup> ), math (11 <sup>th</sup> )	Writing in 9 <sup>th</sup> ; reading in 10 <sup>th</sup> ; math in 11 <sup>th</sup>	Basic Skills Test (BST)
Mississippi	Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program (SATP)	2006	English II (with writing component), Algebra I, Biology I, U.S. history from 1877	End-of-course	Aligned to course content	Varies	Functional Literacy Examination (FLE)
Nevada	High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE)	2003	Reading, writing, math, science (2008)	Standards-based	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	High School Proficiency Examination (earlier version based on 1994 curriculum)
New Jersey	High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA)	2003	Language arts literacy, math; starting 2010, end-of-course exam in biology	Standards-based plus one end-of-course (2010)	11 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup> ; biology will vary	High School Proficiency Test-11
New Mexico	New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE)	1990	Reading, language arts, composition, math, science, social studies	Minimum competency	8 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None

continues ➤



State	Current Exam	Consequences Begin/Began for Class of	Subjects Tested	Type of Test	Grade Level of Alignment	Grade Test First Administered	Prior Exit Exam or Exit Exam Being Phased Out
New York	Regents Examinations	2000	ELA, math, science, social studies, language other than English	End-of-course	9 <sup>th</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup>	Varies	Regents Competency Tests
North Carolina	North Carolina Competency Tests and Tests of Computer Skills	1982 (math/reading) 2001 (computer skills) 2010 (end-of-course exams)	Reading comprehension, math, computer skills; starting 2010, end-of-course exams in Algebra I, English I, U.S. history, civics and economics, biology	Standards-based, plus five end-of-course exams beginning in 2010	8 <sup>th</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup> ; end-of-course exams will vary	None
Ohio	Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT)	2007	Reading, writing, math, science, social studies	Standards-based	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Proficiency Tests
Oklahoma	Oklahoma End-of-Instruction (EOI) Exams	2012	English II, English III, Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, Biology I, U.S. history	End-of-course	High school standards	Varies	None
South Carolina	High School Assessment Program (HSAP)	2006	ELA, math, science (2010), U.S. history (2010)	Standards-based; plus two end-of-course exams in science and history (2010)	Through 10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup> ; end-of-course exams will vary	Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP)
Tennessee	Gateway Examinations	2005	English II, Algebra I, Biology I	End-of-course	10 <sup>th</sup>	Varies	Tennessee Competency Test
Texas	Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS)**	2005	ELA (reading/writing), math, science, social studies	Standards-based	Aligned to course content	11 <sup>th</sup>	Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS)

continues ►

State	Current Exam	Consequences Begin/Began for Class of	Subjects Tested	Type of Test	Grade Level of Alignment	Grade Test First Administered	Prior Exit Exam or Exit Exam Being Phased Out
Virginia	Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-course exams	2004	English (reading/writing), Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, biology, earth science, chemistry, world history to 1500, world history from 1500, Virginia and U.S. history, world geography	End-of-course	Aligned to course content	Varies	Literacy Passport Test
Washington	Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)	2008	Reading, writing, math (2013), science (2013)	Standards-based	10 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>	None

Table reads: Alabama currently administers the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, for which consequences began for the class of 2001. The exam assesses reading, language, math, science, and social studies, and is considered by the state to be a standards-based exam aligned to 11<sup>th</sup> grade standards. The exam is administered for the first time in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The current test replaced the Alabama High School Graduation Exam, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Editions.

\*Maryland is considering delaying the requirement for students with disabilities and English language learners. The state will use results from the 2007 testing period to determine the number of years to exempt these subgroups.

\*\* Minnesota and Texas will transition to new exams. Minnesota is transitioning from the BST to the GRAD test. The state will continue to withhold diplomas based on the BST until 2009. The class of 2010 will be the first class required to pass the new GRAD requirement. Texas students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011 will be the first required to pass the state's 12 new end-of-course exams. The first class required to pass the new exams will be the class of 2013.

Note: ELA = English language arts.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.





# Chapter 1:

## New Developments in High School Exit Exams

### Key Findings

- ▶ The number of states that currently implement or plan to implement mandated high school exit exams continues to grow and now numbers 26. Currently students in 22 states have to pass exit exams to receive a high school diploma. Four more states—Arkansas, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Washington—plan to enforce this requirement. And state officials in Connecticut have seriously considered implementing an exit exam, but no official decision has been made.
- ▶ States continue to move toward end-of-course exams. Texas will completely replace its current standards-based exams with end-of-course exams. Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, and South Carolina will transition to a dual testing system that incorporates standards-based exams and end-of-course exams. Louisiana, Nevada, and Washington are considering whether to include or replace their current exams with end-of-course exams in their high school graduation requirements.
- ▶ Two states are delaying full implementation of their high school exit exam requirements. Ever since California began implementing the California High School Exit Examination, it has exempted students with disabilities, and continues to do so. Washington will begin to withhold diplomas starting with the class of 2008, but will delay the math and science testing requirements until the graduating class of 2013.
- ▶ In many states, preparing students for college and work are not the main purposes of exit exams. Instead, state officials reported that the main purpose is to provide data for school and district policy decisions. About 75% of participating states reported that the purpose is to inform educational policy decisions.

### Introduction

The Center has been tracking the development and implementation of state-mandated high school exit exams over the past six years. This chapter outlines new developments the Center has identified since the release of our 2006 report on high school exit exams. During the past year, we added one more state to our list of states implementing or planning to implement state-mandated high school exit exams, so that we now have 26 states with such exams. A number of these states are moving toward end-of-course exams. These tests are usually standards-based and assess high school level, course-specific content.

Though most states continue to move forward with their implementation of high school exit exams, California and Washington have delayed enforcing the requirement for specific groups of students or specific subjects. Meanwhile, Arizona and California continue to face lawsuits challenging their exit exams.



## Number of States with Mandatory Exit Exams Continues to Grow

The number of states that have implemented or plan to implement mandatory exit exams continues to grow. In 2006, the Center reported that 25 states were implementing or planning to implement state-mandated high school exit exams. This year we add Arkansas to the list, bringing the total to 26.

### Total Number of States and Students Affected

**Figure 1** shows the 22 states that as of school year 2006-07 require students to pass exams to receive a high school diploma—4 more than in 2002.

By 2012, another four states plan to withhold diplomas based on students' exam performance. Washington state's exit exam mandate takes effect for the graduating class of 2008. Maryland stopped using the Maryland Functional Test as its exit exam in 2004 and will not resume withholding diplomas until 2009 when students will be required to pass the Maryland High School Assessment to graduate. Arkansas will begin withholding diplomas with the class of 2010. Oklahoma will begin withholding diplomas for the first time for the class of 2012.

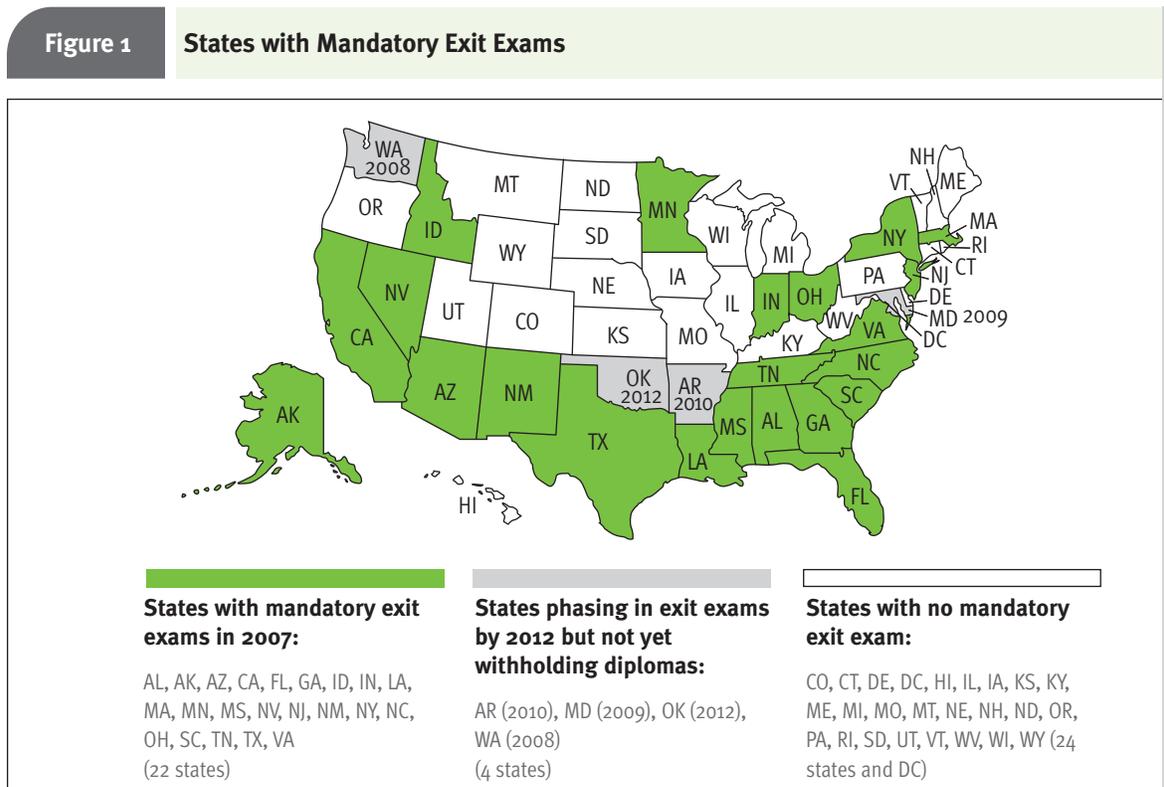


Figure reads: Alabama has a mandatory exit exam in 2007 and is withholding diplomas from students based on exam performance. Maryland is phasing in a new mandatory exit exam and plans to begin withholding diplomas based on this exam in 2009. Colorado does not have an exit exam, nor does it plan to implement one.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

In the 2006-07 school year, 65% of the nation's high school students and 76% of the nation's minority high school students were enrolled in public school in the 22 states with exit exams (See **table 2**). By 2012, an estimated 72% of high school students in the nation and 82% of minority high school students will be enrolled in public school in the 26 states with planned exit exams.

**Table 2**

**Percentage of Public High School Students Enrolled in States with Exit Exams**

Student Group	2007 (22 states)	2012 Projected (26 states)
All students	65%	72%
White	58%	64%
Latino	83%	85%
African American	72%	79%
Asian/Pacific Islander	72%	79%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	53%	77%
All minority students (Latino, African American, Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Native Alaskan)	76%	82%

Table reads: In 2007, 72% of the nation's African American public school students in grades 9-12 were enrolled in school in states with exit exams; in 2012, 79% of African American public school students in grades 9-12 will be enrolled in school in states with exit exams.

Source: Calculations by the Center on Education Policy, based on data from Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, 2003.

### Arkansas Will Implement Exit Exams

Starting with the graduating class of 2009-10, high school students in Arkansas will be required to pass end-of-course exams in literacy, Algebra I, and geometry to receive credit for the corresponding courses and to receive a high school diploma. Students who do not achieve a passing score on the first attempt will have three additional opportunities before completing grade 12. Those students who continue to fail will be allowed to take an alternative course with a corresponding alternative assessment. The state has not yet determined what these alternative courses and assessment will be. Nor has the state determined the required passing scores for the literacy, Algebra I, and geometry assessments.

### Connecticut May Add an Exit Exam

In the past year, some officials in Connecticut have tried to persuade the state to implement a state-mandated high school exit exam. Governor M. Jodi Rell is among those who support exit exams.

Early in 2007, two bills were presented to the General Assembly's appropriations committee. These bills aimed to make all four sections—reading, writing, math, and science—of the Connecticut Academic Performance Tests (CAPT) a graduation requirement. The bills, however, did not move past the committee (Frahm, 2007).

In May of 2007, the newly appointed education commissioner, Mark McQuillan, offered the state board of education two proposals for an exit exam. In McQuillan's proposals, reading and math would become graduation requirements in 2011, and writing and science would be required for the class of 2015. The board considered the proposals, but some concerns remain (FitzGerald, 2007).

Though officials in Connecticut have so far resisted the push toward a state-mandated exit exam, the possibility has not died. The department of education's office of policy and management and the legislature formed a committee to study high school graduation requirements, including the use of high school exit exams. The state board of education also established a committee to study exit exams, including the shape that these exams might take, such as end-of-course exams instead of a one-shot, high-stakes assessment.

## More States Move Toward End-of-Course Exams

Over the past five years, the Center has grouped the types of tests used by states into three categories, based on the states' own descriptions of their tests:

- **Minimum competency exams**, which generally focus on basic skills below the high school level
- **Standards-based exams**, which are aligned with state standards and are generally targeted at the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade level
- **End-of-course exams**, which assess whether students have mastered the content of specific high school courses; these exams are usually standards-based, and students take each test after completing a specific course

Over the past few years, the Center has reported a gradual move away from minimum competency exams and toward standards-based and end-of-course exams. This year, state officials in several states demonstrated strong interest in moving toward end-of-course exams. **Figure 2** demonstrates this shift, and **table 3** summarizes some of the upcoming changes.

By 2015, no state will be using minimum competency exams, a big shift from ten states in 2002. Seventeen states will be using standards-based exams, and eleven will be using end-of-course exams (including four states that will be using a dual exam system).

## Texas Plans Complete Switch to End-of-Course Exams

In June 2007, Senate Bill 1031 was signed by the governor of Texas (Zehr, 2007). The bill replaces the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) with 12 end-of-course exams. Students who enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12 will be the first required to take three end-of-course exams in each of four core subjects:

- English, I, II, and III
- Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry
- Biology, chemistry, and physics
- World geography, world history, and U.S. history

The end-of-course exams will differ from the TAKS in two ways. First, students must attain an average score of 70 in each of the subjects instead of on a single test. For example, students would have to have an average score of 70 when all three of their English tests (English I, II, and III) are averaged together. Second, students will take each test as soon as they complete the course. Students' scores on end-of-course exams will count for 15% of their grade in the corresponding class (Embry, 2007).

Students who enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade before 2011 are still required to pass the TAKS to graduate.

**Figure 2**

**Types of Exit Exams States are Using or Plan to Use**

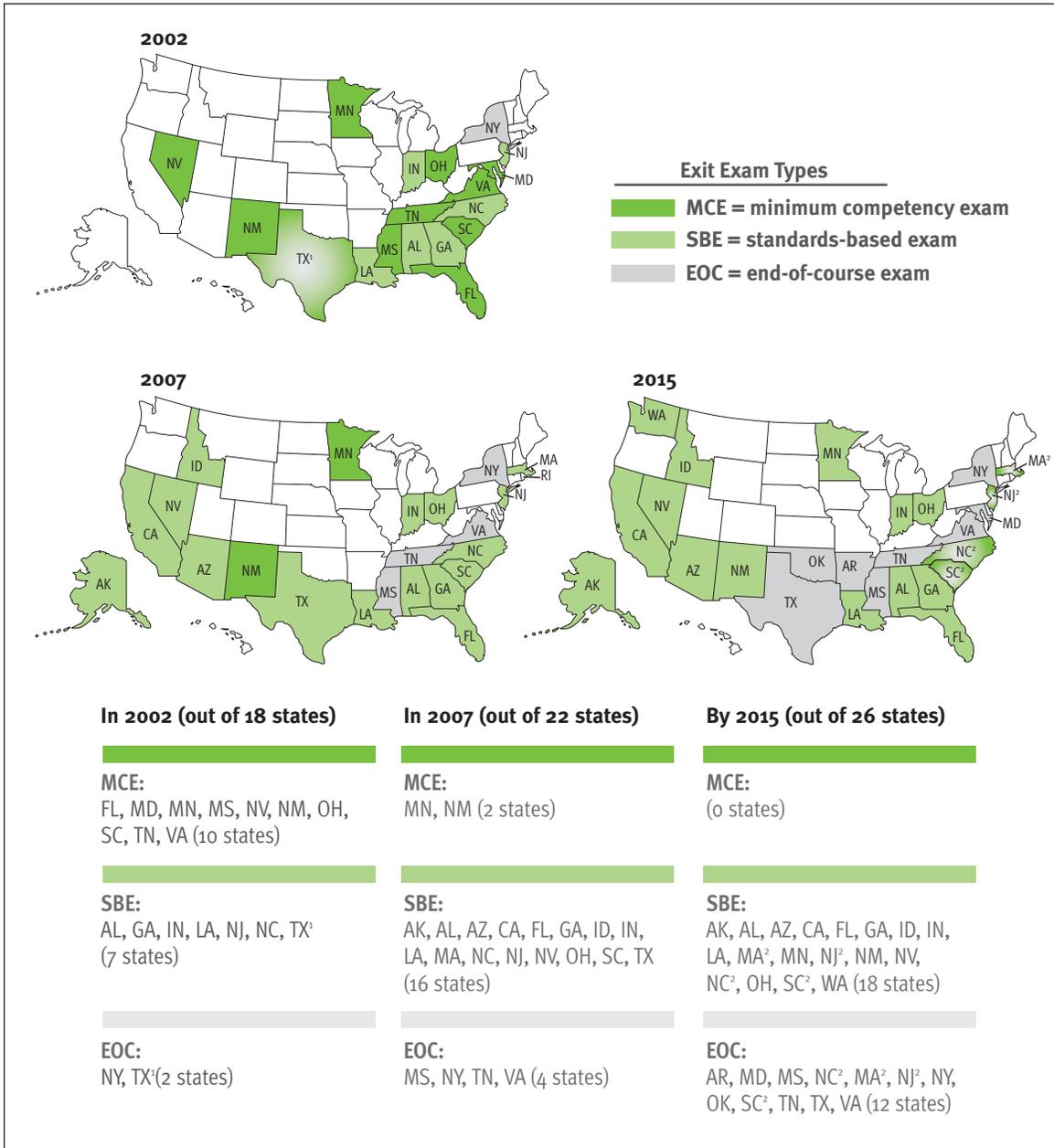


Figure reads: In 2002, 10 of the 18 states with fully implemented exit exams, including Florida, used minimum competency exams, while 7 states, including Alabama, used standards-based exams, and 2 states, including New York, used end-of-course exams. By 2015, none of the 26 states with mandatory exit exams will use minimum competency exams, 18 will use standards-based exams, and 12 will use end-of-course exams. Four states, including North Carolina, will use a combination of standards-based and end-of-course exams.

<sup>1</sup> In 2002, Texas gave students the option to pass either an SBE or an EOC exam.

<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, and South Carolina will require students to pass their existing standards-based exams plus new end-of-course exams.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

**Table 3** Moving Toward End-of-Course Exams

Completely Changing to End-of-Course Exams	Dual Testing System Standards-Based + End-of-Course Exams	Considering End-of-Course Exams
<p>Texas: End-of-course exams will replace the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skill starting with students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12 (class of 2015)</p>	<p>In addition to their standards-based exams these states will add end-of-course exams in the following courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Massachusetts: biology, chemistry, introductory physics, technology/engineering (2010), U.S. history (2012)</li> <li>● New Jersey: biology (2010)</li> <li>● North Carolina: Algebra I, English I, U.S. history, civics and economics, and biology (2010)</li> <li>● South Carolina: science and U.S. history (2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Louisiana: State officials have discussed replacing the Graduation Exit Exam with eight end-of-course exams. No decision has been made.</li> <li>● Nevada: A recently passed bill may lead to the development of end-of-course exams to be added to the current standards-based exam.</li> <li>● Washington: State board of education is researching the use of end-of-course exams to augment or replace the current standards-based exam.</li> <li>● Connecticut: The state is studying end-of-course exams that might be used if state officials choose to implement exit exams.*</li> </ul>

Table reads: Texas will replace the TAKS exams with end-of-course exams beginning with students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12. New Jersey will add an end-of-course exam in biology in addition to its current standards-based exam, starting with the class of 2010. Nevada recently passed a bill that may add end-of-course exams to the state's graduation requirements.

\* Connecticut does not currently implement a state-mandated high school exit exam. State officials are considering implementing a high school exit exam, and if they do, it might be in the form of end-of-course exams.

Note: End-of-course exams and standards-based exams are not mutually exclusive. End-of-course exams are usually standards-based, but are administered at the end of the course that covers the material in the exam.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

### Four States Will Implement a Dual Testing System

In 2010, Massachusetts, New Jersey, North Carolina, and South Carolina will require students to pass a standards-based exam plus new end-of-course exams to graduate. All four states will include an end-of-course test in science, and three states will include end-of-course exams in U.S. history.

#### Massachusetts

Massachusetts has been withholding diplomas based on students' performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) since 2003. The MCAS is a standards-based exam that consists of English language arts and mathematics. Starting with the class of 2010, students will be required to pass, in addition to the standards-based exam, an end-of-course exam in one of four science classes: biology, chemistry, introductory physics, or technology/engineering. Students who fail one science exam may choose to take a different course and different test the following year (Collins, 2007). Furthermore, in October 2006, the board of education scheduled a U.S. history end-of-course exam, previously approved by legislature as a

high school graduation requirement, starting with the class of 2012. Students graduating in 2012 will be required to pass an end-of-course (or end-of-series) exam after completing a series of two U.S. history courses. One will cover U.S. history from 1763-1865, and the other will cover 1865-2001 (MDE, 2007).

### **New Jersey**

New Jersey has had the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) as a high school graduation exam since 2003. From 2003-06, the HSPA consisted of language arts literacy and mathematics. In 2007, the state was scheduled to add a science section to the graduation requirement. This science section of the HSPA had been field tested over the past few years. However, state officials opted to replace the general science test with tests in specific sciences, starting with biology. The new biology end-of-course exam will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2008 and will be part of the HSPA graduation requirement starting with the class of 2010. Other specific science exams may follow. State officials are also considering developing end-of-course exams for specific math courses (Mooney, 2007).

### **North Carolina**

In North Carolina, students have been required to pass a standards-based exam in reading comprehension and mathematics since 1982 and a computer skills test since 2001. In addition, students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2006-07 will also be required to pass end-of-course exams in Algebra I, English I, U.S. history, civics and economics, and biology. The class of 2010 will be the first required to pass the North Carolina High School Competency Tests, the test on computer skills, and the five end-of-course exams.

### **South Carolina**

In 2006, South Carolina officially moved from its Basic Skills Assessment Program, a minimum-competency exam, to the High School Assessment Program (HSAP), a more rigorous standards-based exam aligned to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. The HSAP consists of English language arts and mathematics. However, beginning with the class of 2010, students will have to achieve passing scores not only in the HSAP but also in two end-of-course exams in science and U.S. history.

## **More States Consider Implementing End-of-Course Exams**

State officials in Louisiana, Nevada, Washington, and Connecticut have considered adding end-of-course exams to their current exams for a dual testing system or replacing their current exit exam with end-of-course exams.

### **Louisiana**

Louisiana state officials have considered replacing the Graduation Exit Exam (GEE) with end-of-course exams, but no official decision has been made. The state board of elementary and secondary education has considered developing eight end-of-course exams in Algebra I, geometry, English II, English III, physical science, biology, American history, and civics. If approved, these exams may eventually replace the state's current exam (LDE, 2007).

### **Nevada**

The Nevada state legislature recently passed a bill that adds specific math and science classes to the graduation requirements. According to the state survey respondent, this legislation might press the state to develop end-of-course exams that would eventually become part of the High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE), currently used as the state's high school exit exam. If this occurs, Nevada would join the list of states using a dual testing system.

### **Washington**

Graduation requirements for the math and science sections of the Washington Assessment of Students Learning (WASL) will be delayed until the class of 2013. Along with this delay, the governor directed the state board of education to study end-of-course exams in algebra, geometry, and biology and recommend possible changes (Shaw, 2007).

## Connecticut

If state officials in Connecticut choose to implement state high school exit exams, these tests will likely be in the form of end-of-course exams, currently being studied by the state's board of education.

As explained earlier, end-of-course exams and standards-based exams are not mutually exclusive. In fact, end-of-course exams are usually standards-based exams. However, they differ in that end-of-course exams are administered at the end of the course that covers the material in the exam. As noted in chapter 4, when students take annual exams, pre-exam preparation often consists of reviewing material that was covered in other courses or not covered at all. With end-of-course exams, that presumably would not happen. Yet this leads to questions as to the appropriate response for failure of an end-of-course exam. Would the student have the right or be required to retake the course? Could lawyers link patterns of end-of-course failure to specific teachers? The legalities and dynamics could be potentially different from non-end-of-course exams.

## Implementation Delays

Although the states continue to move forward in the implementation of exit exams, they struggle with high failure rates in particular subjects or low pass rates by specific student subgroups.

## California

California began withholding diplomas based on students' performance on the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) in 2006 for all students except students with disabilities. As reported last year, Senate Bill 517 exempted students with disabilities in the class of 2006 from the exam. This bill was the result of a settlement reached on August 29, 2005, in *Chapman v. California*, a class action lawsuit that challenged the fairness of the CAHSEE for students with disabilities (CEP, 2006).

Senate Bill 267, signed into law in September 2006, provides an additional one-year exemption of the requirement to pass the CAHSEE for certain students with disabilities in the class of 2007. In all, students with disabilities have been exempted for the past two consecutive years since the CAHSEE became a state requirement for all other students.

## Washington

Washington was scheduled to begin withholding diplomas based on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) with the graduating class of 2008. Although state officials are moving forward with the implementation of the WASL exit exam, they will not enforce all four subjects—reading, writing, math, and science—in 2008 as originally intended.

In May of 2007, state officials announced that the state will phase in the math and science requirements. Therefore, students graduating in the classes of 2008-12 will only be required to pass the WASL reading and writing assessments, a state-approved alternative, or an assessment for students with disabilities. Students who do not achieve a passing score on the WASL math assessment, an approved alternative, or the math assessment for students with disabilities may meet the math graduation requirement by continuing to earn math credits until they graduate. Students who pass the reading, writing, and math sections of the WASL will earn a certificate of achievement and a high school diploma. Students who meet the math requirement by earning math credits will not receive the certificate of achievement but will earn a diploma as long as they pass the reading and writing assessments.

Students in the class of 2013 will be the first required to pass all four subjects of the WASL to earn a high school diploma (OSPI, 2007).

## Legal Challenges To Exit Exams

In the past year, Arizona and California continued to struggle with legal challenges to their high school exit exams.

### Arizona

#### Challenging the Constitutionality of the Exit Exam

In Arizona an agreement has not been reached in the *Espinoza v. State of Arizona* lawsuit that challenges the constitutionality of the exit exam requirement. The suit was filed on April 8, 2006, on behalf of a group of students in the class of 2006 who had met all graduation requirements except passing the exam (Kossan & Ryman, 2006; Fischer, 2006; CEP, 2006). The plaintiffs argue that the state inadequately funds education, thereby depriving many students of the services they need to reach state academic standards and pass Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). The suit mentions three specific groups of students harmed by the exit exam requirement: racial/ethnic minority students, low-income students, and English language learners.

On May 15, 2006, a superior court judge denied the request to suspend the exam for students in the class of 2006, explaining that it would be easier to distribute diplomas later if the plaintiffs prevailed than to get students to return diplomas if the court eventually upheld the exit exam. The judge scheduled a hearing for July 2006, but as of July 2007 an agreement had not been reached. As explained to CEP staff by plaintiffs in the *Espinoza* case, the judge denied a motion for preliminary judgment and granted a motion for class certification, though smaller than what had been requested. (Class certification means that what is achieved with this lawsuit will apply to a group of students, though in this case the group is smaller than what the plaintiffs originally hoped for.) As of June 2007, the case was in the discovery/trial preparation phase, with a trial set for January 2008.

#### Exit Exam Requirements for English Language Learners

The *Flores v. Arizona* lawsuit was first brought against the state in 1992 by the Arizona Center for Law in the Public Interest. In 2000, the plaintiffs won the case, and a court ordered Arizona to improve funding for English language learners (Bland, 2005; CEP, 2006).

In July 2005, the attorney in the original case asked a federal court to suspend the exit exam requirement for ELL students until the state complied with an earlier court order to improve instruction for these students (Sherwood, 2005; CEP, 2006). The court granted a motion to exempt ELL students from the test until the state can demonstrate that it properly funds ELL programs and provides sufficient time for ELL students to fairly compete in the exam. When the legislature failed to act, a fine of \$500,000 per day was initiated, amounting to a total of \$22 million. However, legislative leadership and the state superintendent filed an appeal and took the case back to court. English language learners in the class of 2006 were required to pass the exam to receive a high school diploma.

The lawsuit continues to challenge the state of Arizona, urging the state to provide adequate funding and services for educating English language learners. In March 2007, the court once again ruled that the legislature's attempts to meet the education needs of English language learners fall short of adequate. The judge ordered the legislature to comply by the end of the legislative session, but the session ended without a resolution to this issue. Meanwhile, the legislature and the state superintendent have appealed the decision to the 9th circuit, where it will be briefed this summer. For now, students in the graduating class of 2007 are still accountable for achieving passing scores on the AIMS to receive a high school diploma.

## California

### Lawsuit Challenges Fairness of State Exit Exam

On July 18, 2007, a tentative settlement agreement was reached in the longstanding *Valenzuela v. O'Connell* lawsuit challenging the fairness of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE). The lawsuit was filed on February 8, 2006, by a San Francisco law firm and contends that the exam unfairly penalizes students who have not received adequate learning resources. The settlement agreement leaves the exit exam in place, stating that students who complete grade 12 without achieving a passing score on both parts of the CAHSEE may receive two additional years of academic assistance in the material tested on the exam at no charge to them.

If approved, the bill would require districts receiving state funds specifically to prepare students for the CAHSEE, to provide, among other things, the following services to students who complete grade 12 without achieving passing scores on both parts of the exam:

- Two consecutive years of additional instruction after completing grade 12 or until students pass both parts of the CAHSEE, whichever comes first
- Two consecutive years of intensive instruction to improve English proficiency for English language learners after completing grade 12 or until students pass both parts of the CAHSEE, whichever comes first
- Notification to students of the availability of instruction and services, and of their right to file a complaint if they are not provided these services

The agreement received preliminary approval on July 19, 2007, by Alameda Superior Court Judge Robert Freedman. A hearing for final approval of the proposed settlement was scheduled for August 13, 2007 (McLean, 2007; Superior Court of California, 2007).

### Purpose of the Exam

Over the past few years the Center has documented the time, effort, and funds states invest in implementing state-mandated high school exit exams. In previous surveys states have identified meeting a state mandate as the purpose of high school exit exams. This year we wanted to explore the purposes behind state mandates. To this end, we asked states to identify other purposes of the exit exam. **Table 4** shows the responses to this question.

Purposes related to carrying out state policy ranked among the most identified for implementing high school exit exams. About 75% of the 24 participating states reported that the purpose of the exam is to provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions.

Considering that 19 of the 24 states participating in our survey use the state high school exit exam to meet the No Child Left Behind Act's high school assessment requirements, it is not surprising that states identified curriculum issues as another major purpose for implementing high school exit exams. Seventy-five percent of the participating states reported that the purpose of the exam is to determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum (e.g. standards, curriculum frameworks), and 66% of the participating states reported that the purpose of the exam is to increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards.

Efforts to close achievement gaps were identified as purposes of the exam by several states. About 71% of the states reported that the purpose of implementing high school exit exams is to encourage districts and

Table 4

Purpose of the High School Exit Exam as Reported by States

Purpose	Number of States
Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum (e.g., standards, curriculum frameworks)	18
Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions	18
Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure	17
Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards	16
Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups	15
Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information	13
Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment	9
Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education	6

Table reads: Eighteen of the 24 participating states reported that the purpose of the state high school exit exam is to determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum (e.g., standards, curriculum frameworks).

Note: All 24 participating states completed this part of the survey. States could give more than one response.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

schools to identify and serve students at risk of failure. And 62% reported that the purpose of the exam is to promote equity of opportunity across all student groups.

Perhaps the most surprising response on the exit exam survey was that preparing students for life after high school was among the least identified purposes for implementing high school exit exams. Less than 38% of the participating states reported that determining prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment was a purpose for implementing high school exit exams. Only 25% of the states reported that the purpose of the high school exit exam is to determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education.





## Chapter 2:

# State Assistance to Help Districts Close Achievement Gaps

### Key Findings

- ▶ Of the 20 states that completed the achievement gaps section of our survey, 19 reported a gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. This gap is the one most often reported by states to be the most challenging gap to close. In mathematics, 11 states reported this gap to be the most challenging to close. In reading/language arts, 9 states reported this gap to be the most challenging to close.
- ▶ Among the ethnic minority groups, of the 20 states that completed the achievement gaps section of our survey, 19 reported gaps between white and African American students and white and Latino students. The third most commonly reported achievement gap among the ethnic groups was that between white and Native American students. Only five states reported a gap between white and Asian students; the Asian subgroup often has higher pass rates than white students.
- ▶ More than half of the states reported that they provide funding and technical assistance to districts specifically to close the achievement gap. Fifteen of the 23 states that completed this part of the survey reported that they provide this support to close achievement gaps in reading/language arts. Fourteen of the 23 states that completed this part of the survey reported that they provide this support to close gaps in mathematics.

### Introduction

In previous years, the Center has reported achievement gaps on exit exam pass rates. This year, we chose to look not only at achievement gaps, but also at what states perceive to be the most challenging gaps to close and what types of assistance they are providing to close these gaps. In this chapter we describe the achievement gaps reported by states, which achievement gaps states report to be most challenging to close, and some of the strategies states are using to close these gaps. We also look at gaps in initial pass rates on high school exit exams.



Achievement gaps refer to the difference in academic achievement (as evidenced by such indicators as test scores, grades, drop-out rates, and graduation rates) between subgroups of students. While research on achievement gaps has focused primarily on racial, ethnic, and socio-economic subgroups (Learning Point Associates, 2007; McLaughlin, 2006), achievement gaps have been documented between English language learners and non-ELLs (Mahon, 2006; Thomas & Collier, 2001) and between students with disabilities and students not identified as having disabilities (USDOE, 2006; Spradlin, 2005).

In recent years, closing the achievement gap has become the focus of federal and state education policy. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) expressly states that it is an act “to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind” (Public Law 107-110). Closing the achievement gap has become the focus of various state projects and initiatives. For example, in 2001 the Colorado state legislature declared its goal to close the achievement gap “a central element of educational accountability in the state” and urged the state board of education and the state education agency to do what is necessary to accomplish this goal (House Joint Resolution 01-1014).

The concern for closing the achievement gap has led to the recommendation of a variety of strategies to close this gap (CEP, 2001). Policymakers have called for everything from higher academic standards, reduced class sizes, and smaller schools to better quality teachers and more rigorous coursework (Viadero & Johnston, 2000), yet the achievement gap persists.

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Note: NCLB focuses on the achievement gap within schools. Thus, it does not account for the achievement gap between schools. This limitation in NCLB is significant in that researchers have found that many schools are too homogenous to have identified subgroups under NCLB, yet the racial achievement gap may be greatest between schools as opposed to within them (Stiefel, Schwartz, & Chellman, 2007).

## Challenges and Strategies to Close the Achievement Gap

In our survey, states identified achievement gaps between subgroups of students based on the 2005-06 administration of high school exit exams and answered the question as to which gaps are the most challenging to close.

Not all states found all subgroups listed on our survey to be applicable, since some states reported that they did not have students in a particular subgroup or that a particular subgroup was not identified for the purpose of their exit exam. Specifically, one state (Virginia) reported that neither the white/Asian nor the white/Native American comparisons were applicable; one state (Mississippi) reported that all ethnic minority subgroups (other than African American) are less than 1% and too small for comparison; two states (Alaska and Georgia) reported that the English language learner/non-ELL comparison was not applicable<sup>5</sup>; and one state (Arizona) reported that the students with disabilities/students without disabilities comparison was not applicable.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Both Alaska and Georgia indicated that while the states report test data for ELLs, they do not compare the test data of ELLs with non-ELLs.

<sup>6</sup> Arizona officials explained that students with disabilities may be exempt from having to pass the exit exam to graduate or may be eligible for extra points from courses in which they received a grade of C or better.

Most non-Asians in the United States think of Asian Americans as the “model minority” in our public school systems and in our society (Spring, 2004). The term “Asian American” encompasses great diversity and includes Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, Malaysian, Laotian, and Hmong. Even though these different groups of Asian Americans experience varying levels of success in public school and beyond, they are often lumped together under one category. A recent report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office shows that while most Asian Americans have a higher educational attainment than other groups, the poor performance of some subgroups is “masked” by the overall success rate of the group as a whole (Jaschik, 2007). The following table illustrates these differences.

#### Educational Attainment and Average Income of Asian American Groups in 2005

Group	Percentage of Adults with at Least a 4-Year Degree	Average Income
Asian Indian	68%	\$66,000
Korean	54%	\$52,000
Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan	54%	\$48,000
Chinese	53%	\$56,000
Filipino	48%	\$46,000
Japanese	44%	\$59,000
Indonesian, Malaysian, Thai	44%	\$40,000
Vietnamese	25%	\$41,000
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	17%	\$38,000
Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong	13%	\$32,000

Source: United States Government Accountability Office Report to Congressional Requesters. *Higher Education: Information Sharing Could Help Institutions Identify and Address Challenges Some Asian Americans Face and Pacific Islanders Face*, July 2007.

### Reported Achievement Gaps

The number of states that identified achievement gaps in mathematics and reading/language arts is shown in **table 5**. Of the 24 states that completed our survey, 4 (Alabama, New Mexico, Ohio, and South Carolina) did not answer the question that asked them to identify achievement gaps.

As displayed in table 5, achievement gaps between white students and African American students and between white students and Latino students were the most commonly identified by participating states. All states identified a gap between white and African American students in math. All participating states identified an achievement gap between white and Latino students in both reading language arts and mathematics (except Mississippi, which does not have a subgroup large enough to compare). Gaps between white and Native American students and between white and Asian American students were the least identified. The achievement gap between white and Asian American students was the least identified of all gaps. However, as explained in **box 2**, the lumping together of various groups into a single category of Asian American often masks the underperformance of specific groups within the Asian American subgroup.

Achievement gaps between students with disabilities and students without disabilities, low-income students and students who are not low-income, and English language learners and students who are not ELLs were also identified by most of the states that chose to complete this part of our survey.

**Table 5** Achievement Gaps as Reported by States

Identified Subgroups	Gaps in Reading/Language	Gaps in Mathematics
White students compared with African American students	19	20
White students compared with Latino students	19	19
Students with disabilities compared with students without disabilities	19	19
Low-income students as compared with students who are not low-income	19	18
English language learners compared with non-ELLs	18	16
White students compared with Native American students	12	14
White students compared with Asian American students	5	5

Table reads: Nineteen states, respectively, reported an achievement gap between white and African American students; between white and Latino students; between students with disabilities and students without disabilities; and between low-income students and students who are not low-income. Eighteen states reported an achievement gap between English language learners and non-ELLs.

Note: Twenty of the participating states reported achievement gaps.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

### The Most Challenging Achievement Gaps to Close

When asked to identify the gap that is most challenging to close, seven (Alabama, Arizona, Florida, New Mexico, Ohio, South Carolina, and Virginia) of the states that completed our survey did not provide an answer regarding reading/language arts, and nine states (those mentioned above plus New Jersey and New York) did not provide an answer regarding mathematics. The Florida respondent noted that the state intentionally chose not to complete this portion of our survey and commented, “There is not one achievement gap that is harder to close. There are varying strategies and supports needed depending on the circumstances, age, and developmental levels of students.”

As presented in **table 6**, the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities was the most commonly identified to be the most challenging gap to close in both reading/language arts and mathematics. The achievement gap between white and African American students was the only gap among the ethnic minority groups to be identified as the most challenging to close. Washington was the only state to identify the gap between low-income students and students who are not low-income as the most challenging gap to close for both reading/language arts and mathematics.

Table 6

Number of States Reporting the Most Challenging Achievement Gaps

Reported Achievement Gap	Most Challenging to Close in Reading/Language Arts	Most Challenging to Close in Mathematics
Students with disabilities compared with students without disabilities	9	11
English language learners/limited English proficiency (LEP) students compared with non-LEP students	4	1
White students compared with African American students	3	2
Low-income students as compared with students who are not low-income	1	1

Table reads: Nine states reported the achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities to be the most challenging to close in reading/language arts.

Note: Seventeen states identified the most challenging gap to close.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

## Funding and Technical Assistance to Close the Achievement Gap

We asked states to tell us whether they were providing targeted funding or technical assistance to districts with any of the reported achievement gaps in reading/language arts and mathematics. We then asked states that were doing so which subgroup(s) they were targeting with funding and assistance and how this served to close the gap. Only one state, Alabama, did not respond to this portion of our high school exit exam survey.

In reading the following sections, it is important to note that the majority of states use the same high school exit exam to fulfill testing requirements mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. In fact, of the 26 states currently implementing or planning to implement exit exams, 19 use the same exam to fulfill NCLB testing requirements. Much of the support provided by states to districts serves the primary purpose of increasing pass rates, in turn preventing the consequences enforced on low-performing schools, districts, and states by NCLB, and helping students achieve a requirement for a high school diploma.

### Targeted Support to Close the Achievement Gap in Reading/Language Arts

Of the 23 states that responded to this portion of our survey, more than half (15) reported providing targeted funding or technical assistance specifically intended to help close achievement gaps in the reading/language arts part of the exit exams. For example, Idaho reported appropriating funds for special programs to address limited English proficient (LEP) student needs in 2006-07 and 2007-08. Georgia indicated that graduation coaches and academic coaches both count as types of technical assistance the state provides to districts.

Massachusetts reported making grants available for services for students with disabilities and English language learners; for transportation in rural districts and in districts with high populations of low-income students; and for school support specialists to coordinate and implement district support to the 10 urban districts with the highest numbers of schools in improvement, restructuring, or corrective action. Massachusetts also provides a variety of forms of technical assistance, including in-depth training on teaching ELLs and a two-year program for principals on instructional leadership in a standards-based educational program. New York provides funding as required by *Abbott v. Burke* for districts with signifi-

cant achievement gaps. New York also reported providing technical assistance through several early literacy programs focused on districts with significant achievement gaps.

### Targeted Support to Close the Achievement Gap in Mathematics

Of the 23 states that responded to this portion of our survey, more than half (14) reported providing targeted funding or technical assistance to districts with achievement gaps in the mathematics section of the exit exams. For example, Idaho provides \$750,000 appropriated by the state legislature to address the needs of ELL students. Georgia provides a mathematics training initiative and academic coaches. Florida provides funding to districts for instructional services to ELLs and also a variety of different types of technical assistance, including the Algebra Success Keys (ASK) initiative to provide professional development for teachers to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

## Gaps in Initial Pass Rates in 2005-06

A look at initial pass rates on exit exams displays the consistency of achievement gaps across all states for specific subgroups. The tables in this section show the states with some of the smallest and largest gaps in initial pass rates to display the range across states. Initial pass rates for all other states can be found in their individual profiles at the back of this report. Although cumulative pass rates might be a better measure of this differential performance, not all states collect this data.

### Gaps in Initial Pass Rates Between White and Non-White Students

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the gaps between white and African American students and white and Latino students were the most commonly identified gaps by states. The gap between white students and Native American students was the third of the ethnic group gaps most commonly identified by states. Achievement gaps between white and Asian American students were the least identified by states.

A look at initial pass rates on exit exams in 2005-06 supports state responses. **Table 7** displays the gaps in initial pass rates in some of the states with the largest and smallest initial pass rate gaps between white students and students of color to show a range in the gaps within states. As shown in the table, the gaps between white and African American students and white and Latino students tend to be greater than the gaps between white and Asian American and white and Native American students. In 2005-06, for example, Indiana had a 38 percentage point gap between white and African American students in mathematics, a 25 percentage point gap between white and Latino students, a 15 percentage point gap between white and Native American students, and a negative 11 percentage point gap between white and Asian students.

### Gaps in Initial Pass Rates Between Students With Disabilities and All Students

As previously discussed in this chapter, 19 of the 20 states that completed the part of our survey that asked them to identify achievement gaps reported that based on student performance on the exit exams, there is an achievement gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Furthermore, this gap was the most often reported as the most challenging one to close.

**Table 8** shows the range in initial pass rate gaps between students with disabilities and all students in the states with some of the smallest and largest achievement gaps. Not only is the gap between students with disabilities and all students persistent across all states, but it is most often the largest of all gaps within each state, with gaps across the states falling between 18 and 44 percentage points in reading/language arts and between 12 and 44 percentage points in mathematics.

Table 7

## Gaps in Initial Pass Rates on Exit Exams Between White and Non-White Students

## Gaps in Mathematics

State	White Pass Rate	African American Pass Rate	White/African American Percentage Point Gap	Latino Pass Rate	White/Latino Percentage Point Gap	Asian American Pass Rate	White/Asian American Percentage Point Gap*	Native American Pass Rate	White/Native American Percentage Point Gap
Alaska	86%	58%	28	73%	13	77%	9	60%	26
Arizona	78%	51%	27	50%	28	83%	--	41%	37
Florida	87%	60%	27	72%	15	91%	--	79%	8
Georgia	96%	86%	10	89%	7	97%	--	96%	0
Idaho	84%	76%	8	58%	26	90%	--	65%	19
Indiana	71%	33%	38	46%	25	82%	--	56%	15
Maryland	81%	46%	35	57%	24	87%	--	61%	20
North Carolina	93%	40%	53	51%	42	82%	11	46%	47

## Reading/English Language Arts

State	White Pass Rate	African American Pass Rate	White/African American Percentage Point Gap	Latino Pass Rate	White/Latino Percentage Point Gap	Asian American Pass Rate	White/Asian American Percentage Point Gap*	Native American Pass Rate	White/Native American Percentage Point Gap
Alaska	86%	57%	29	67%	19	62%	24	51%	35
Arizona	85%	62%	23	56%	29	82%	3	48%	37
Florida	65%	30%	35	44%	21	65%	0	55%	10
Georgia	98%	93%	5	90%	8	96%	2	96%	2
Idaho	88%	75%	13	59%	29	77%	11	72%	16
Indiana	73%	39%	34	43%	30	70%	3	60%	13
Maryland	72%	42%	30	48%	24	77%	--	56%	16
North Carolina	94%	80%	14	79%	15	93%	1	81%	13

Table reads: On the Alaska math exit exam administered in 2006, 86% of white test-takers passed on the first attempt, compared with 58% of African American test-takers, a gap of 28 percentage points. That same year on the Alaska reading/English language arts exit exam, 86% of white test-takers passed on the first attempt, compared with 57% of African American test-takers, a gap of 29 percentage points.

\*A dotted line in this column means that the Asian American subgroup had higher pass rates than the white subgroup.

Note: Percentages in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The shaded columns in the table show the gap in pass rates between the two groups noted, expressed as a percentage point difference.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

Table 8

### Gaps in Initial Pass Rates on Exit Exams Between Students With Disabilities and All Students, 2006

State	Reading/English Language Arts			Mathematics		
	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Percentage Point Gap	Students with Disabilities	All Students	Percentage Point Gap
Alaska	30%	74%	44	58%	70%	12
Arizona	29%	71%	42	21%	65%	44
Idaho	48%	85%	37	29%	70%	41
Massachusetts	75%	93%	18	62%	88%	26
Mississippi	37%	78%	41	75%	91%	16
South Carolina	42%	85%	43	36%	80%	44

Table reads: In 2006 in Alaska, 30% of students with disabilities passed the reading part of the high school exit exam on the first try, compared with 74% of all test-takers, a gap in pass rates of 44 percentage points. In the same state, 58% of students with disabilities passed the mathematics part of the exit exam on the first try, compared with 70% of all students, a gap in pass rates of 12 percentage points.

Note: Percentages in this table have been rounded to the nearest whole number. The percentage point gap column shows the differences in pass rates between students with disabilities and all students who took that exit exam.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam survey of state departments of education, June 2007.

## Conclusion

As has been the case in prior years, achievement gaps persist across all states. CEP's goal this year was to gain an understanding of what, if anything, states are doing specifically to close these gaps. As seen in this chapter, almost all states (23 out of 24) report that they provide targeted support to close achievement gaps. Targeted funding and technical assistance tend to be the most commonly reported forms of assistance to close achievement gaps. Yet despite these efforts, gaps persist.

The next two chapters look at what states and districts are doing to raise initial pass rates for all students and remediation efforts to help students who do not pass exit exams on their first attempt.



## Chapter 3: State Assistance to Districts

### Key Findings

- ▶ Twenty-three of the 24 states that responded to our survey reported providing some type of technical assistance to help all districts raise initial pass rates for all students on high school exit exams. The most common types of technical assistance were intended to help districts support teachers. Twenty states reported providing assistance to help teachers administer the exam, and 20 reported offering assistance to help teachers prepare students for the exam. Only 13 states reported providing technical assistance to improve the instructional leadership of administrators.
- ▶ The majority of states deliver technical assistance through specialists at the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and online assistance. Several states deliver technical assistance through field-based specialists, and a few states provide additional funding to districts, either through grants or fiscal resources to hire local support personnel.
- ▶ Fifteen states provide assistance and/or remediation to help districts support students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. Two of these states offer additional funding for remediation and support of students. California, for example, reported awarding \$70 million in grants to assist students who failed to pass the exit exam in grade 10.
- ▶ Many states are developing remediation programs that focus directly on students, such as providing student study guides and helping schools identify and target students for additional assistance. Other states are directing their efforts toward administrators and teachers by providing professional development on content, benchmarking/formative assessment, and the like.

### Introduction

In last year's report, we looked at state efforts to help students pass exit exams and found that most states are providing supports to help school districts prepare students for exit exams and remediation when they do not pass. This year we wanted to examine more specifically the kinds of interventions and remediation states provide to all school districts as well as to those with identified achievement gaps.

This chapter presents our findings about two broad forms of assistance that states offer to all of their districts: intervention—technical assistance to raise initial pass rates for all students on high school exit exams; and remediation—technical assistance to support students who have failed in their initial attempts to pass the exit exam. We also report information about the particular types of technical assistance that states provide, grouped by their intended beneficiaries—teachers, schools, or school districts. Moreover, we discuss the methods for delivering this technical assistance.

## Types of Technical Assistance to Raise Pass Rates for All Students

Twenty-one of the 24 states that responded to this portion of our survey reported providing some form of technical assistance to help all districts raise initial pass rates of all students on high school exit exams. The one notable exception was New Mexico, which does not provide any technical assistance to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the exit exam.

**Table 9** lists eight types of technical assistance to improve pass rates for all students, ranked according to the number of states providing each type. The types of technical assistance in the table mirror the list of response options about state assistance in our state survey; we developed these particular options in our survey based on information from our past surveys and expert views of the most common types of state assistance. In table 9, these types of technical assistance are categorized according to three types of recipients: teachers, schools, and school districts.

**Table 9**

**Technical Assistance Provided by States to Help Districts Raise Initial Pass Rates for All Students**

Type of Technical Assistance	Number of states
<b>Technical Assistance Aimed at Teachers</b>	
To help teachers administer the exam	20
To help all teachers prepare students for the exam	20
To help teachers become more proficient in their content area	18
<b>Technical Assistance Aimed at Schools</b>	
To help schools implement comprehensive school reform	17
To help schools identify and target students for assistance	16
<b>Technical Assistance Aimed at School Districts</b>	
To help districts improve professional development for teachers	15
To help districts improve formative uses of assessment	14
To help all districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators	13

Table reads: Twenty states reported providing assistance to help teachers administer the exam and 20 states reported providing assistance to help teachers prepare students for the exam. Just 13 states reported providing assistance to help all districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators.

Note: All 24 participating states completed this part of the survey.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

### Assistance Aimed at Teachers

Teachers play a critical role in the success of an exit exam policy. Not only do teachers prepare students for the exam, but in most cases they also administer the exam.

As table 9 indicates, the most common types of technical assistance indicated by states were intended to help support teachers. Twenty of the 24 states that participated in our state survey reported providing technical assistance to help teachers administer the exam. For example, California, Florida, and South Carolina provide manuals and other training materials to help teachers administer the exam.

Twenty states also offer technical assistance to help teachers prepare all students for the exam. California, for one, provides student study guides, and Louisiana delivers focused lessons and practice tests for use by teachers and students.

Officials in 18 states said their state offers technical assistance to help teachers become more proficient in their content area. South Carolina, for example, makes funds available for professional development on standards implementation (PDSI). This professional development is intended to improve teachers' content knowledge and instructional strategies, and 10% of the funds are connected to the content measured on the exit exam.

### Assistance Aimed at Schools

Some types of technical assistance aimed at schools were commonly used, as displayed in table 9. Seventeen states offer technical assistance to help schools implement comprehensive school reform, while 16 states offer support to help schools identify and target students for additional assistance. Florida, for example, offers field-based specialists such as school facilitators and principal mentors to help implement comprehensive school reform. In low-performing districts, Ohio reported administering a 9<sup>th</sup> grade test to identify and intervene with students at risk of not passing the exit exam.

### Assistance Aimed at Districts

School districts received various types of technical assistance, though to a lesser extent than that provided to teachers and schools. Respondents from 15 states said that their state provides technical assistance to help districts improve professional development for teachers. For example, Georgia reported working with the state's regional educational service agencies (RESAs) to provide professional development opportunities for teachers.

Fourteen states provide assistance to districts to improve formative uses of assessment—defined on our survey as assessment information that can be used to adapt teaching and learning to meet students' needs. Georgia, to cite one example, reported providing a Web-based online assessment system (OAS) that allows districts and schools to use state-developed formative assessments and to build customized formative assessments for all grades and content areas covered by the state's assessment system. Massachusetts indicated that it provides individual student success plans (ISSPs) to identify learning gaps and structure interventions for students whose records indicate they are at risk of failing.

Just 13 states reported providing technical assistance—such as networking opportunities, leadership academies, and workshops—to help districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators. Maryland and Ohio, for example, offer networking opportunities and leadership academies to support administrators in improving leadership skills and use of data. Georgia arranges Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) training and holds sessions aimed to help administrators raise standards.

## Delivering Assistance to Raise Pass Rates for All Students

In addition to asking states about types of technical assistance provided to help raise initial pass rates for all students, we also asked about six common methods of delivering this assistance. The delivery methods listed on our survey included the following:

- Specialists in the state education agency
- Train-the-trainer workshops (workshops that provide information and support to district and school personnel who then, in turn, provide support to staff in their respective districts or schools)
- Online assistance (support provided via the internet, including but not limited to information posted on the state education agency's Web site or provided remotely by state education agency specialists)
- Field-based specialists (state education agency specialists who work in districts and schools to provide assistance)
- Grants to districts
- Fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance
- Other methods, forms of assistance, or interventions described later in this report

For most types of technical assistance, the most common delivery methods include providing specialists in the state education agency, providing online assistance, and conducting train-the-trainer workshops. Using field-based specialists is a moderately common method for some types of technical assistance. Some states provide grants to districts, while a few states provide additional financial assistance to fund local support personnel. Below we discuss in more detail the methods used to deliver assistance aimed at teachers, schools, and districts.

### Delivering Technical Assistance Aimed at Teachers

The number of states using various methods to deliver three main types of assistance aimed at teachers is displayed in **table 10**. Specialists in the state education agency are among the most common means of delivering all three types of assistance to teachers. Delivering assistance online is also relatively common for all three types. Train-the-trainer workshops are used by 18 states to help teachers administer exit exams, but are used by only 12 states to help teachers prepare students for the exam or become more proficient in content. A moderate number of states use field-based specialists to assist teachers with issues of exam administration (6 states), student preparation (8 states) and content proficiency (10 states). Providing grants to districts has been the most common way to help teachers become more proficient in content (10 states). The remaining methods of delivery displayed in table 10 are used by fewer than 10 states.

### Delivering Technical Assistance Aimed at Schools and Districts

States use various methods to deliver the two types of technical assistance aimed at schools and the three types aimed at districts, as shown in **table 11**.

In general, specialists in the state education agency and train-the-trainer workshops are the means used by most states to deliver assistance aimed at schools and districts. Field-based specialists are also often used, especially to deliver assistance to help districts with comprehensive reform (12 states) or to help districts improve teacher professional development (10 states). Of the other delivery methods listed in table 11, online assistance is the most prevalent, used by 9 states to deliver three of the five listed types of assistance. The other delivery methods shown in table 11 are less common.

**Table 10** Number of States Using Various Methods to Deliver Technical Assistance Aimed at Teachers

Delivery Method	Help Teachers Administer Exam	Help Teachers Prepare Students for Exam	Help Teachers Become More Proficient in Content
Specialist(s) in state education agency	17	17	17
Train-the-trainer workshops	18	12	12
Online assistance	15	18	12
Field-based specialists	6	8	10
Grants to districts	0	7	10
Fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance	2	7	7
Other	4	3	3

Table reads: Seventeen states reported that they provide specialists in the state education agency to help teachers administer exit exams. Twelve states reported that they have train-the-trainer workshops to help teachers prepare students for exit exams.

Note: All 24 participating states completed this part of the survey.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

**Table 11** Number of States Using Various Methods to Deliver Technical Assistance Aimed at Schools and Districts

Delivery Method	Help Schools Implement Comprehensive Reform	Help Schools Identify and Target Students for Assistance	Help Districts Improve Teacher Professional Development	Help Districts Improve Formative Assessment	Help Districts Improve Administrators' Instructional Leadership
Specialist(s) in state education agency	15	11	15	9	9
Train-the-trainer workshops	11	10	13	10	8
Field-based specialists	12	7	10	6	9
Online assistance	9	9	6	9	2
Grants to districts	7	8	6	5	4
Fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance	6	8	4	4	2
Other	0	4	2	3	3

Table reads: Ten states provide train-the-trainer workshops to help schools identify and target students for assistance. Twelve states provide field-based specialists to help schools implement comprehensive reform.

Note: All 24 participating states completed this part of the survey.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

## Other Assistance or Interventions to Raise Pass Rates for All Students

In addition to asking states about specific types of technical assistance, we asked them whether they were providing other forms of assistance or interventions to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students. By asking an open-ended question, we were able to generate a list of particular options in our survey based on our prior work with exit exams at the state and district level.

Of the 24 states that responded to our survey, several reported providing other forms of assistance. The following three forms were mentioned most often:

- Exam preparation materials for teachers (17 states)
- Released test items from prior years (15)
- Exam preparation materials to students (15)

Other forms mentioned by states included:

- Courses to prepare students for the exam (5 states)
- Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates (5)
- State-developed benchmarks/formative assessments (4)

Three states (California, Ohio, and South Carolina) mentioned forms of assistance or interventions in addition to the examples we provided. California posts exam blueprints on its Web site. Ohio publishes a family guide and posts various practice guides on its Web site. South Carolina releases online materials to help students and teachers understand and practice item types and scoring. Three states (Idaho, New Mexico, and North Carolina) responded that they did not provide any other types of assistance or intervention to all districts to raise initial pass rates.

## Technical Assistance or Remediation for Students Who Fail Exit Exams

We asked states which types of assistance or remediation they were providing to all districts to help students who fail in their initial attempts to pass exit exams. We provided states with a list of typical assistance and remediation strategies, including:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content areas
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment
- Additional professional development for administrators

We also asked states if they were providing other types of assistance or remediation not included on our list and, if so, to explain.

Seven of the 24 states that responded to this portion of our survey—Alaska, Mississippi, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee—reported that they did not offer any technical

assistance or remediation to districts to support students who failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. However, 16 states responded that they provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.

As shown in **table 12**, targeted remediation programs are the most common type of assistance for students who fail exams, with 13 of the 16 participating states responding that they deliver this type of remediation.

**Table 12 Assistance or Remediation Provided to All Districts to Help Students Who Fail Their Initial Attempt to Pass the Exit Exam**

Type of Assistance or Remediation	Number of States that Provide This Type of Assistance or Remediation
Targeted remediation programs for students	13
Additional professional development for teachers in their content area	8
Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment	8
Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure	7
Additional professional development for administrators	4
Other	7
None	7

Table reads: Of the states that provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam, 13 states provide targeted remediation programs for students.

Note: Sixteen states reported providing some type of assistance or remediation for students who fail their initial attempt.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007.

Seven states (Alabama, Arizona, California, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, and Ohio) reported providing other assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who fail in their initial attempts to pass the exit exam. Officials from two of these states said they provide additional funding for remediation and support of students who fail to pass the exit exam on their first try. California reported awarding \$70 million in grants to help students who fail to pass the exit exam in grade 10. Officials from the other states said their state delivered additional support through materials and coaching for teachers. Idaho, for example, purchased the Plato Learning courseware in K-12 language arts and math and made it available to all districts and schools. The state also provides training to teachers so they may effectively use the courseware. Georgia provides academic coaches to train teachers on best practices in their specific content area and to work with teachers on pedagogy, formative assessment, and working with at-risk students.

## Conclusion

Although states report that they provide all of these forms of support, it is difficult to tell from a survey whether these forms of assistance are adequate. It is indisputable, however, that gaps persist despite all of these forms of support. There is urgent need to take a closer look at how these supports are used at the district and school level. For example, is state-developed professional development effective in raising students' pass rates on exit exams? How are state-developed study guides perceived and used by school administrators, teachers, and students? These types of questions require more in-depth work.



# Chapter 4:

## Interventions and Remediation at the Local Level

### Key Findings

- ▶ Almost all states with exit exams (23 of the 24 participating states) reported that school districts in their state offer remediation outside the regular school day, but only two states—California and Florida—require this by law.
- ▶ The majority of states with exit exams (20 of the 24 participating states) reported that local school districts in their state offered remediation during the day. Three states—California, Florida, Nevada—require this by law.
- ▶ Data from our case study research in five states (Virginia, Maryland, Texas, Mississippi, and Arizona) over the past three years show that high schools and school districts are using many different kinds of interventions and remediation to assist their students in passing state exit exams, such as assessment data to guide instruction or inform additional interventions, intensive in-class reviews of tested material prior to the exam, test preparation activities, and benchmark assessments.
- ▶ Our case study research has revealed benefits, drawbacks, and perhaps unintended outcomes of exit exam interventions and remediation on passing rates as well as on curriculum and instruction. Benefits include reported increases in passing rates, student effort and motivation, and consistency in instruction and curriculum. Drawbacks include the significant resources districts report spending on exit exam interventions and remediation. Other concerns voiced by teachers, administrators, and students were lack of depth in the curriculum, a decrease in teaching higher-level thinking skills, and a decrease in flexibility in the core curriculum (often through the loss of electives).

### Introduction

The previous chapter presented the various ways in which states provide assistance to school districts to raise passing rates on high school exit exams and remediate students when they fail. This chapter highlights interventions and remediation that school districts in our case studies report they are employing for all students, as well as interventions and remediation targeted at special populations of students, such as academically struggling students or English language learners. While an analysis of our case study data identified specific interventions and remediation, our data are descriptive and are not meant to be representative of schools and districts for each state. Other schools and districts in these five states may or may not employ these strategies.



## Strategies Used by Districts to Raise Pass Rates

On this year's survey, many states indicated that school districts in their state are implementing strategies and supports to raise pass rates on exit exams. However, only a few have laws that require school districts to provide these supports and strategies. As presented in **table 13**, the most common strategy reported by almost all states with exit exams (23 of the 25 participating states) was remediation offered outside the regular school day. Both California<sup>7</sup> and Florida reported that state law requires school districts to provide this support. The least-used strategy reported by states (10) was modifying curriculum in regular classes.

**Table 13** Number of States Reporting that School Districts Use Various Strategies Aimed at Raising Pass Rates on Exit Exams

Support or Strategy	Number of States That Report That Some Districts Provide this Type of Assistance or Remediation	States Indicating That the Specific School District Support is Required by Law
Remediation offered outside the regular school day	23	California, Florida
Remediation offered during the regular school day	20	California, Florida, Nevada
District-designed benchmark/formative assessment	19	Florida
Professional development to help teachers become more proficient in their content areas	17	Florida
Professional development to help teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure	17	Florida
Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments	16	Florida
District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides	16	None
Professional development for administrators	15	Florida
Changes in class schedules and offerings	14	Florida
Extended class day	14	Florida
Individualized academic plans for students	13	Florida, Nevada, Washington
Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers	12	Florida
Modified curriculum in regular classes	10	Florida

Table reads: Of the 24 states that responded to the survey question, 19 states indicated that some school districts in their state use the strategy of district-designed benchmark/formative assessments to raise pass rates on exit exams. Only Florida requires by law that school districts provide this support.

Note: All 24 participating states completed this part of the survey.

Source: Center on Education Policy, exit exam surveys of state departments of education, June 2007

<sup>7</sup> California reported that remediation is required under law if the school district receives funding under the \$70 million grant awarded to local school districts to develop programs to help students pass the exit exam in grade 11 or 12. The enacting legislation indicates that funding can be used for individual or small group instruction, hiring additional teachers, purchasing scoring and reviewing diagnostic assessments, counseling, designing instruction to meet specific needs of eligible students, and appropriate training to meet the needs of additional students. Remediation is also required for those students with disabilities who receive an exemption from the exit exam requirement as stated in the law.

Only one state, New Mexico, reported that its school districts provided no official supports to raise passing rates on exit exams. As one state official explained, “provision of supports is a local decision and responsibility.”

## Exit Exam Policy at the Local Level

After studying exit exam policy at the state level for several years, the Center decided to undertake research aimed at investigating the effects of exit exam policies at the local level. To this end, we designed a series of increasingly intensive case studies which began in Virginia and Maryland and continued in Texas and Mississippi and, most recently, in Arizona. In all, we have studied 8 school districts and 13 high schools in these five states. Data sources varied for each of the studies, but included interviews with various education stakeholders, student surveys, analysis of state and school district policies, and student testing data. The following is an analysis of interventions and remediation that school districts in our case studies report they employ.

### Interventions Available to All Students

While remediation for students who have failed an exit exam is essential, interventions that prepare students for exit exams are also crucial. We wanted to know what kinds of supports schools and districts have in place for their students. Analysis of our case study data from five states over the past two years reveals that schools and districts implement many different kinds of interventions to assist students in passing their state’s high school exit exam. For each of the five states studied so far, we offer a glimpse of the kinds of interventions schools and districts have put in place to help all of their students. The interventions offered by our case study districts that were available to all students in five states include:

- Intensive in-class review of tested material prior to the exam
- Test preparation activities
- Benchmark or interim assessments
- Use of assessment data to guide instruction and additional interventions
- Increased instructional time in math and reading
- Strategic assignment of more effective teachers to teach exit exam content classes
- Instructional pacing or planning guides
- Focus on tested content over non-tested content
- Tutoring outside the school day
- Alignment of curriculum with state standards and exit exams
- Writing across the curriculum

Several of these interventions are described in more detail in the following pages.

### **Intensive Review of Tested Material Prior to Exit Exam**

Students and teachers in several schools and districts reported incorporating review sessions during the school day in the days or weeks immediately preceding the exit exam. In several schools, students often described these periods of intense review as “cramming” for the exam.

In some schools in the Austin Independent School District, teachers reported that just before the exit exam they would break from the guided curriculum to review content that might appear on the test. These review periods would last anywhere from two to six weeks. Because the exit exam in Texas at the time of the study was a criterion-referenced, standards-based exam rather than an end-of-course exam, these in-class review sessions sometimes covered material from previous grades or from courses students had not yet taken.

### **Test Preparation Activities**

In the schools and districts we studied in all five states, both teachers and students reported the use of various kinds of test preparation activities in their classrooms or during the instructional day. These preparation activities included:

- Reviewing old tests or test questions
- Working through teacher-developed study guides
- Using the same kind of question types that are found on the exit exam
- Teaching test-taking strategies
- Creating in-class assignments that mirror the exit exam questions
- Using warm-up activities that address tested skills at the beginning of classes or in homeroom periods
- Reviewing the state-developed study guide

Some students described these activities as pervasive. In Austin Independent School District, 76% of students surveyed<sup>8</sup> reported practicing sample exit exam questions during class, and 75% of students surveyed reported that teachers spend time reviewing test-taking skills in their classes. These practices were even more pronounced in Mississippi public schools. Ninety-three percent of students surveyed reported practicing sample exit exam test questions during class, and 92% reported that teachers spend time reviewing test-taking skills in class.

### **Benchmark or Interim Assessments**

Benchmark or interim assessments are used in schools in all five of the states we studied. In Arizona, one school described its benchmark tests as tests that are aligned to the state standards and the exit exam. All of the standards are divided into four quarters, and teachers are given pacing charts that identify which standards teachers are supposed to be focusing on. The benchmark assessments test students’ understanding of the standards. In this school, benchmark testing begins in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, and students are tested every nine weeks.

<sup>8</sup> We were unable to obtain a representative student sample for our survey in either the Jackson Public Schools or the Austin Independent School District. Therefore, survey results should be interpreted cautiously. See the full report “It’s Different Now”: How Exit Exams Are Affecting Teaching and Learning in Jackson and Austin at [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org) for a more in-depth description of the study’s methodology.

### Uses of Assessment Data

Teachers and administrators reported that the data generated from the benchmark or interim assessments were often used to identify student weaknesses or low-performing students who needed more intensive interventions. Some teachers said that data from the benchmark tests helped them better focus their instruction. Sometimes assessment data were used to do both. For example, teachers and administrators in a school district in Mississippi reported that the results of benchmark assessments were used to assess students' strengths and weaknesses and to differentiate or alter instruction to address the weaknesses. One teacher in Jackson, Mississippi, reported that assessment data would shape instruction during the school year as well as help her focus instruction for the following school year.

Schools and districts varied greatly in their ability to use data depending on several factors, including the physical infrastructure in place to support the use of data and the expertise available to build, manage, and maintain data systems as well as train school personnel in the use of data. One administrator in a Texas school district described the district's use of data as "strategic, not wanton." Several district and school-level administrators in all five states characterized their use of data in this way as well.

### Increased Instructional Time in Math and Reading

Some schools and districts reported increasing instructional time in either math or reading or both for all students. For example, in one high school in Arizona, a literacy support class is assigned to all students<sup>9</sup> in addition to their 9<sup>th</sup> grade English class. This class does not teach students how to read, but rather teaches students strategies to become better readers. Further, all freshmen except honors math students are scheduled for an additional math period. While a few high schools reported increasing time in math and literacy for all students, most high schools we studied had increased time in these subject areas for students who were struggling academically or for students who had already failed the exit exam.

### Strategic Assignment of Teachers

Some high schools and districts reported making strategic teacher assignments. The Jackson Public Schools, for example, reported that they look at faculty who have been successful in teaching particular content areas and move those teachers within the school so their skills can be used to help students pass the exit exams.

### Instructional Pacing and Planning Guides

These guides are aimed at improving consistency of instruction across schools within a district. In Jackson Public Schools, instructional pacing guides are intended to help teachers know what topics and skills they must cover to prepare students effectively for the benchmark assessments. For courses covered by the exit exam, the district pacing guides are specifically designed to prepare students to succeed on the exams.

### Targeted Intervention

Most of the high schools we have studied have specific interventions to help special populations of students in their schools pass the exit exam. Most of the high schools in these five states had interventions for academically struggling students, while only some of the high schools we studied (mostly in Arizona) had interventions specifically aimed to help English language learners.

<sup>9</sup> Students who are identified as English language learners are not scheduled for this class because the goals are addressed in students' English as a second language classes instead.

### Interventions for Academically Struggling Students

The most common reported intervention for academically struggling students was the use of remedial classes in English and math (algebra and geometry, for instance). High schools in Arizona offer a variety of remedial classes that use a commercial curriculum such as Read 180. This curriculum has a lexile<sup>10</sup> testing component, and depending on the lexile level, the student is assigned a particular reading program. This class meets for two periods a day, and students who typically qualify for this program are students who read at the 3<sup>rd</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.

In Jackson Public Schools, all high schools operate on block schedules. This allows the high schools to offer additional instructional time in areas such as technical writing, science skills, and transitions to algebra. Students' grades and their scores on the benchmark assessments are often used to help determine whether they should be enrolled in a support class. A student who is struggling in math, for example, is often double-scheduled in math. One class focuses on basic math.

Tutoring before and after school is another intervention targeted to academically struggling students. In Jackson Public Schools, for example, students are selected for tutoring based on data from the benchmark assessments. Assessment data is also used in some of the high schools in Arizona to target students who "fall far below" on the state exam to provide additional interventions to these students.

Another intervention aimed at assisting academically struggling students is individualized student plans. In Austin Independent School District, these plans consist of structured interventions to help students who are struggling in the classroom; they also ensure that students have the supports needed to pass the exit exam.

### Interventions for English Language Learners

In Arizona, many of the high schools and districts we studied have specific interventions to assist English language learners with passing the exit exam. Because teachers and administrators identify language as the most significant barrier to passing the exit exam, most interventions targeted at ELLs are related to English language acquisition. One example of this is the use of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) by teachers in content area classes. This model assists teachers with instructional strategies aimed at helping English language learners learn academic content and includes various components such as lesson preparation, building students' background knowledge, and lesson delivery.<sup>11</sup>

### Remediation for All Students

High schools and districts have implemented exit exam remediation in an attempt to raise passing rates and thus graduation rates. In many of the high schools, specific kinds of remediation were mandatory. An analysis of our case study data reveals that the high schools and districts we studied are using fairly consistent and similar remediation strategies and supports. The remediation offered by our case study districts to *all eligible students* in five states includes:

- Tutoring
- Additional classes in failed exit exam subject
- Individualized study guides
- Exit exam prep classes
- Personal graduation plans
- Summer school

<sup>10</sup> Lexiles are used to match a student's reading level with an appropriate text.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on this protocol see [www.cal.org/siop](http://www.cal.org/siop).

These different types of remediation are described in more detail below.

### **Tutoring**

Most of the high schools studied offered some kind of tutoring to all students who fail an exit exam. Depending on the high school, the time in which tutoring was offered varied, often depending on the needs of students. Tutoring was offered before school, after school, during school (at lunch for example), on weekends, and even in the summer. In Jackson Public Schools, the only tutoring specifically targeted at students who have failed an exit exam is a 20-hour block offered in the weeks before a scheduled retest. Students are encouraged but not required to attend tutoring sessions.

Some teachers and administrators reported having difficulty getting students to attend tutoring sessions. In Arizona for example, some English language learners have either family obligations (such as watching a younger sibling) or have to work outside the regular school day. In one rural school in Arizona, transportation was a significant issue; some students may have to travel over an hour to get from home to school. This rural school was also a farm-based community, and many students had to work after school.

### **Additional Classes in Failed Exit Exam Subjects**

Most of the high schools studied offered additional classes for students who had failed an exit exam. In some schools, these classes were mandatory, while in a few they were not. For example, in Austin Independent School District, students who fail the exit exam are placed in a double block of classes that includes a regular class (such as English 12) and a second class focused specifically on exit exam material in the same subject. One administrator in the school district referred to this as “double-dosing.”

Critical teacher shortages in subjects such as math can impact a high school’s ability to offer additional classes in exit exam subjects. Administrators from one high school in Arizona that consistently experiences a significant teacher turnover rate lamented over their inability to offer more remedial classes to students who had failed an exit exam. The school cannot attract and retain qualified teaching staff needed to teach such classes.

### **Individual Study Guides**

High schools in both Texas and Arizona reported receiving personalized student study guides from their respective state departments of education. These study guides are sent to all students who have not yet passed the exit exam and are individualized based on the students’ weaknesses.

### **Exit Exam Prep Classes**

These classes are often described as intensive preparation classes that occur right before a retake of the exit exam. In one high school in Austin Independent School District, teachers and administrators reported that students may be pulled out of elective classes to participate in these special preparation classes.

### **Personal Graduation Plans**

The Austin Independent School District designs personal graduation plans for secondary students who do not pass one of the exit exams or who are at risk of dropping out. These plans aim to help students perform on grade level by the end of the school year. The plans include several specific actions, such as identifying educational goals for the student and designating an intensive instructional program.

### **Summer School**

Some high schools offer summer school for students who have failed the exit exam. In the Austin Independent School District, for example, some high schools offer an intensive exit exam “camp” in the summer before a student’s retest. However, as with summer tutoring, low participation rates at these camps is a concern.



## Targeted Remediation

Students who have failed an exit exam are also likely to be performing poorly academically. Therefore, remediation is usually targeted at students who are academically low-performing. Some high schools and districts in Arizona have specific remediation for English language learners. One school district in Arizona requires its high schools to develop Written Individual Compensatory Plans (WICP) for English language learners or for students recently reclassified as fluent English proficient who are not making adequate progress in English. The WICP includes information about the kind of interventions or supports needed in the classroom.

## Influences of Exit Exam Interventions and Remediation

While high schools and districts in all five states are using various kinds of interventions and remediation, our research has revealed some interesting influences on pass rates as well as on curriculum and instruction. Most high schools and districts reported that interventions and remediation do seem to be increasing passing rates on exit exams. Teachers also reported that they perceive an increase in student effort and motivation in classes of tested content. Many students reported being more motivated to do well and pay attention in those classes. Administrators often cited that exit exam interventions such as instructional pacing or planning guides, curriculum guides, and benchmark testing have increased consistency in both curriculum and instruction.

There have been some drawbacks and perhaps unintended outcomes of exit exam interventions and remediation, however. High schools and districts in all five states reported that significant resources are spent on interventions to prepare students to take the exit exams, as well as remediation when they fail, even though most of the school districts we studied did not formally evaluate the effectiveness of these programs. Furthermore, some teachers and administrators believe more resources are being spent on exit exam content classes than on others.

While instructional pacing guides and benchmark testing may be increasing consistency in curriculum and instruction, teachers and students from all five states report that the pace at which instruction and curriculum are delivered is increasing. Some teachers reported serious concerns about their inability to cover topics in depth or to allow their students enough time to master skills.

Many teachers commented that exit exam interventions and remediation are decreasing the kinds of higher-level skills they used to teach in their classrooms. This was supported by students, who pointed out that test-taking preparation activities and test-taking skills were taught during academic instructional time. In addition, almost all the high schools we studied required students who had failed an exit exam to take an additional class in that subject. This second class often focused on basic remedial skills needed to pass the exit exam. This practice led to another concern; some teachers and administrators reported that increasing instructional time in reading and math often led to decreased flexibility in the core curriculum and loss of electives for students, particularly students with low academic performance.

Finally, our case study research has shown that the types of interventions and remediation as well as the scope of these supports are significantly influenced by the resources a high school or district has available. Resources can make the difference between offering a separate remedial math class with a certified mathematics teacher, offering a remedial math class that uses a computer program and is supervised by a paraprofessional, or not being able to offer an additional math class at all.

## Conclusion

School districts in most states are using a variety of strategies to improve student pass rates on high school exit exams. Not enough is known about the way these efforts impact the educational experiences of students, particularly disadvantaged learners. More research is needed to determine the effect of high school exit exam policy on instruction, curriculum, and student achievement.

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# Profiles of State Exit Exam Systems

The profiles that follow provide basic information about the exit exam systems and policies in the 26 states that currently have or are phasing in mandatory high school exit exams. The profiles also provide data on pass rates and state funding for remediation.

The information in the profiles has been taken from the responses of officials in each participating state to the Center's 2007 state survey of exit exam policies, state Web sites, and media coverage. The survey responses have been condensed and edited somewhat to fit a standard format for the profiles. After developing the profiles, the Center sent draft profiles to the survey contacts in each state, asking them to review the profiles for accuracy. The final profiles contained here reflect the changes states made as a result of that review process. All profiles were reviewed and approved by state officials unless otherwise noted.



# Alabama

## Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE), 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

50

State High School Exit Exams: Working to Raise Test Scores

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based exam
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	The 1 <sup>st</sup> edition of the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHSGE) was first administered in 1984. A second version of the state graduation exam, the High School Basic Skills Exit Exam, was first administered in 1995. The 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition was first administered in 1999.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2001 for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition (1985 for the 1 <sup>st</sup> edition)
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, mathematics, science, social studies, language
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> (considered a pregraduation administration, but if students pass one or more subjects they receive credit toward graduation)
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Four opportunities to retest, additional opportunity in the summer between 11 <sup>th</sup> and 12 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Unlimited retakes after grade 12
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Yes. General education students can pass the GED exam and receive the Alabama Alternate Adult Diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Yes. Students with disabilities may receive an Alabama Occupational Diploma, which does not require passing the AHSGE, or apply for a waiver for one subject-area test in the student's major disability to obtain a regular diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No

continues ➤

<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>Since 2003-04, the state has been using the AHSGE to meet the NCLB math and reading test requirements. The spring administration in 11<sup>th</sup> grade counts for NCLB. The state will use the new science (biology) section of the AHSGE for NCLB purposes in 2007-08.</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialists in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialists in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialists in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which include specialists in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialists in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialists in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides exam preparation materials for teachers.</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their <i>initial</i> attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state provides funds for remediation and additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</p>

continues ➤



**11<sup>th</sup> grade cumulative  
pass rates, 2006**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing Exit Exam, 11<sup>th</sup> Grade Cumulative Pass Rate</b>					
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
All students	86%	82%	84%	85%	77%
White	92%	89%	89%	92%	85%
African American	75%	71%	74%	72%	64%
Latino	72%	69%	82%	75%	64%
Asian	86%	88%	94%	88%	84%
Native American	88%	82%	85%	91%	81%
English language learners	43%	48%	74%	57%	41%
Migrant	65%	72%	85%	81%	63%
Students with disabilities	33%	27%	31%	42%	32%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	76%	72%	75%	74%	65%
Passing score (scale of 0-999)	563	560	477	491	509

Note: Students actually take the AHSGE for the first time in the spring of 10<sup>th</sup> grade as a pre-graduation administration. The pass rates in this table, however, are for the spring administration of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, when the exam first counts toward the graduation requirement. These data came from the Alabama Department of Education Web site at [www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp](http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp).

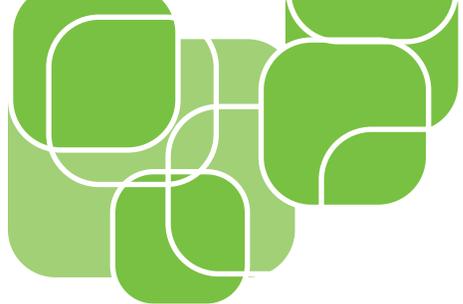
**12<sup>th</sup> grade cumulative  
pass rates, 2006**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>					
	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
All students	95%	95%	95%	96%	94%
White	98%	97%	98%	98%	97%
African American	91%	90%	92%	92%	89%
Latino	87%	88%	93%	89%	86%
Asian	96%	97%	99%	98%	96%
Native American	95%	95%	96%	96%	95%
English language learners	64%	73%	87%	74%	67%
Migrant	88%	88%	93%	88%	91%
Students with disabilities	60%	60%	60%	70%	62%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	91%	90%	92%	92%	89%

Note: These data came from the Alabama Department of Education Web site at [www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp](http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp).

<b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	Information not available
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have any of the above identified achievement gaps</b>	Information not available
<b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	Information not available
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have any of the above identified achievement gaps</b>	Information not available
<b>Evaluations of state exit exam</b>	The state did an alignment evaluation of the reading, mathematics, and science exams that was used for internal review and will not be published.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Data Recognition Corporation





# Alaska



## Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Examination (HSGQE)

Type of test	Standards-based
Purpose	To meet a state mandate
Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy	No
Year first administered	2000
Year diplomas first withheld	2004 for most students (delayed from 2001); 2005 for students with disabilities
Subjects tested	Reading, writing, mathematics
Grade first administered	10 <sup>th</sup>
Grade(s) exam aligned to	8 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup>
Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12	Two per year
Retakes after grade 12	Two per year indefinitely
Alternate paths to graduation for general education students	No
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities	Students with disabilities who do not pass the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination by their sophomore year may be allowed to take an alternative assessment program, which consists of the modified or the nonstandardized version of the exam. The nonstandardized HSGQE consists of an extensive collection of work that reflects competency in each of the state standards tested in the HSGQE.
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners	No
Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?	As of 2005-06, Alaska no longer uses the HSGQE to meet NCLB high school testing requirements but instead uses the Grade 10 Standards-Based Assessment.

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<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>Not Applicable</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>● All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance;</li> <li>● Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency;</li> <li>● Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency; and</li> <li>● All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes field-based specialists</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides state-developed benchmark/formative assessments and exam preparation materials for students.</p>
<p><b>Type of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state does <i>not</i> provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>School districts in the state provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● District-designed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>● Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments</li> <li>● Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas</li> <li>● Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>● Professional development for administrators</li> <li>● District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides</li> <li>● Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers</li> <li>● Modified curriculum in regular classes</li> <li>● Changes in class schedules and offerings</li> <li>● Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</li> <li>● Individualized academic plans for students</li> <li>● Extended class day</li> </ul>

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## Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006			
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math
All students	73.7%	89.9%	70.2%
White	85.5%	94.4%	85.5%
African American	57.2%	84.8%	58.2%
Latino	67.3%	87.9%	72.9%
Asian	62.1%	90.6%	77.2%
Alaska Native/Native American	51.3%	79.4%	59.6%
Multiracial	73.0%	89.0%	74.2%
English language learners	37.2%	77.2%	53.3%
Migrant	55.4%	82.1%	64.9%
Students with disabilities	29.9%	58.2%	33.78%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	55.5%	81.8%	62.6%
Passing score (scale of 100-600)	287	304	328

## Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Data not available. The state does not calculate this information.

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Alaska Native/Native American students
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

The state reported that the gap comparison between English language learners and non-ELLs is not applicable because the state does not report non-ELLs.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

No

<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Asian students</li> <li>• White students and Alaska Native/Native American students</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.</p> <p>The state reported that the gap comparison between English language learners and non-ELLs is not applicable because the state does not report non-ELLs.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>A technical report is available on request.</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Data Recognition Corporation</p>



# Arizona\*

## Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	The purpose of the test is to determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum and to meet a state mandate.
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	The AIMS (Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards) augmentation formula has been revised to include more courses. The formula previously included 11.5 credits; now it includes 20 credits. Further, the state statute authorizing AIMS augmentation is set for automatic repeal on January 1, 2008.
<b>Year first administered</b>	1999
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2006 (delayed from 2001)
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, writing, mathematics
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Five retakes, beginning in fall of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all other graduation requirements are allowed to retake the exam an unlimited number of times after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Students who fail to pass one or more sections of the assessment may augment their scores with points derived from course grades of C or better. To qualify for this alternative, students must meet all of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Complete all required courses with a passing grade</li> <li>b) Take the AIMS assessment each time the test is offered</li> <li>c) Participate in remediation programs available at his/her school in the failed subject areas</li> </ul> <p>Students meet the alternate graduation requirement if their augmented scores exceed the "meet the standard" threshold. However, if students score extremely poorly on the AIMS, the augmented scores may still not be enough to earn them a diploma.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Students with disabilities may be exempted from having to pass AIMS in order to graduate from high school. Students with disabilities who are not exempt from passing the exam may qualify for AIMS augmentation (see preceding item on alternate paths for general education students).

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\* Arizona was unable to verify the completed profile.

<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	AIMS augmentation (see preceding item on alternate paths for general education students)
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	The first administration in grade 10 is used for NCLB purposes.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and field-based specialists;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessments, which include online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and field-based specialists.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-developed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>• Test items from prior years</li> <li>• Exam preparation materials for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their <i>initial</i> attempt to pass the exit exam</b>	<p>The state provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted remediation programs for students</li> <li>• Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment</li> <li>• Customized study guides for each student who fails one or more content area of AIMS</li> <li>• Teacher or tutor guides to assist teachers and tutors in using the customized study guides with their students</li> </ul>

### Types of supports provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments (district may use the questions provided by the state to design benchmark assessments)
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Extended class day

Note: Each school district provides different support, thus, not all districts provide all of the above help to students.

### Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006			
Student Group	Reading/ Language Arts	Writing	Math
All students	71.0%	64.1%	64.5%
White	85.2%	75.4%	78.3%
African American	62.4%	58.3%	50.5%
Latino	55.6%	49.8%	49.7%
Asian	81.7%	78.2%	82.9%
Native American	47.5%	51.7%	41.4%
English language learners	12.6%	12.4%	20.7%
Migrant	40.4%	32.7%	44.3%
Students with disabilities	29.2%	18.9%	21.4%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	54.0%	48.6%	48.7%
<b>Passing score (scale of 500-900)</b>			
	674	678	683

Note: These are 10<sup>th</sup> grade pass rates for 2006. The percentages were obtained from a research associate at the Arizona Department of Education, Research & Evaluation.

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Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade				
Student Group	Reading/ Language Arts	Writing	Math	All Subjects
All students	80.1%	80.9%	76.9%	71.0%
White	86.7%	86.9%	84.1%	80.1%
African American	73.6%	74.8%	66.3%	61.6%
Latino	71.5%	73.0%	68.1%	59.0%
Asian	84.8%	84.7%	85.2%	79.6%
Native American	69.9%	70.5%	62.7%	54.9%
English language learners	34.0%	37.4%	46.4%	20.2%
Migrant	63.2%	66.8%	72.1%	51.4%
Students with disabilities	27.4%	26.2%	14.2%	8.0%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	70.9%	72.1%	68.2%	68.2%

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.

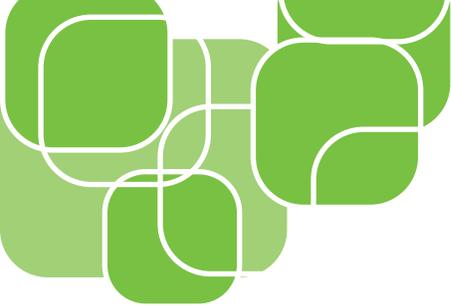
The state reported that the gap comparison between students with disabilities and those without disabilities was not applicable because students with disabilities are not required to pass the exam in order to graduate.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. All students who are not proficient are eligible for tutoring, customized study guides, and assistance through state-provided tutoring funds. Title I high schools identified for improvement through NCLB for two years and beyond must provide tutoring before school, after school, or in the summer for the lowest-achieving, lowest-income students.

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<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.</p> <p>The state reported that the gap comparison between students with disabilities and those without disabilities was not applicable because students with disabilities are not required to pass the exam in order to graduate.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. All students who are not proficient are eligible for tutoring, customized study guides, and assistance through state-provided tutoring funds. Title I high schools identified for improvement through NCLB for two years and beyond must provide tutoring before school, after school, or in summer for the lowest-achieving, lowest-income students.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>2005 AIMS alignment study by the University of Arizona, Department of Educational Psychology (available at <a href="http://www.ade.az.gov/standards/AIMS/Administering/Default.asp">www.ade.az.gov/standards/AIMS/Administering/Default.asp</a>).</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>CTB/McGraw Hill</p>



# Arkansas\*

## Arkansas Comprehensive Assessment Program

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-course
<b>Year first administered</b>	Algebra I and Geometry (end-of-course exams) and the grade 11 literacy exam (an end-of-level exam) were first given in the 2000-01 school year.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2010
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Literacy, Algebra I, and Geometry
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Varies
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Students have 3 chances to retake before graduation.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Yes. Students who fail the assessment three times must pass an alternate assessment to graduate. The alternate assessment will cover the same level of content.
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Yes
<b>Statewide End-of-Course and Grade 11 Literacy Testing Summary, 2006</b>	

Combined Population	Algebra I (January)	Algebra I (April)	Geometry (January)	Geometry (May)	Grade 11 Literacy (April)
Below Basic	12%	12%	13%	9%	11%
Basic	37%	24%	36%	31%	44%
Proficient	44%	37%	37%	42%	45%
Advanced	8%	28%	14%	18%	0%
Proficient/Advanced	52%	65%	51%	60%	45%

Note: There are four levels based on student performance: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. A passing score has not been determined.



\* Arkansas was unable to respond to our survey. This profile is based on publicly available information on the state department of education's Web site ([www.arkansased.org](http://www.arkansased.org)) and the Education Commission of the States' Web site ([www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)) as well as information reported by the state by telephone or e-mail.

# California

## California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>Yes. In assembly bill (AB) 1503 the state superintendent of public instruction (with the consent of the state board of education) provides recommendations for a course of action regarding the CAHSEE and waiver requests for students with disabilities. More information about these specific recommendations can be found at <a href="http://www.leginfo.ca.gov">www.leginfo.ca.gov</a>.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	2001 for the original exam. The exam was revised in 2003 and first administered in 2004.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2006, except for students with disabilities who meet the criteria for a local waiver or two one-year exemptions set forth in state law by SB 517 (for the class of 2006) and SB 267 (for the class of 2007)
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts and mathematics
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The English language arts part of the exam addresses state content standards through grade 10. The mathematics part addresses state content standards in grades 6 and 7 and in Algebra I.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Students who progress through grades 10-12 at the normal pace have up to five retake opportunities, in addition to the first administration in grade 10. These include two possible retakes in grade 11 and three in grade 12. Students may not retake parts of the exam they have previously passed.

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Retakes after grade 12	Students who complete all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may continue to retake the exam three times per year, with no limits on retesting opportunities until they meet the CAHSEE requirement. Students must be enrolled in adult education or high school to retest.
Alternate paths to graduation for general education students	No
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities	<p>Yes. Three different options are available to students with disabilities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Local waiver request.</b> Students must be permitted to use any modifications specified in their individualized education program or Section 504 Plan. Modifications fundamentally alter what the test measures and can affect the comparability of scores. Students who take the exam with modifications and receive the equivalent of a passing score are eligible to request a waiver of the CAHSEE requirement from their local school board. If the waiver is granted, and the student has met all other graduation requirements, the student is eligible for a high school diploma.</li> <li>2) <b>Class of 2007 one-year exemption.</b> Senate Bill 267, signed into law in September 2006, provides a one-year exemption of the requirement to pass the CAHSEE for certain students with disabilities in the class of 2007. The criteria for this exemption are specified in Education Code Section 60852.4.</li> <li>3) <b>Certificate of completion.</b> Students with disabilities who are not on a diploma track may receive a certificate of completion instead.</li> </ol>
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners	No
Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?	Results from the first administration in grade 10 are used to meet the high school testing requirements of NCLB.
Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?	No. Beginning with the February 2004 test administration, the definition of proficient performance for NCLB purposes was set at 380 (scaled score) for both English language arts and math—higher than the exit exam passing score of 350 for each part.
Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and written technical assistance in the form of district and test site coordinators' manuals;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes grants to districts and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.</li> </ul>

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their *initial* attempt to pass the exit exam**

There are many programs designed and implemented by the state that are based on California's academic content standards. While the CAHSEE is fully aligned to the state's academic content standards, these programs were not specifically designed to prepare the students for the state's high school exit exam, but rather to teach the state's academic content standards. These programs also play a major role in student performance on the state's other assessments.

The state also provides:

- Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates
- Test items from prior years
- Exam preparation materials for students
- Exam preparation materials for teachers
- A printed version of a student study guide to each 10<sup>th</sup> grade student in the state, additional study guides to each school site for new or repeating students, and online availability of the study guide
- A compendium of remediation strategies submitted by school districts that can be used by school districts and schools to replicate successful remediation programs
- Exam blueprints posted on the state department of education Web site and annual releases of items from the math and English language arts portions of the exam

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative use of assessment.

For 2006-07, the state awarded \$70 million (\$20 million in 2005-06) in grants to local school districts to assist them in developing programs to help students pass the CAHSEE in grade 11 or grade 12. The enacting legislation indicated that the funding could be used for:

- Individual or small group instruction
- Hiring additional teachers
- Purchasing, scoring, and reviewing diagnostic assessments
- Counseling
- Designing instruction to meet specific needs of eligible pupils
- Appropriate teacher training to meet the needs of eligible pupils

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### Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessment
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development to help teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day\*
- Individualized academic plans for students
- Extended class day

\* Remediation is required under law if the local school district receives funding under the \$70 million grant described above and for those students with disabilities who receive an exemption of the CAHSEE requirement under Education Code Section 60852.4.

### Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006		
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math
All students	77%	76%
White	90%	88%
African American	66%	57%
Latino	66%	65%
Asian	87%	92%
Native American	77%	73%
English language learners	38%	48%
Migrant	55%	63%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	35%	33%
Students with disabilities	65%	64%
Passing score (scale of 275-450)	350 (60% of items)	350 (55% of items)

continues ➤

Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12th Grade			
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math	Both Subjects
All students	94%	94%	91%
White	99%	98%	97%
African American	91%	86%	84%
Latino	90%	90%	86%
Asian	96%	98%	95%
Native American	NA	NA	NA
English language learners	81%	86%	76%
Migrant	NA	NA	NA
Students with disabilities	60%	56%	48%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	90%	90%	86%

Note: These data are published by HumRRO, the independent evaluator of the CAHSEE, and can be found at: [www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/indevalrptv106.pdf](http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/documents/indevalrptv106.pdf). For various categories above, NA appears because the independent evaluator did not provide an analysis for the demographic subgroup.

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. The funding described above (\$70 million) is awarded on a per-student basis—\$500 per eligible 12<sup>th</sup> grader and about \$100 for each 11<sup>th</sup> grader. Using this allotment, those schools with a larger population of students who failed to pass received a larger amount of funding.

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<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. The funding described above (\$70 million) is awarded on a per-student basis, \$500 per eligible 12th grader and about \$100 for each 11th grader. Using this allotment, those schools with a larger population of students who failed to pass received a larger amount of funding.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>The Human Resources Research Organization (HumRRO) is studying the impact of the CAHSEE and has released annual reports of its findings.</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Educational Testing Service</p>



# Florida

## Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	1998
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2003
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, mathematics, and writing. At this time, only math and reading results are used to determine whether students graduate with a standard diploma. Students enrolled in 9th grade for the first time in 2006-07 will need to achieve passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT Writing+. The writing section will become a graduation requirement for the class of 2010.
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Five retakes are allowed before the end of grade 12, with the first retake opportunity in October of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have not passed the FCAT but have met other graduation requirements may retake the exam after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade and still receive a regular diploma. There are no limits on the number of retakes or the age for retaking the exam.

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<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b></p>	<p>Yes. Students scheduled to graduate are provided an opportunity to meet the testing requirement for high school graduation by using concordant scores on an alternate assessment (SAT/ACT). To use this equivalent score option, students must have taken the FCAT three times without earning a passing score. Also, students who do not meet the exit exam requirement may be awarded a certificate of completion instead of a diploma.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b></p>	<p>Yes. The FCAT requirement may be waived for students with disabilities who have not achieved a passing score on the exam and have met all other requirements to graduate with a standard diploma.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>Yes. Results from the first test administration in 10<sup>th</sup> grade are used to meet NCLB requirements.</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>No. The FCAT reading and mathematics passing scores for graduation are lower (in the mid-range of the level 2 or “basic” score) than those used for NCLB purposes (level 3).</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and</li> <li>• Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides test items from prior years and exam preparation materials for teachers and students.</p>

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their *initial* attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment
- Additional professional development for administrators

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam assessments**

School districts in the state are required by law to provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials\*
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during the regular school day
- Remediation offered outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students
- Extended class day

\*The noted legal requirement is not applicable to district-designed curriculum materials.

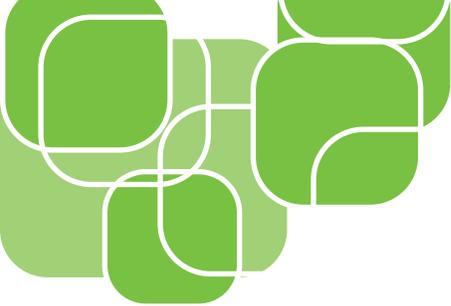
**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006		
Student Group	Reading	Math
All students	52%	77%
White	65%	87%
African American	30%	60%
Latino	44%	72%
Asian	65%	91%
Native American	55%	79%
Multiracial	60%	82%
English language learners	11%	46%
Migrant	22%	57%
Students with disabilities	17%	38%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	36%	66%
Passing score (scale of 100-500)	300	300

<p><b>Cumulative pass rates, 2006</b></p>	<p>Cumulative pass rates are not available at this time.</p>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● White students and African American students</li> <li>● White students and Latino students</li> <li>● White students and Native American students</li> <li>● English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>● Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>● Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. Title I grant; Title I Part A; Title V state set-aside; Title V Part 3 VPSC, reading coaches through K-12 reading plan; math coaches; math and science partnership grants; Schoolwide Assistance Teams; Florida State University policy center; state line item appropriations; Supplemental Academic Instruction; state categoricals. The target for funding and technical assistance is to close all achievement gaps in all subgroups using data analysis to focus lessons on mastery of standards.</p>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● White students and African American students</li> <li>● White students and Latino students</li> <li>● White students and Native American students</li> <li>● English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>● Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>● Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>For students with disabilities, the state DOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) funds Project Central at University of Central Florida, which coordinates existing networks to reach all learners. During 2005-06, Algebraic Thinking-Algebra Success Keys (ASK) was a major initiative designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities in mathematics. The project provided professional development related to the following products developed by the state DOE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Manuals, including <i>Cool Tools in Algebra: Classroom Informal Assessments for Teachers, and Mentoring Highly qualified ASK Professional Developers</i></li> <li>● Lessons plans, including <i>Using the CRA Process in Algebra</i></li> <li>● Video entitled <i>Video Success for All Students in Math</i></li> <li>● Directory of master professional developers in ASK</li> <li>● Brochure entitled <i>Meeting Instructional Needs in Math</i></li> </ul> <p>Another project funded by BEESS is the Curriculum Improvement Project. Over the years, this project has developed an array of Parallel Alternative Strategies for Students with Disabilities (PASS) materials. These supplemental textbooks, written to assist students with various learning needs achieve success in the classroom, are presented in an easy to understand format for students seeking a standard diploma. The PASS materials provide resources for teaching courses without changing essential content. The teacher guides give suggestions to stimulate student interest with thought-provoking activities. These inexpensive,</p>



	<p>ready-to-use resources may be reproduced or used as a textbook or a workbook. A list of PASS materials can be found at <a href="http://www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/pdf/pricepub.pdf">www.firn.edu/doe/commhome/pdf/pricepub.pdf</a>. There are three secondary PASS products related to math.</p> <p>State funding is provided to all school districts as a weighted cost factor for provision of instructional services to English Language Learners. School districts are required to provide instruction to ELLs that is equal in amount, sequence, scope, and quality as that provided to non-ELLs. All instruction is aligned to the state’s academic standards.</p>
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	Florida was included in the Achieve Inc. study, <i>Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams</i> (June 2004).
<b>State test contractor</b>	Harcourt (test development and norm-referenced tests); CTB (test administration, scoring, and reporting)



# Georgia

## Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>Yes. Beginning with the 2005-06 school year, school board policy allows districts to seek a waiver or variance from the GHSGT in one subject area. To be eligible to apply for a waiver or variance for one subject area test of the GHSGT, the student must have completed all requisite courses, taken advantage of all testing opportunities, and passed an end-of-course test in the same subject. The student is allowed a variance if his or her scale score is within one standard error of measurement from the passing cut score. Students who successfully complete this waiver or variance process receive a regular diploma.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	1991
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	1994
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and writing
<b>Grade first administered</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> ; the writing assessment takes place in the fall, and the Georgia High School Graduation Tests in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies occur in the spring of the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Five. Students who do not pass on the first attempt have multiple opportunities to receive additional instruction, retest, and qualify for graduation before the spring of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all other graduation requirements are allowed to retake the exit exam as many times as they need to after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade to receive a regular diploma.



**Alternate paths to graduation for general education students**

No. However, the state does have a waiver process that must be initiated by the student's home school. All students are eligible for the waiver, but the waiver request must include documentation of limitations that would account for failing the test. A waiver may be granted to a student who, due to disability, is rendered incapable of passing a section of the GHSGT or to a student who has not had a reasonable opportunity to pass a section of the GHSGT due to substantial hardship beyond the student's control, such as a significant, unique, and demonstrable economic, technological, legal, or other type of deprivation. Students who are granted the waiver and meet all other requirements may receive a certificate of attendance.

In addition, there is a variance process that allows an alternate means of demonstrating academic proficiency for students who are not rendered incapable of passing a section of the GHSGT or the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT). The state board of education may, by majority vote, grant a variance to students who have satisfied all of the following requirements:

- 1) Passed any three of the five graduation tests (four content sections of the GHSGT and the GHSWT)
- 2) Met state attendance and course unit requirements for graduation
- 3) Attained a 90% or better attendance record, excluding excused absences, while enrolled in grades 9-12
- 4) Obtained a scale score that falls within one standard error of measurement of the passing score for the relevant sections of the tests
- 5) Where applicable, passed each of the state's end-of-course tests related to the sections of the graduation tests for which the variance is being sought

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities**

No. However, students with disabilities may apply for the general waiver described above. A special education diploma is also available for students with disabilities who complete the requirements of their individualized education program.

**Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners**

No

**Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?**

The first administration of the exam in spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade is used to meet NCLB requirements.

**Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?**

No. The tests have been enhanced for NCLB accountability purposes. Additional items have been added to better address the depth and breadth of the curriculum. The enhanced tests also have two additional cut scores for the "proficient" and "advanced" levels. These performance levels are used to calculate adequate yearly progress for NCLB purposes but do not affect a student's chance of earning a diploma.

Students must achieve a score of 500 to graduate and a score of 516 in mathematics and 511 in English language arts to be counted as proficient for adequate yearly progress under NCLB.

**Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, a graduation coach in each high school who helps identify students who may not graduate and subsequently provides counseling and guides students in the direction of assistance;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, graduation coaches, Graduation Counts guide, and data utilization guide;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, a data utilization guide, and a balanced assessment module;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and additional professional development opportunities; and
- All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and Georgia Performance Standards training for administrators and sessions on how to raise standards.

The state also provides:

- State-developed benchmark/formative assessments  
Note: Georgia implements formative assessments through an application called the Online Assessment System (OAS). This is a Web-based resource that contains an item bank from which schools and systems can build customized assessments in all the grade/content areas covered by the state assessment system. This facilitates formative assessments at the school and system level. At the state level, the state also provides “pre-built” formative assessments within the OAS that systems and schools are able to use.
- Test items from prior years
- Exam preparation materials for students and teachers

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**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their *initial* attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment
- Graduation coaches, leadership quality initiatives, and secondary leadership facilitators dedicated to supporting high schools and helping them increase graduation rates, in part by counseling students to enroll in more rigorous courses so they are better prepared for the GHS GT

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Extended class day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006					
Student Group	English Language Arts	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	96%	92%	92%	73%	86%
White	98%	96%	96%	85%	92%
African American	93%	88%	86%	56%	77%
Latino	90%	83%	89%	59%	77%
Asian	96%	95%	97%	82%	92%
Native American	96%	91%	96%	77%	87%
Multiracial	97%	95%	96%	79%	91%
English language learners	74%	63%	79%	35%	53%
Migrant	83%	70%	85%	51%	67%
Students with disabilities	74%	61%	56%	34%	48%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	92%	87%	87%	57%	76%
Passing score (scale of 400-600)	500	500	500	500	500

Note: To provide information on all disaggregated groupings, data have been retrieved from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement 2005-06 State Report Card. This report can be found at: <http://reportcard2006.gaosa.org/>.

Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade					
Student Group	English Language Arts	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	96%	NA	94%	86%	91%

Note: This information is from a special analysis based on the 2005-06 GHS GT data and was presented to the state school superintendent and board members. Disaggregated information by student group was not available in this report.

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. This is the largest gap; the variability within the students with disabilities subgroup is also great.

The state reported that the gap comparison between English language learners and non-ELLs is not applicable because the state reports on ELLs but not compared to non-ELLs.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. Graduation coaches and academic coaches are among the kinds of assistance offered.

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

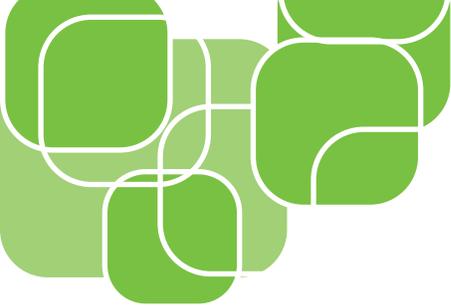
The most challenging gap to close will be the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities. This is the largest gap; the variability within the students with disabilities subgroup is also great.

The state reported that the gap comparison between English language learners and non-ELLs is not applicable because the state reports on ELLs but not compared to non-ELLs.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes; mathematics training initiative and academic coaches

<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	The enhanced GHSGT in English language arts and mathematics were externally evaluated in spring 2006.
<b>State test contractor</b>	For 2005-06, Data Recognition Corporation (test development); the Georgia Center for Assessment at the University of Georgia (scoring and reporting); and Pearson Educational Measurement (printing)  Beginning in 2007, Pearson Educational Measurement is the primary contractor.



# Idaho\*

## Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The test has the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	2004 was the first year the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) was administered as a high school exit exam. Before 2004, the ISAT was administered solely to assess how well students were learning state content standards.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2006
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, language usage, mathematics, science
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	<p>The test is aligned to 10<sup>th</sup> grade content standards, but the cut scores that represent proficient performance at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level have been phased in. Cut scores have been set for four performance levels—advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic—based on grade-level performance expectations.</p> <p>The cut scores established for these levels are being phased in over three years, from 2006-08, with gradual increases in scores. Students in the class of 2006 were required to pass the test at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, students in the class of 2007 at a 9<sup>th</sup> grade level, and students in the class of 2008 at the full 10<sup>th</sup> grade level. On January 1, 2008, the phase-in will end, and the graduation score will equal the standard for grade 10.</p>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Nine, starting with a first retest option in July after 10 <sup>th</sup> grade



\* Idaho was unable to verify the completed profile.

<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students not passing the exit exam by the time they reach their senior year may appeal to the school district for an alternate route to graduation. These alternate routes must be aligned to state content standards at the 10 <sup>th</sup> grade level. Completion of the alternate route results in a regular diploma. Issuance of the diploma rests with the local school district. Districts are strongly encouraged to provide this alternate route in order to assure that no student needs to continue to take the exit exam beyond the 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Yes. Board rule allows each district to adopt an alternate route that requires courses to be offered to and completed by students. The courses are valid and reliable and are required to be standards-based at 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. The board reviews these plans and keeps them on file.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	No. But a student with disabilities may appeal for an alternate measure to reach graduation. This appeal is not specifically for students with disabilities. It is also available for English language learners with three or fewer years in the program and for students who reach their senior year without having passed the exit exam.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners (ELLs)</b>	No. But as described above, English language learners with three or fewer years in the program may appeal for an alternate measure to reach graduation. This appeal is not specifically for ELLs; it is also available for students with disabilities and for students who reach their senior year without having passed the exit exam.
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Results in reading and math from the spring administration in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade are used to determine adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. For the classes of 2006 and 2007, the scores required for graduation are lower than those required for NCLB because of the phase-in of the standard. Beginning January 1, 2008, the two cut scores will be the same.
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	The state does not provide technical or other types of assistance or intervention to all districts to raise initial pass rates.
<b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b>	The state has purchased and made available to all districts and all schools unlimited and perpetual licenses for the Plato Learning software for courses in language arts and math that span K-12. Training is provided to teachers to assure their effective use of the program.
<b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b>	<p>School districts in the state provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>● Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</li> <li>● Extended class day</li> </ul> <p>In coming years there will be increased emphasis on rigor in high schools. Education plans will be required, as well as additional courses in math and science.</p>

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006</b>			
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>
All students	84.9%	80.5%	70.0%
White	88.2%	83.6%	73.3%
African American	75.4%	76.4%	46.0%
Latino	58.5%	57.8%	41.8%
Asian	76.8%	90.3%	76.0%
Native American	72.4%	65.4%	49.4%
English language learners	42.3%	65.6%	29.3%
Migrant	48.4%	63.4%	32.1%
Students with disabilities	48.1%	58.9%	29.4%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	74.8%	76.7%	56.1%
<b>Passing score (scale of 150-300)</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>235</b>

Note: During the past year the cut scores were reset based on a technically acceptable methodology. These are test scores for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students who took the test for the first time in 2006.

**Cumulative pass rates, 2006**

Unable to disaggregate until spring 2008 for class of 2007

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

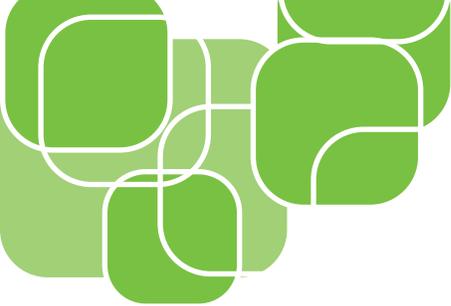
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between English language learners and non-ELLs.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. The state appropriates funds for special programs to address ELL needs. A special small grant program for districts was funded in 2006-07 and has also been funded for 2007-08.

<p><b>Achievement gaps in math (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in math between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>No. But in state FY07 and FY08 the Idaho state legislature appropriated \$750,000 to address the needs of some districts that have not made AYP because of ELLs. The monies are awarded on a competitive basis to districts to address the achievement of ELLs.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>Yes. Results of the external review are available at <a href="http://www.boardofed.idaho.gov/saa/ExtReview-May2005.asp">www.boardofed.idaho.gov/saa/ExtReview-May2005.asp</a></p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Data Recognition Corporation</p>



# Indiana

## Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based; combination of multiple-choice, constructed-response, and essay items; includes end of grade 9 English skills, end of pre-algebra, and Algebra I mathematics skills.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	1997
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	1999-2000 school year
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts (through grade 9) and mathematics (through pre-algebra and Algebra I)
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> grade standards, including Algebra I
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Four (in addition to initial test administration); first retake opportunity in the fall after 10 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all other graduation requirements but have not passed the exit exam may retake the exam as many times as necessary after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade and still receive a regular diploma.



### Alternate paths to graduation for general education students

Students who fail the exit exam may be eligible to graduate if they do *all* of the following:

- a) Retake the exam in each failed subject at least once per year after the year in which they first took the exam
- b) Complete remediation opportunities
- c) Maintain a school attendance rate of at least 95%
- d) Maintain a C average or equivalent in the courses required by the state for graduation
- e) Meet all other graduation requirements
- f) Either:
  - i) Complete the course and credit requirements for a general diploma, including the career academic sequence; complete a workforce readiness assessment; and complete at least one career exploration internship, cooperative education, or workforce credential recommended by the student's school; or
  - ii) Obtain written recommendations from their teachers in each subject in which they failed the exam; the recommendation must be supported by the principal and by documentation demonstrating the student's acquired knowledge

Before July 1, 2010, a student who does not achieve a passing score on the graduation examination may be eligible to graduate if all of the following occur:

- a) The principal of the student's school certifies that within one month of the student's scheduled graduation date the student will successfully complete all components of the Core 40 curriculum as established by the Indiana state board of education under IC 20-30-10.
- b) The student otherwise satisfies all state and local graduation requirements.

### Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who fail the exam may be determined by their case conference committee to be eligible to graduate if they do all of the following:

- a) Obtain a written recommendation from their teacher of record in consultation with their teacher in each failed subject; the recommendation must be supported by the principal and by documentation demonstrating the students' acquired knowledge
- b) Retake the exam in each failed subject as often as required by the student's individualized education program (IEP)
- c) Complete remediation opportunities to the extent required by the IEP
- d) Maintain an attendance rate of at least 95% to the extent required by the IEP
- e) Maintain at least a C average or the equivalent
- f) Meet all other graduation requirements

The alternate path for general education students is also available to students with disabilities.

### Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners

No, other than the alternate path available to general education students

### Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?

Results from the first time a student takes the exit exam count toward NCLB accountability.

### Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?

Yes

**Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency; and
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency.

The state also provides preparation materials for students and teachers and test items from prior years.

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides targeted remediation programs for students.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

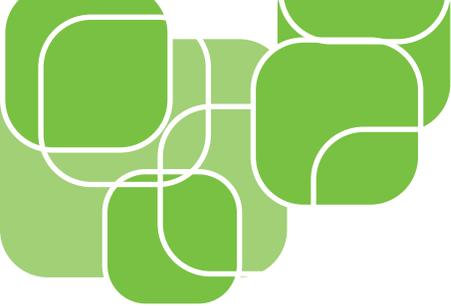
School districts facilitate:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006		
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math
All students	66%	65%
White	73%	71%
African American	39%	33%
Latino	43%	46%
Asian	70%	82%
Native American	60%	56%
Multiracial	65%	60%
English language learners	22%	36%
Migrant	17%	27%
Students with disabilities	21%	25%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	47%	46%
Passing score (scale of 220-820 for English language arts and 300-920 for mathematics)	551	586

<p><b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between English language learners and non-ELLs.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>Yes, by Achieve Inc.</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>CTB/McGraw Hill</p>



# Louisiana

## Graduation Exit Examination (GEE)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	The state board has discussed using end-of-course tests as a graduation requirement, but there is no state policy at this time.
<b>Year first administered</b>	2000-01 (English language arts and mathematics); 2001-02 (science and social studies)
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2003
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	Standards for grades 9-12
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Six retakes for English language arts and mathematics, three for science and social studies
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	After grade 12, retakes are permitted for students who have met other graduation requirements at all regularly scheduled administrations with no age limit and with no limit on the number of times the student may take the exam after the senior year.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	No
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	No. Students with severe cognitive disabilities are eligible for a certificate of achievement instead of a regular diploma.



<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Since 2002-03, results from the first time a student takes the exit exam have counted for NCLB accountability.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. For NCLB proficiency students must achieve at the “basic” level, while for graduation purposes students must achieve at the “approaching basic” level or above.
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes train-the-trainer workshops and a toll-free number to call;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer assessment workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance and professional development, specialist(s) in the state education agency (elementary and secondary staff), and grants to districts; and</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, including online assistance.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides exam preparation materials for students and teachers and test items from prior years.</p>
<b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b>	The state provides targeted remediation programs for students who fail to pass the exit exam on their initial attempt.
<b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b>	<p>School districts in the state provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-designed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments</li> <li>• Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</li> <li>• Extended class day</li> </ul>

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**Initial pass rates, 2006**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006</b>				
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
All students	87%	82%	83%	85%
White	93%	91%	94%	92%
African American	79%	70%	67%	71%
Latino	79%	78%	76%	80%
Asian	88%	92%	86%	88%
Native American	86%	85%	90%	89%
English language learners	53%	67%	60%	67%
Students with disabilities	40%	42%	50%	49%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	83%	77%	76%	76%
Passing score (scale of 100-500)	270	286	267	275

**Cumulative pass rates, 2006**

97% of all students pass all GEE tests by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade. (Specific subgroup and subject area information is not available.)

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

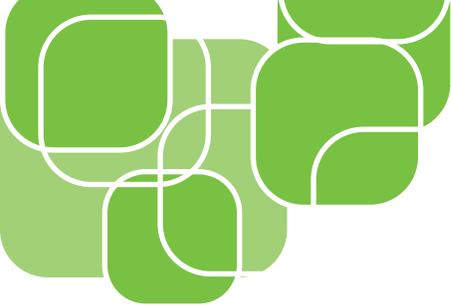
- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between white students and African American students.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

No

<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Asian students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between white students and African American students.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>State alignment study, available from the state department of education</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Data Recognition Corporation</p>



# Maryland

## Maryland High School Assessment (HSA)

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-course exams tied to content standards
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment*</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education*</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul> <p>* These tests are approximately on a 10<sup>th</sup> grade level, and their purpose is to determine whether students are on proper trajectory to be ready by the end of grade 12 for work and postsecondary education. Skills tested are not end-of-grade-12 knowledge skills.</p>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	Yes. In August 2007, the Maryland State Board of Education is expected to consider implementation options for three subgroups: students with disabilities, ELL, and students with 504 plans.
<b>Year first administered</b>	2001
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>The High School Assessment (HSA) end-of-course exams replaced the Maryland Functional Test, a minimum competency test students were required to pass to receive a diploma between 1989 and 2004.</p> <p>Beginning in 2009, Maryland will require all students to meet designated cutoff points on statewide HSA tests to graduate. This graduation requirement is applicable for students who entered grade 9 in 2005-06.</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English 2, algebra/data analysis, biology, and government
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Students must take each exam in January, May, or August of the year in which they complete the course in the subject being tested.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>



<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Four testing opportunities every year beginning in the year the student first takes the course. A fifth administration is offered for seniors in April.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students enrolled in a Maryland public school and under 21 years of age can continue to retake the HSA.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>The state offers alternatives to passing each of the high school assessments. This includes a combined score option, which requires a minimum score on each of the four tests and a combined overall score of 1602. Other alternatives include the Maryland Adult External High School Diploma (must be 18 or older) and the GED (General Education Diploma). Specific Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate course exams are acceptable substitutes for specific HSAs provided students receive the specified MSDE-approved scores on the exams.</p> <p>A modified HSA, known as the “Mod-HSA” is currently under development and would be available to students with disabilities who fall outside the NCLB 2% exemption. The Mod-HSA will cover the same content as the HSA; however, the questions will be less difficult overall in accordance with Department of Education guidelines for Modified Academic Achievement Standards.</p> <p>Further, a comparable HSA, known as the Comp-HSA, is in the pilot stage. The Comp-HSA is an assessment that tests the same content as the HSA but is more suitable for students who struggle with traditional tests. The Comp-HSA will require the student to demonstrate mastery of the coursework in some way other than the traditional testing process. It may be similar to a portfolio, but collected over a shorter period of time.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>No. Students with disabilities who do not pass the HSA and cannot meet the requirements for a diploma may receive the Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion instead. To qualify, students must have completed four years of high school past grade 8 and must meet one of the following conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student’s parents and individualized education program (IEP) team must reach an agreement that the student has developed the appropriate skills to enter the world of work, act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life; or</li> <li>The student will have turned 21 by the end of his or her current school year.</li> </ol>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	The exams in algebra/data analysis and English 2 are used to satisfy NCLB accountability for mathematics and reading/language arts. Maryland will use the state’s HSA in biology to satisfy the NCLB requirement for a test in science.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes

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**Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam**

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which include online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts; and
- Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, the Principals' Academy, and a variety of workshops on instructional leadership required to be successful on assessments.

The state also provides:

- State-developed benchmark/formative assessments
- State-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam (online courses and highly detailed curricular materials available online)
- Test items from prior years
- Exam preparation materials for teachers available online

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment
- Additional professional development for administrators
- Online courses configured to permit the use of appropriate modules, pending the student's needs

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students
- Extended class day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

**Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006**

Student Group	English 2	Algebra	Biology	Government
All 2006 grade 9 students*	**	71.5%	79.4%	77.8%
All students	60.1%	66.6%	67.7%	74.2%
White	72.1%	81.4%	80.3%	85.1%
African American	42.3%	46.0%	47.1%	57.9%
Latino	48.4%	57.3%	55.5%	64.5%
Asian	76.5%	86.9%	84.8%	86.9%
Native American	55.8%	60.6%	62.7%	73.2%
English language learners	20.1%	38.1%	34.9%	46.2%
Students with disabilities	15.8%	27.2%	28.3%	34.8%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	39.9%	49.3%	48.8%	57.6%
Passing score (scale of 0-800)	396	412	400	394

Note: Scores include students in grade 9 and lower for whom the tests are required for graduation and results for students in grades 10-12 who only need to take the assessment.

\*Scores for the students in grade 9 in the 2005-06 school year who need to pass the tests to graduate in 2009.

\*\* There are no scores to report for English 2 because it is primarily a 10<sup>th</sup> grade test.

**Cumulative pass rates, 2006**

NA

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and the students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. Professional development for central office and school-based teams includes effective instructional practices for reading/language arts that address the needs of lower-performing students. These strategies help teachers provide instruction that enables students with disabilities and students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds to improve their performance.

The State has established governor's academies that are focused on improving student performance on the high school assessment. Teachers from local school systems across the state engage in a wide variety of experiences related to the teaching of the skills, concepts, and processes of the standards in each subject area. Instructional strategies are included that address the needs of students with disabilities and various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. Professional development for central office and school-based teams includes effective instructional practices for mathematics that address the needs of lower-performing students. These strategies help teachers provide instruction that enables students with disabilities and students of various racial and ethnic backgrounds improve their performance.

The State has established governor's academies that are focused on improving student performance on the high school assessment. Teachers from local school systems across the state engage in a wide variety of experiences related to the teaching of the skills, concepts, and processes of the standards in each subject area. Teaching strategies are included that address the needs of students with disabilities and various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

**Evaluations of the state exit exam**

Achieve Inc. conducted alignment studies of the HSAs and released the results in June 2004. Maryland is participating in the American Diploma Project with Achieve, and the state's standards in math and English are currently being reviewed for alignment with standards for college and work.

**State test contractor**

ETS

# Massachusetts

## Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> </ul> <p>Note: In the past few years it has become clear that the grade 10 “needs improvement” standard does not represent mastery, nor does it necessarily prepare students for post-secondary education. This is why the state has adopted a policy requiring Educational Proficiency Plans for students who pass MCAS but who fall short of the proficient level.</p>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>Beginning with the class of 2010, students will need to earn either a score of at least 240 (proficient) on the English language arts and mathematics MCAS tests, or at least 220 (needs improvement) and complete an Educational Proficiency Plan before they qualify for a high school diploma. A student who scores between 220 and 240 will have an Education Proficiency Plan for each content area in which he or she did not score at least 240. Each plan will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A review of the student’s strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>• A list of the courses the student will be required to take and successfully complete in grades 11 and 12 in the relevant content area</li> <li>• A description of the assessments the school will administer to the student annually to ensure he or she is making progress toward proficiency</li> </ul> <p>Further details regarding these new standards are available at <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3200">www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=3200</a>.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	1998
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2003

<b>Subjects tested</b>	<p>English language arts and mathematics. In June 2005, the state board of education voted to make science a graduation requirement beginning with the class of 2010. High school students will be required to pass a standards-based end-of-course test in one of four content areas: biology, chemistry, introductory physics, or technology/engineering.</p> <p>Further, in October 2006, the board of education voted to make U.S. history a graduation requirement, beginning with the class of 2012. High school students will be required to pass a standards-based MCAS test upon completion of a two-year sequence of U.S history courses.</p>
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	Grade 10 standards
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Four for English language arts and mathematics, beginning in November following the initial testing in spring of grade 10 (six for students who are retained in grade 10, 11, or 12)
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	A student who has failed the exit exam but met all local graduation requirements may retake the exit exam an unlimited number of times after grade 12. A student who has passed the retest and met all local requirements may receive a diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>The MCAS Performance Appeals process provides an alternate path to students who have not achieved the minimum score of 220 on the MCAS tests after repeated attempts. A performance appeal allows a student to demonstrate through other specific measures that he or she possesses the skills and knowledge required to be eligible for a high school diploma. To qualify, a student must have met all of the following requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Taken a grade 10 test or retest in the subject of the appeal at least three times</li> <li>b) Maintained a 95% attendance rate during the junior and senior years</li> <li>c) Participated in tutoring and academic support services made available or approved by the school</li> </ul> <p>The commissioner has the authority to waive one or more of the eligibility requirements listed above if there are extenuating circumstances. For more information, see <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals">http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals</a>.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>A student with significant disabilities can participate in an alternate assessment (MCAS-Alt), which consists of a portfolio of student work collected annually by the teacher and student. Approximately 1% of students in the state take the MCAS-Alt.</p> <p>A student with disabilities who does not pass the test but meets all other graduation requirements can receive a certificate of attainment, as long as the local school committee authorizes the district to offer such a certificate. In addition, a student with disabilities who qualifies may file a performance appeal.</p> <p>For further information, see <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/about.html">www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/about.html</a>.</p>

<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>Results from the first time students take the MCAS tests in English language arts and mathematics are used to fulfill the NCLB high school testing requirements for reading/language arts and mathematics. In particular, the results from initial grade 10 testing—but not from retests—are used to determine whether schools and districts meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) performance and improvement targets under NCLB. Massachusetts also uses the cumulative percentage of students passing the English language arts and mathematics tests by the end of their senior year (including retests) as an additional indicator of AYP for high schools.</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>No. The state currently uses higher cut scores to determine NCLB proficiency than to determine eligibility for a high school diploma. To become eligible for a high school diploma, a student must score at least at the “needs improvement” level—a scaled score of 220 or higher—and complete an Educational Proficiency Plan if the student does not earn a scaled score of at least 240, which is the threshold for the proficient level. NCLB requires all students to score at the proficient level or higher by 2014.</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the tests, which includes online assistance (<a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html">www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/admin.html</a>), specialists in the state education agency, test administration manuals, and test administration workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the tests, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, released test items from previous tests, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content areas, which include online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and workshops highlighting promising practices;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and Individual Student Success Plans, which identify the gaps that need to be addressed and the interventions that are needed. These plans are required for students who have performed poorly on MCAS tests;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts; and</li> <li>• Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes train-the-trainer workshops.</li> </ul>

The state also provides:

- Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates, including:
  - Academic support funds targeted to students in grades 9 and 10 who have scored at the warning level on their grades 7 and 8 MCAS tests
  - Competitive Academic Support Transition Grants for students in the classes of 2011 and 2010 to better prepare them for high school and the grade 10 MCAS tests
- The release of all test items on which student scores were based in prior years
- Test preparation materials for teachers

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their *initial* attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide:

- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students in the Class of 2008 Who Passed MCAS Grade 10 Tests on the First Try, Spring 2006		
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math
All students	93%	88%
White	96%	92%
African American	87%	74%
Latino	80%	68%
Asian	94%	93%
Native American	93%	89%
English language learners	55%	54%
Students with disabilities	75%	62%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	85%	74%
Passing score (scale of 200-280)	220	220

Note: Data are based on student enrollment during the MCAS testing window in spring 2006. The data are from *Spring 2006 MCAS Tests, Summary of State Results*, which is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html?yr=06](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html?yr=06).

Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students in the Class of 2006 Who Passed by the End of Grade 12			
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math	Both Subjects
All students	96%	96%	95%
White	98%	97%	97%
African American	91%	88%	86%
Latino	91%	89%	86%
Asian	97%	97%	96%
Native American	98%	95%	94%
English language learners	77%	83%	72%
Students with disabilities	84%	81%	79%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	93%	91%	90%

Note: Data are based on students who were members of the class of 2006 as of March 2006. The data are from *Progress Report on Students Attaining the Competency Determination Statewide and by School and District: Classes of 2006 and 2007, June 2006*, which is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html?yr=06](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/results.html?yr=06).

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be that between English language learners and non-ELLs.

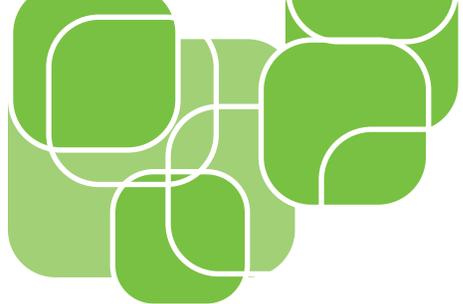
**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Academic Support Request for Proposal funding priorities include grants for services to students with disabilities and English language learners. Additionally, funding may be used to provide transportation, an issue in districts with high populations of low-income students and/or rural areas. Technical assistance includes the following initiatives, which address the achievement gaps:

- Prioritizing resources for districts with schools in restructuring, corrective action, and improvement to fund turnaround partners or consultant services, or grants in reading or expanded learning time
- Funding for ten urban districts with the highest number of schools in restructuring, corrective action, and improvement to pay the salary of at least one school support specialist whose role is to coordinate and implement the district's support to these schools (DOE providing monthly training on best practices in school improvement and interdistrict networking opportunities)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted training programs, including reading academies for early elementary teachers in identified schools, in-depth training on teaching ELLs, and a two-year program for principals on instructional leadership in a standards-based educational program</li> <li>• Networking opportunities monthly for superintendents from the state’s 22 largest urban districts to meet with DOE administrators to share practices and programs that will improve student performance</li> <li>• Direct assistance to monitor and support the implementation of planned improvement initiatives in districts with schools declared underperforming. (DOE staff initiate structured visits to observe classroom instruction, faculty planning, and professional development activities to oversee implementation of improvement plans.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be that between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>The same academic support funding that is explained above under reading/language arts is applicable in math. Additional technical assistance includes a network for mathematics leaders in the state’s districts with schools showing low performance in mathematics.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>Achieve Inc. conducted an evaluation of the MCAS (see <a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf">www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf</a>). In addition, the state has issued reports that describe the technical integrity of the MCAS high school exit tests and include validity evidence (see <a href="http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tech_rpt.html">www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tech_rpt.html</a>).</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Measured Progress in Dover, NH</p>





# Minnesota



## Phasing Out the Basic Skills Tests (BSTs) and Phasing In the Graduation Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD)

<p><b>Type of test</b></p>	<p>The state considers the Graduation Required Assessments for Diploma (GRAD) tests to be proficiency tests of mathematics, reading and writing skills, and knowledge necessary for graduation. The GRAD tests measure many of the Minnesota academic standards. However, the larger assessment system into which the GRAD tests are embedded, the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, Series II (MCA-II), is intended to measure students' competency on the Minnesota academic standards.</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment and to meet a state mandate.</p>
<p><b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b></p>	<p>In 2007 the state continued its transition from the Basic Skills Tests (BSTs) to the GRAD test. However, the state is still administering the BST tests. The written composition section was administered as a census test in 2007 for the final time to grade 10 students, and the mathematics and reading portions will still be administered as retests until the class of 2009 has graduated.</p> <p>Legislation is currently being considered in Minnesota regarding the GRAD test which would formally establish the GRAD test as the official graduation test and provide rule-making authority to the Minnesota Department of Education.</p>
<p><b>Year first administered</b></p>	<p>The BSTs were first administered in math and reading in 1996 and in writing in 1999. The class of 2009 will be the last class required to pass the BSTs for graduation.</p> <p>The GRAD tests are being phased in. The GRAD writing test will replace the basic skills written composition test in 2007; the GRAD reading test (a subset of the MCA-II) will replace the basic skills reading test in 2008; and the GRAD mathematics test (a subset of the MCA-II) will replace the basic skills mathematics test in 2009. The class of 2010 will be the first class required to pass the GRAD tests.</p>
<p><b>Year diplomas first withheld</b></p>	<p>Diplomas were first withheld in 2000 for students who did not pass the basic skills tests. Diplomas will be withheld in 2010 for students who do not pass the GRAD tests.</p>
<p><b>Subjects tested</b></p>	<p>Mathematics, reading, writing composition</p>
<p><b>Grade first administered</b></p>	<p>The GRAD/MCA-II tests will first be administered in different grades, depending on the subject: the writing test in 9<sup>th</sup> grade, the reading test in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, and the math test in 11<sup>th</sup> grade.</p>

<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	<b>BSTs:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> grade for reading and math, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade for written composition <b>GRAD/MCA-II tests:</b> 9 <sup>th</sup> grade for writing, 10 <sup>th</sup> grade for reading, 11 <sup>th</sup> grade for math
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	<b>BSTs:</b> 11 retake opportunities in reading and math, 8 in written composition <b>GRAD tests:</b> At a minimum, 7 retake opportunities for the reading test, 4 for the math test, and 10 for the writing test. Minnesota is working to develop an on-demand online assessment for retakes of the GRAD test starting with the GRAD reading in the summer of 2008. This is expected to provide more opportunities for students to retake the exam.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who meet all other graduation requirements except passing the BSTs can retake the exam an unlimited number of times after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade. The same rules will apply for the GRAD test.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	To help students pass the exam, the state allows general education students to be eligible for any accommodation after April 1 <sup>st</sup> of their senior year.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>The IEP team may determine a different passing score on the BST or the team may decide an alternate assessment is best for the student and determine performance criteria appropriate for the student.</p> <p>In either case, students with disabilities who pass this way are given a Pass Individual notation on their record rather than a Pass State designation, but they still receive a regular diploma.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	Yes. If a student has been in the country for less than three years before graduation, the district may choose to exempt the student from passing the tests.
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	<p>The basic skills tests are not aligned with state standards and are first administered in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, so they do not satisfy the NCLB requirement for a high school test.</p> <p>The MCA-II 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading test will be used for NCLB purposes in 2008, and the MCA-II 11<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics test will be used for NCLB in 2009. (The GRAD writing test will not be used for NCLB.)</p> <p>Students will take the entire MCA-II only one time as part of the graduation component for reading and mathematics. If students are proficient on the MCA-II (earning the achievement level of Meets the Standards or Exceeds the Standards), then they will be considered as having met the graduation requirement regardless of their performance on the GRAD portion of the test. Students who do not meet the graduation requirement on the first try, either by reaching proficiency on the MCA-II or by passing the subset of items that constitute the GRAD test, will retake just the GRAD items rather than the entire MCA-II.</p>

### Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?

No. For accountability in reading and mathematics under NCLB, students must reach the proficient level on the MCA-II. Students can meet the graduation requirement, however, by performing successfully on just the subset of questions on the MCA-II that makes up the GRAD tests. A standards setting will be conducted each year a new GRAD test is given (2008 for reading and 2009 for mathematics), which will only focus on the content of the GRAD assessment. Essentially, students can meet graduation requirements based on their performance on the GRAD even when they do not achieve the level of proficiency on the MCA-II needed to meet NCLB benchmarks of proficiency.

### Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam

The state does not provide technical assistance to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the high school exit exams. However, the state does provide test items from prior years.

### Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam

The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.

### Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam

School districts in the state facilitate:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day

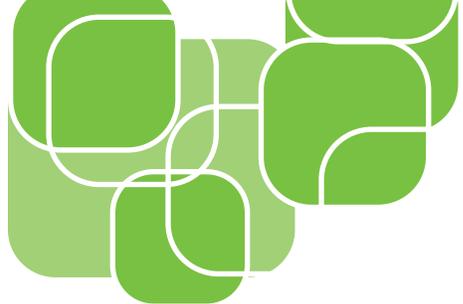
### Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006	
Student Group	Writing
All students	92.65%
White	96.23%
African American	72.97%
Latino	76.99%
Asian	80.82%
Native American	86.63%
English language learners	57.07%
Migrant	81.53%
Students with disabilities	61.11%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	68.92%
Passing score (scale of 0-6)	3

Note: Not applicable to reading and mathematics in 2006:  
 BST Reading and Mathematics were last administered in 2005 to grade 8 students.  
 BST Written Composition pass rates for 2006 are reported in the above table.  
 GRAD Written Composition: Being given first time in April 2007. Pass rates expected in July.  
 GRAD Reading: Pass rates available in June 2008.  
 GRAD Mathematics: Pass rates available in June 2009.

<b>Cumulative pass rates, 2006</b>	Minnesota does not maintain this data for the BST. The state expects to collect this data for GRAD assessments. Writing would first be available in 2010, followed by reading and mathematics.
<b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Asian students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learner and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between white students and African American students.</p>
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	No
<b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• White students and Asian students</li> <li>• White students and Native American students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between white students and African American students.</p>
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	No
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	No
<b>State test contractor</b>	Pearson Educational Measurement





# Mississippi

## Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program (SATP)

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-course, criterion-referenced
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	Tests in Algebra I, Biology I, English II (with a writing component), and U.S. History in their current form were all administered in 2000-01
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>To earn a high school diploma in previous years, Mississippi students had to pass the Functional Literacy Exam, a minimum competency exam introduced in the mid-1980s. In September 2000, the state board of education adopted the SATP tests as the new exit exam. The SATP has been phased in over the past five years, while the Functional Literacy Exam has been phased out.</p> <p>The requirement to pass U.S. History applied to the graduation class of 2003; the requirement to pass English II applied to the graduation class of 2004; the requirement to pass Biology I applied to the graduation class of 2005. With the requirement to pass Algebra I added for 2006, the class of 2006 became the first required to pass all four Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) end-of-course tests to graduate. (See the phase-in schedule at <a href="http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa/grad.pdf">www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa/grad.pdf</a>.)</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Algebra I, English II (with a writing component), Biology I, U.S. History from 1877. Content is based on the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Students take the exams at different grade levels, depending on when they complete the course in the content being tested.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The tests are aligned to course content rather than to grade levels. However, most students take Algebra I and Biology I in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, English II in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade, and U.S. history in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	A minimum of three times each school year.

*continues* ➤

<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have completed all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may retake the tests until they achieve a passing score.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Yes. Students who fail a subject area test twice may submit an appeal for a substitute evaluation that relies on other evidence to demonstrate their mastery of the subject and can receive a regular diploma. Students who do not receive a regular diploma because they fail the SATP can continue to take the SATP until they pass it and receive a regular diploma. Students who have completed all other requirements for graduation and are no longer enrolled in high school remain eligible to retest. These students include those who enroll in a GED (General Education Diploma) program, those who enroll in a community college, and those who join the work force.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Students with disabilities can receive a certificate of completion or occupational diploma. These students must participate in subject-area testing for NCLB reporting, but these alternate paths do not require that students pass the subject area tests. Students with disabilities pursuing a regular diploma may participate in the High Stakes Alternative Assessment after their initial participation in subject area testing. This alternate assessment is available only for students with disabilities who are pursuing a regular diploma but would need an unallowable testing accommodation in order to take the general assessment.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Results from the first time students take the Algebra I and English II tests are reported for NCLB. If a student passes a test such as the Algebra I test for the first time in 8 <sup>th</sup> or 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, the results will be reported for NCLB accountability purposes when the student is in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. Cut scores for proficient performance for NCLB are higher than the score of 300 required for graduation. To be considered proficient for NCLB, students must attain the following scores: Algebra I: 344 English II: 346 Biology I: 335 U.S. History: 347
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	The state offers technical assistance to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes the Three Tier Instructional Model adopted by the state board of education on January 21, 2005, and is designed to meet the needs of every student;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and field-based specialists;</li> </ul>

- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops; and
- Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops.

The state also provides state-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam and exam preparation materials for students and teachers.

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their *initial* attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state does not provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

State school districts provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006					
Student Group	English II	Writing Prompt	Algebra I	Biology I	U.S. History
All students	78.1%	93.7%	91.0%	93.3%	95.9%
White	88.9%	96.0%	95.6%	96.0%	96.0%
African American	66.3%	90.1%	85.8%	88.1%	93.6%
Latino	78.9%	96.0%	96.0%	94.3%	94.6%
Asian	88.1%	96.0%	96.0%	96.0%	96.0%
Native American	74.0%	96.0%	94.1%	89.3%	95.3%
English language learners	67.0%	96.0%	94.6%	88.0%	88.6%
Migrant	71.4%	85.7%	90.9%	85.3%	96.0%
Students with disabilities	37.0%	79.5%	75.0%	81.0%	85.9%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	70.6%	91.6%	88.0%	90.5%	94.5%
Passing score (scale of 100-500 in all subjects except writing, which has scale of 0-4)	300	2	300	300	300

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Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade					
Student Group	English II	Writing Prompt	Algebra I	Biology I	U.S. History
All students	97.6%	99.7%	99.3%	99.6%	99.5%
White	99.5%	99.9%	99.8%	99.9%	99.9%
African American	95.7%	99.4%	98.4%	99.2%	99.2%
Latino	95.5%	99.5%	99.0%	99.5%	98.6%
Asian	97.6%	99.5%	100%	100%	99.5%
Native American	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
English language learners	89.6%	98.6%	100%	100%	96.1%
Migrant	100%	100%	96.4%	100%	100%
Students with disabilities	79.8%	95.3%	92.7%	94.0%	96.2%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	96.1%	99.5%	99.0%	99.3%	99.3%

Note: Data on this table were updated December 2007.

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

No

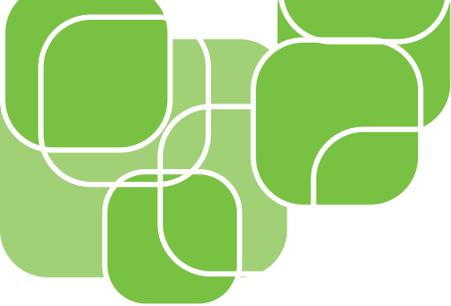
**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	No
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	An alignment evaluation was done by an independent outside group.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Harcourt Assessment Inc.



# Nevada

## High School Proficiency Examination (HSPE)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>A bill was passed that increases the number of credits required for graduation and adds specific math and science classes to the required course list. Due to the passage of this legislation, the state might be pressed to develop end-of-course tests that then become part of the High School Proficiency (HSPE) exit exam requirement.</p> <p>A second bill was passed that allows a student to submit a district-scored portfolio of work, including grades and district test scores, in lieu of a passing score for one of the required tests.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	The 1998 series exam, which is based on content standards adopted in 1998, was first administered in 2001.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	The class of 2003 was the first required to pass the 1998 series tests.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Math, reading, writing. Science will be included in 2008 for 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students.
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> grade, spring semester, except writing, which is first administered in the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	State standards for grades 9-12
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Six



<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Following the summer after their planned graduation date, students who have completed all graduation requirements except passing an exit exam may enroll in an adult education program to continue to take the tests. They may take the tests as many times as needed with no limits on age, and if they pass they will still receive a regular high school diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Although the state does not offer any alternate routes to a regular diploma, students who do not pass the test can receive a certificate of completion or attendance.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Yes. A student with an approved individualized education program (IEP) may take the HSPE with accommodations or modifications. They may also receive an adjusted diploma if they complete the graduation requirements specified in their IEP but do not pass all portions of the HSPE.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Results from students' initial testing and first retest count for NCLB purposes. Nevada began using the results from the HSPE to meet NCLB requirements in 2003-04. The science test will also be used for NCLB purposes in 2007-08.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>● All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>● Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts;</li> <li>● Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>● Districts improve formative uses of assessment, online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and</li> <li>● Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates</li> <li>● Test items from prior years (The state has released test forms and items from previous years, but not on an annual basis.)</li> <li>● Exam preparation materials for students and teachers</li> </ul>

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. (The state provides some funding to districts to develop programs for remediation of students and some for professional development, but does not directly provide the instruction or materials for these programs.)

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, including instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during the school day (districts are required by law to provide this support) and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students (districts are required by law to provide this support)
- Extended class day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade Students Passing, 2006			
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math
All students	89.8%	91.8%	72.1%
White	94.4%	96.0%	81.4%
African American	80.8%	85.8%	48.6%
Latino	82.1%	83.7%	57.6%
Asian	91.4%	93.7%	79.6%
Native American	87.0%	91.1%	65.1%
English language learners	52.0%	50.3%	33.4%
Students with disabilities	48.6%	52.9%	23.8%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	80.3%	82.2%	55.4%
Passing score (scale of 100-500, except for writing, which has a scale of 0-12)	251	7	304

Note: The pass rates for the reading and math tests represent the percentage of students passing after spring testing of 11<sup>th</sup> grade, which means they had two opportunities to pass—spring of 10<sup>th</sup> grade and spring of 11<sup>th</sup> grade. The pass rates for the writing test represent the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> graders passing the first time they took the test.

Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade			
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math
All students	99.76%	99.37%	90.89%
White	99.97%	99.67%	92.8%
African American	99.95%	99.59%	75.5%
Latino	99.1%	98.0%	82.7%
Asian	99.4%	99.9%	93.3%
Native American	98.65%	97.7%	76.0%
English language learners	91.64%	82.7%	69.4%
Students with disabilities	96.3%	99.6%	30.2%

Note: The state does not collect data for the free or reduced-price lunch eligible student group for the high school exit exam.

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

No

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

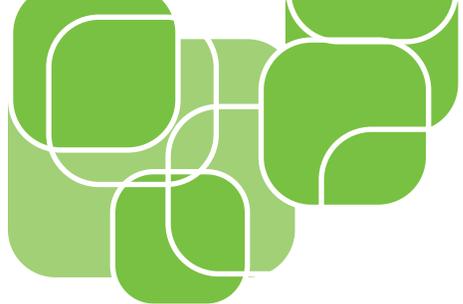
The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

No

<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	The state has not done a full evaluation of the HSPE, but the Center for Assessment at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas has done an alignment study of the HSPE reading and math tests.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Measured Progress





# New Jersey

## High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>The HSPA science test will not be a graduation requirement; it will be replaced in 2008 with an end-of-course biology test that is expected to become a graduation requirement circa 2010.</p> <p>In general, the state department of education is planning to move to an end-of-course test model for all content areas of the high school assessment. The biology test is the first step in this direction, and further steps are under discussion. The New Jersey DOE plans to pilot end-of-course exams in Algebra II in May 2008 on a volunteer basis; this test is seen as an instrument for evaluating college readiness.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>Students who were in 11<sup>th</sup> grade in 2002 were the first to take the HSPA.</p> <p>The HSPA replaced the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT11), which was first administered in 1983 and became a state graduation requirement for all public high school students who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade on or after September 1, 1991. The class of 2000 was the last required to pass the HSPT11.</p>
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	The class of 2003 was the first required to pass the HSPA to obtain a diploma.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Language arts literacy and mathematics (science in 2007; biology will replace science in 2008).
<b>Grade first administered</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Two; students who are retained have additional opportunities

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<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	No limit on retest opportunities; students in adult high schools are also eligible to take the HSPA.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Yes. Students who fail one or both sections of the HSPA may go through a special review assessment (SRA) process, which offers them an alternate way to demonstrate their mastery of the required skills.</p> <p>The NJ state board is still considering whether to eliminate the SRA, but no final decision has been made. In the meantime, the SRA will be administered for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>In addition, students who have met all other graduation requirements except passing the HSPA can either return to school at testing time the following year and retake the HSPA or pass the General Education Diploma (GED) test.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	No. Some students with disabilities are exempt from passing—but not from taking—the HSPA, based on their individualized education program (IEP). Students who are designated as “IEP-exempt from passing” must take the exempt portions of the test at least once, but their scores will not affect their graduation status. Students with severe disabilities take the Alternate Proficiency Assessment instead of the HSPA and can earn a regular diploma if they fulfill all other requirements for graduation.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	<p>No. English language learners may demonstrate proficiency in the required content areas by completing the SRA process, which is also available in Spanish and two additional languages other than English. To be eligible for an SRA in the native language, a student must have:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scored below the state-established cutoff on one of the state-approved English language tests;</li> <li>Participated in a bilingual, English as a second language, or English language services program for two consecutive years or fewer before the HSPA testing; or</li> <li>Attended school in the U.S. for three consecutive years or fewer before the date of the HSPA.</li> </ol> <p>English language learners who take the SRA must also pass the English fluency test to receive a high school diploma.</p>
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	The results of the first administration of the HSPA in grade 11 in language arts literacy and math count for determining adequate yearly progress under NCLB. The science test will not be used as a graduation requirement.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	The state offers technical assistance to teachers administering the exam, including online assistance and train-the-trainer workshops. The state also helps teachers prepare students for the exam, including online assistance, and provides exam preparation materials for students and teachers.

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides targeted remediation programs for students.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Remediation offered outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006</b>		
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>
All students	83.5%	75.9%
White	91.5%	86.1%
African American	64.3%	46.3%
Latino	68.2%	58.0%
Asian	90.6%	90.9%
Native American	72.6%	68.6%
Multiracial	69.9%	64.1%
English language learners	22.1%	32.5%
Migrant	37.8%	29.6%
Students with disabilities	44.9%	31.6%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	63.1%	51.6%
Passing score (scale of 100-300)	200	200

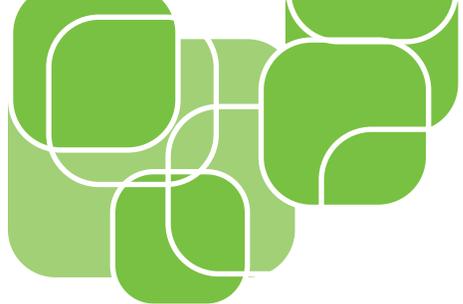
Note: a score of 200 = proficient and 250 = advanced proficient.

**Cumulative pass rates, 2006**

Cumulative pass rates are not yet available.

<p><b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between white students and African American students.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. State supreme court-mandated funding (as a result of <i>Abbott v. Burke</i>) provides additional funding for districts with significant achievement gaps. The Abbott districts are largely urban districts with high minority populations. In addition, there are Reading First and other targeted early literacy programs focusing on districts with significant achievement gaps.</p>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> </ul> <p>The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. State Supreme Court-mandated funding (as a result of <i>Abbott v. Burke</i>) provides additional funding for districts with significant achievement gaps. The Abbott districts are largely urban districts with high minority populations.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>An evaluation was conducted by Achieve Inc. (see <a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf">www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf</a>).</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Measurement Incorporated in Durham, NC</p>





# New Mexico



## New Mexico High School Competency Examination (NMHSCE)

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State High School Exit Exams: Working to Raise Test Scores

<b>Type of test</b>	Minimum competency
<b>Purpose</b>	To meet a state mandate
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	Yes. The 2007 NM Legislative session implemented a requirement that terminates the current New Mexico High School Competency exam (NMHSCE) effective July 1, 2010. In its place, the student must demonstrate competence in math, reading and language arts, science, and social studies based on standards-based assessments or a portfolio.
<b>Year first administered</b>	1987-88
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	The class of 1990 was the first required to pass all subjects of the exit exam before receiving a diploma.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, language arts, composition, mathematics, science, social studies
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade standards in reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Three. Students initially take the test once in the 10 <sup>th</sup> grade and may retake it in the spring of 11 <sup>th</sup> grade. They have two more opportunities to retake it by the end of 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Two retake opportunities each year for up to five years after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>The state does not allow students to submit scores from other tests to replace its exit exam, but it does allow districts to grant waivers of the exam requirement. The waiver or appeal must be initiated by the school principal and sent to the district superintendent and the local school board. If the waiver is approved by the local school board, the district superintendent submits a waiver request documenting local school board approval to the state secretary of education for consideration and approval. The waiver request must include documentation of the student's record of having met all other graduation requirements.</p> <p>Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may be granted a certificate of completion indicating the number of credits earned and the grade completed.</p>

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	<p>Beginning in school year 2010-11, if a student is not able to demonstrate competence in math, reading and language arts, science, and social studies, a certificate of credits earned and grade completed will be issued. The student will have five years from completion of the 12<sup>th</sup> grade to demonstrate competency and subsequently be issued a diploma.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b></p>	<p>No. There are currently three pathways to the diploma in New Mexico. Each pathway has specific requirements that students must follow in order to earn a standard diploma. The pathways are Standard, Career Readiness, and Ability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Standard:</b> Students must meet the district’s graduation requirements that apply to all students.</li> <li>• <b>Career Readiness:</b> Students must take the NMHSCE and meet a competency level determined by the student’s individualized education program (IEP) team.</li> <li>• <b>Ability:</b> students must take either the NMHSCE or the New Mexico Alternate Assessment and meet a competency level determined by the IEP team.</li> </ul> <p>Like all other students, students with disabilities who complete 12<sup>th</sup> grade without having passed the exit exam may receive a certificate of completion. However, a follow-up plan of action must be completed in order to provide a free, appropriate public education to these students as they pursue the process of meeting graduation requirements.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b></p>	<p>No; but English language learners are eligible for the same waiver and certificate options as general education students</p>
<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state does <i>not</i> provide assistance or intervention to all districts to raise initial pass rates.</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state does <i>not</i> provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>School districts do not provide support to raise pass rates on exit exams. Provision of support is a local decision and responsibility.</p>

## Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006							
Student Group	Reading	Language Arts	Writing Composition	Math	Science	Social Studies	All Six Subjects
All students	87%	77%	95%	78%	73%	72%	57%
White	96%	88%	97%	90%	89%	86%	77%
African American	82%	69%	93%	67%	63%	64%	47%
Latino	83%	72%	94%	73%	65%	65%	47%
Asian	96%	89%	96%	94%	89%	83%	77%
Native American	82%	69%	91%	69%	62%	63%	43%
English language learners	73%	61%	90%	64%	54%	54%	32%
Migrant	62%	61%	87%	68%	51%	57%	31%
Students with disabilities	62%	38%	80%	42%	41%	40%	21%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	82%	70%	92%	72%	64%	64%	46%
Passing score (on a varying scale*)	175	175	3.0	175	175	175	175

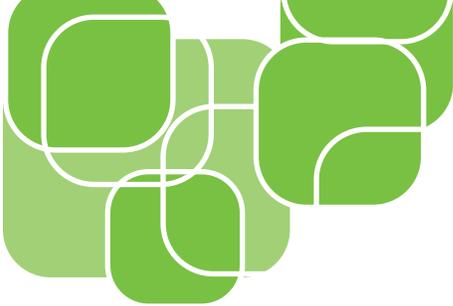
\*The tests, except for writing, are scored on a scale of 0 to approximately 300 points, depending on the particular forms used each year. The writing test is scored using a 6-point rubric.

## Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade							
Student Group	Reading	Language Arts	Writing Composition	Math	Science	Social Studies	All Six Subjects
All students	90%	84%	97%	86%	84%	87%	76%
White	96%	92%	99%	93%	94%	94%	88%
African American	87%	80%	96%	79%	78%	83%	72%
Latino	87%	80%	96%	83%	80%	83%	71%
Asian	89%	89%	95%	93%	86%	88%	82%
Native American	85%	78%	96%	80%	77%	83%	68%
English language learners	75%	68%	93%	74%	68%	73%	54%
Migrant	65%	60%	89%	66%	51%	58%	45%
Students with disabilities	66%	49%	87%	57%	56%	62%	37%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	85%	79%	96%	81%	78%	82%	69%

<b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	The state reports achievement gaps according to New Mexico’s standards based assessment rather than the New Mexico High School Competency exam. The standards-based assessment is used for NCLB accountability.
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	No
<b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	The state reports achievement gaps according to New Mexico’s standards-based assessment rather than the New Mexico High School Competency exam. The standards-based assessment is used for NCLB accountability.
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	No
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	An item review of the NMHSCE was conducted every year from 1987 to 1998. The last item review was conducted in 2003-04.
<b>State test contractor</b>	CTB/McGraw Hill was the original contractor. Harcourt will be the contractor for NMHSCE in 2007.





# New York

## Regents Examinations

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-course (achievement tests aligned to New York State Learning Standards)
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	1878
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>The class of 2000 was the first required to pass the revised Regents Examinations to graduate, but these students only had to pass the English language arts test. Since 2003, students have been required to pass five Regents Examinations to graduate.</p> <p>Students with disabilities who enter grade 9 prior to September 2010 will be the last cohort for whom the same scores and examinations will be required and will not be required to achieve the same scores as other students until 2013.</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and languages other than English
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Varies, depending on when students complete the course associated with a particular Regents Examination. In the case of a science Regents Examination, only students who have also met the laboratory requirement (1,200 minutes) may take the test.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	Grades 9-12 of the New York State Learning Standards

<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Most Regents Examinations are administered three times a year (January, June, and August). Students may retake the examinations during each of these three administrations.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Yes
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Students who have completed the course in a subject tested by a Regents Examination may substitute a minimum acceptable score on a department-approved alternative examination (such as the SAT II, Advanced Placement, or International Baccalaureate exam) for a Regents exam score.</p> <p>An appeals process is available to students who have entered 9<sup>th</sup> grade in September 2005 or later, have passed certain courses to prepare for a Regents Examination, and have earned a 65 course average, but whose highest score on the Regents exam is within three points of the 65 passing score. These students may appeal for permission to graduate with a local or Regents Diploma using this lower score.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Students with disabilities who enroll in 9<sup>th</sup> grade prior to September 2010 and who fail a required Regents Examination may still receive a regular diploma if they pass the corresponding Regents Competency Test, an assessment available for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Students with disabilities can also receive an individualized education program (IEP) certificate if they have achieved the goals and objectives in their IEP but have not passed the Regents Competency Tests.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Since 2005-06, the student’s score achieved on the Regents Examinations in English and mathematics and recorded on the permanent record by the end of the fourth year of high school has been used to meet the high school testing requirements of NCLB. The science examination will also be used for NCLB purposes in 2007-08.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise initial pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance and specialist(s) in the state education agency;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and “regional</li> </ul>

	<p>network strategy,” which are large presentations for administrators on data to aid instruction;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which include online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and grants to districts;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and field-based specialists.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides test items from prior years.</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted remediation programs for students</li> <li>• Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment</li> <li>• Additional professional development for administrators</li> </ul> <p>The state has a Regional Technical Assistance System in seven regions of the state to provide technical assistance to those identified at highest accountability levels with most at-risk students. Data provided shows which groups are most at risk.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>School districts in the state provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-designed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Professional development for administrators</li> <li>• District-designed curriculum materials</li> <li>• Changes in class schedules and offerings</li> <li>• Remediation offered during and outside of the regular school day</li> <li>• Individualized academic plans for students</li> <li>• Extended class day</li> </ul>
<p><b>Initial pass rates, 2006</b></p>	<p>Not available at the state level.</p>

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Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade					
Student Group	Comprehensive English	Math	Science	Global History & Geography	U.S. History & Government
All students	76%	78%	79%	76%	73%
White	84%	86%	88%	85%	83%
African American	62%	64%	63%	61%	58%
Latino	60%	63%	62%	61%	56%
Asian	83%	87%	85%	84%	82%
Native American	60%	64%	67%	61%	57%
English language learners	36%	52%	45%	45%	40%
Migrant	43%	47%	54%	49%	42%
Students with disabilities	38%	41%	45%	41%	38%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	64%	68%	67%	65%	61%

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close is the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. The state funding formula provides more funding to districts with the most students who are in need (low-income).

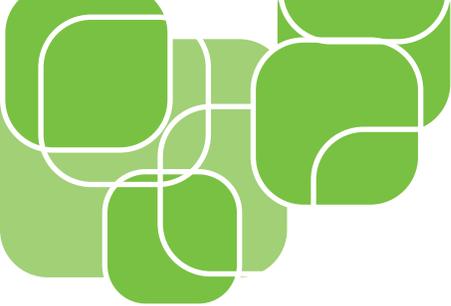
**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The state did not identify which gap was the most challenging gap to close.

<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	Yes. The state funding formula provides more funding to districts with the most students who are in need (low-income).
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	An evaluation has been conducted and is available at <a href="http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/assesspubs/repubs.html">www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/assesspubs/repubs.html</a>
<b>State test contractor</b>	No contractor for test development as of June 2006. Some ancillary activities are contracted out.



# North Carolina

## North Carolina High School Competency Tests and Test of Computer Skills

<b>Type of test</b>	North Carolina High School Competency Tests are standards-based; however, five end-of-course exams (also standards-based) were required for students entering the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade in 2006-07.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>The state has undertaken many changes to develop a better form of assessment. The North Carolina High School Competency Tests in Reading Comprehension and Mathematics were first administered in 1978-79, and the Computer Skills Test in 1996-97. A new Web-based version of the computer skills test has replaced the old computer test and was available in 2006-07 for entering 9<sup>th</sup> graders.</p> <p>Students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2006-07 who are following the college/university preparation, college/technical preparation, and career preparation courses of study will be held to new exit standards, which include passing five end-of-course tests and completing a graduation project.</p>
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>1982 (for competency tests in reading and mathematics)          2001 (for computer skills test)          2009-2010 (for new exit standards)</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	<p>Reading comprehension and mathematics (competency tests); and computer proficiency (computer skills test)</p> <p>In addition, students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2006-07 will be required to pass end-of-course exams in Algebra I, English I, U.S. History, civics and economics, and biology to meet the new exit standards.</p>
<b>Grade first administered</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade for both the competency tests and computer skills test



<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> grade
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	<p>A minimum of one and maximum of three retakes per year for the competency and computer skills tests. In their senior year, students have an additional retake opportunity during the last month of the school year.</p> <p>For the new end-of-course tests, students will have a maximum of two retest opportunities before completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade.</p>
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	<p>Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the competency or computer skills tests may retake the tests after completing 12<sup>th</sup> grade and still receive a regular diploma. Students are allowed to return to school and take advantage of remedial instruction and additional retesting until they reach age 21, or beyond if the district allows it.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Yes. North Carolina students may use scores from the following alternate tests to meet the state competency test requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Carolina grade 8 end-of-course tests</li> <li>• PSAT, SAT, ACT, and College Board tests (such as ACT PLAN, ACT COMPASS, and ACCUPLACER)</li> <li>• Standardized tests, such as the California Achievement Test 5<sup>th</sup> edition, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Terra Nova, and Stanford Achievement Test 9</li> <li>• Nationally normed assessments approved by the state Department of Public Instruction</li> </ul> <p>When nationally normed tests are not available, students may use any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 7 end-of-grade tests in reading and mathematics</li> <li>• Algebra I end-of-course test to meet the math competency requirement</li> <li>• English I end-of-course test to meet the reading competency requirement</li> </ul> <p>Students may use a combination of measures to meet the competency test requirements, but they still must pass the computer skills test.</p> <p>The state does not have a process for requesting a waiver or appeal of the competency test requirement. Students who do not receive a regular diploma may be awarded a certificate of achievement.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Yes. Students with disabilities who are following the occupational course of study (OCS) are not required to pass the competency test to receive a diploma. Only certain students with disabilities may participate in OCS, as determined by each student's individualized education program (IEP) team.</p> <p>In addition, an IEP team or section 504 committee may determine that a student with disabilities participating in the college/university, college/technical, or career preparation courses of study will not participate in the competency test. These students will not receive a diploma but instead will receive a graduation certificate available only for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Students with disabilities must still pass the computer skills assessment.</p>

<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	No. The current exams are aligned to 8 <sup>th</sup> grade standards and do not satisfy the high school testing requirements of NCLB. However, the Algebra I and English I (combined with the writing assessment in grade 10) end-of-course exams are used to meet the requirements of NCLB. Students entering 9 <sup>th</sup> grade in 2006-07 are the first to use the same exams for both graduation requirements and for NCLB accountability.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Not applicable for competency and computer skills. For Algebra I and English I student must score level 3 or above. One standard of error of measurement is allowed for meeting the exit standards but it is not allowed for meeting NCLB accountability.
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops.</li> </ul> <p>There is a competency test using reading instructional materials and a mathematics instructional materials publication. These publications are provided to the participants after the competency test professional development for teachers and administrators session. The purpose of these publications is to provide technical assistance to teachers and administrators and content-specific strategies.</p>
<b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b>	The state does <i>not</i> provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. School districts are required to provide assistance and remediation to help students who failed in their initial attempt.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students

State law requires school districts to provide remediation, but the type is not specified.

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006			
Student Group	NCHSCT Reading Level III	NCHSCT Math Level III	Computer Skills Test
All students	88.6% / 86.9%	61.3% / 96.6%	65.0%
White	94.1% / 92.9%	93.2% / 72.6%	78.5%
African American	79.9% / 77.9%	40.2% / 40.0%	43.7%
Latino	78.8% / 75.7%	50.8% / 49.3%	47.1%
Asian	92.8% / 91.6%	82.0% / 80.6%	77.7%
Native American	81.4% / 79.8%	45.5% / 45.4%	43.9%
Multiracial	92.3% / 91.0%	61.9% / 61.3%	69.5%
English language learners	61.8% / 58.4%	36.0% / 35.9%	28.0%
Migrant	64.4% / 58.9%	42.4% / 41.3%	34.2%
Students with disabilities	64.0% / 61.8%	28.2% / 33.3%	38.3%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	80.8% / 78.5%	44.3% / 44.0%	48.2%
Passing score (scale of 231-291 for reading, 235-310 for math, and 18-82 for computer skills)	254	261	47 on multiple choice test; 49 on performance test

Note: The first number for reading and math represents multiple choice assessments; the second number includes the alternate assessments previously explained.

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Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Student Group	Competency Test of Reading and Mathematics	Computer Skills Test
All students	93.5%	93.1%
White	≥ 95.0%	≥ 95.0%
African American	88.7%	89.4%
Latino	88.3%	87.7%
Asian	92.6%	92.2%
Native American	94.0%	91.0%
Multiracial	93.8%	93.8%
English language learners	77.9%	82.6%
Migrant	78.8%	85.3%
Students with disabilities	66.6%	68.7%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	88.7%	88.5%

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Assistance has been provided to some districts and schools. Subgroups targeted include students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.

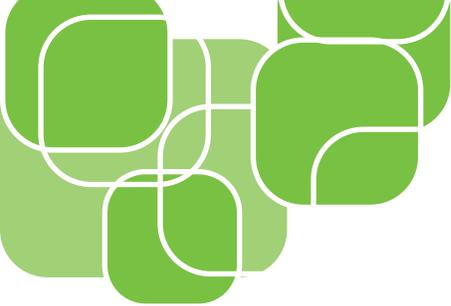
**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Assistance has been provided to some districts and schools. Subgroups targeted include students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>Yes, but results are not available at this time.</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>The state has a contract with North Carolina State University to provide assistance with the development of the competency, computer skills, and end-of-course tests.</p>



# Ohio

## Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure the level of reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies skill expected at the end of 10<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>• Ensure that students meet a passing score as a condition toward granting a diploma</li> <li>• Provide data to state policy makers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Provide schools with academic performance information that will guide the improvement of curriculum and programs of instruction</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>The OGT is the second-generation graduation test. Beginning with graduating classes in the mid-1990s, Ohio students had to pass a first-generation test—the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Proficiency Test—in order to graduate.</p> <p>New testing requirements were established by the Ohio General Assembly in 2001 based on recommendations by the Governor’s Commission for Student Success. The reading and math Ohio Graduation Tests (OGT) were first administered to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2004. The science, social studies, and writing tests were first administered to 10<sup>th</sup> grade students in 2005. The first exam that counted toward graduation occurred in March 2005. The class of 2007 is the first that must pass the OGT in order to graduate.</p>
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	Beginning in the mid-1990s, students were required to pass an exit exam (the 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade Proficiency Test) in order to graduate. The class of 2007 is the first graduating class required to pass the OGT in order to earn a diploma.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> grade benchmarks of the academic content standards
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Six. After taking the tests for the first time in the spring of 10 <sup>th</sup> grade, students may retake them in the summer and every fall and spring until the end of grade 12, with an optional summer administration available in some schools.



<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students can continue taking the OGT, with no limitations on age or number of retakes, until they pass and receive a regular diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Students in the graduating class of 2007 and beyond may graduate and receive a diploma without passing all five tests of the OGT if they meet the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pass four of the five tests and miss passing the fifth test by no more than 10 scale score points</li> <li>Attain a 97% attendance rate each of the last four years and no expulsion in the last four years</li> <li>Achieve a grade point average of 2.5 out of 4.0 in the subject area missed and complete the curriculum requirement in the subject area missed</li> <li>Participate in any intervention programs offered by the school and maintain a 97% attendance rate in any program offered outside the normal school day or year, including those programs offered by entity other than the school</li> <li>Obtain letters of recommendation from each teacher in the subject area not yet passed and the high school principal</li> </ol>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Students with disabilities may be exempted from the consequences of the tests, although they are required to take the test at least once. This decision is made by the individualized education program (IEP) team on a student-by-student basis.</p> <p>Further, students with the most severe cognitive disabilities may take the OGT alternate assessment, which consists of a classroom-based collection of the students' work and is available in all five subjects.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	Since 2005, reading and math scores from students' initial testing in 10 <sup>th</sup> grade have been used to determine adequate yearly progress under NCLB. The science OGT will be used to meet NCLB science testing requirements in 2007.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, and a toll-free hotline administered by the testing company;</li> <li>All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and a 9<sup>th</sup> grade test that is required in low-performing districts to identify and intervene with students at risk of not passing OGT;</li> <li>Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal</li> </ul>

resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and professional development;

- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, a 9<sup>th</sup> grade test that is required in low-performing districts to identify and intervene (state funds provided) with students at risk of not passing OGT, and test score reports;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Help districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance;
- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and
- All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and a leadership academy through professional organizations.

The state also provides:

- Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates
- Test items from prior years
- Exam preparation materials for students and teachers (OGT Family Guide)
- Online resources and various practice tests

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students (Operation Extend, which is a summer remediation program)
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area

Ohio requires that low-performing districts administer a 9<sup>th</sup> grade test to identify and provide intervention for students at risk of not passing the OGT in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, Ohio provides funds and requires districts to provide appropriate intervention for students who scored below “proficient” on any of the state’s assessments, including the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade tests.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

Ohio requires that low-performing districts administer a 9<sup>th</sup> grade test to identify and provide intervention for students at risk of not passing the OGT in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In addition, Ohio provides funds and requires districts to provide appropriate intervention for students who scored below “proficient” on any of the state’s assessments, including the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade tests.

In addition, school districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators

- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students
- Extended class day

Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006					
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	89.2%	88.0%	82.4%	72.6%	79.1%
White	92.2%	90.5%	87.2%	79.6%	83.9%
African American	75.5%	75.5%	59.7%	40.6%	57.2%
Latino	79.6%	78.1%	71.2%	53.4%	64.1%
Asian	93.0%	92.0%	92.6%	88.2%	83.2%
Native American	87.2%	82.8%	76.3%	80.3%	71.7%
Multiracial	88.1%	86.9%	81.0%	68.5%	77.6%
English language learners	62.1%	65.5%	60.0%	38.9%	52.6%
Migrant	65.2%	67.2%	71.6%	55.2%	62.1%
Students with disabilities	56.9%	55.7%	45.0%	37.0%	43.8%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	78.4%	77.5%	67.4%	51.7%	62.0%
Passing score (number of points needed to pass, scoring proficient or above, out of total points)	19.5 out of 48	24 out of 48	18 out of 48	21.5 out of 48	20.5 out of 48

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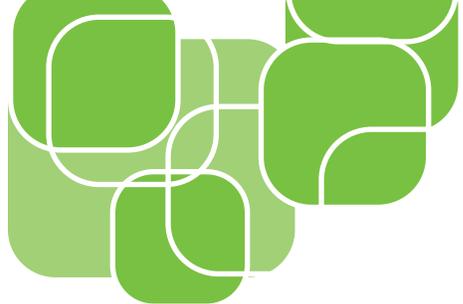
Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 11 <sup>th</sup> Grade					
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math	Science	Social Studies
White	95.3%	93.6%	91.8%	87.6%	89.5%
African American	85.1%	82.6%	72.1%	55.6%	68.4%
Latino	86.1%	82.9%	79.7%	67.1%	73.7%
Asian	94.9%	94.6%	95.2%	88.0%	91.3%
Native American	92.7%	90.1%	81.8%	77.4%	81.2%
Multiracial	91.5%	88.3%	84.3%	88.1%	77.5%
English language learners	73.9%	72.6%	74.2%	51.7%	64.5%
Migrant	83.0%	82.6%	68.1%	55.3%	77.1%
Students with disabilities	65.8%	58.3%	52.6%	44.9%	50.0%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	85.9%	82.7%	76.6%	64.4%	71.5%

Note: The state does not have data for 12<sup>th</sup> graders at this time. The above percentages are cumulative pass rates through the end of 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

<b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	The state chose not to answer the question addressing achievement gaps in reading/language arts.
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	The state employs a “poverty index,” an “academic distress percentage,” and an “academic distress index” to identify districts with low academic achievement and high need to which targeted funding is provided.
<b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	The state chose not to answer the question addressing achievement gaps in mathematics.
<b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b>	The state employs a “poverty index,” an “academic distress percentage,” and an “academic distress index” to identify districts with low academic achievement and high need to which targeted funding is provided.
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	The state has received full approval from the Department of Education of its assessment program under the peer review process.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Measurement Incorporated Questar Assessment Inc. Effective July 1, 2007, the American Institutes of Research (AIR) and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) will become Ohio’s testing contractor.





# Oklahoma\*

## End-of-Instruction (EOI) Exams

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State High School Exit Exams: Working to Raise Test Scores

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-instruction (EOI), criterion-referenced examinations aligned to the Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS), which are the state’s academic content standards
<b>Purpose</b>	In previous years Oklahoma reported that the purpose of the EOI exams is to assess students’ mastery of state content standards.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2012
<b>Subjects tested</b>	<p>All Oklahoma students must take four EOI exams—English II (with a writing component), Algebra I, Biology I, and U.S. history—but not as a graduation requirement. The Oklahoma Achieving Classroom Excellence Act (ACE) of 2006 requires three new EOIs to be created: English III (with a writing component), geometry, and Algebra II.</p> <p>By 2012 students will be required to pass a minimum of four out of seven EOI exams in selected subject areas to receive a diploma. Two of the four exams that students must pass are English II and Algebra I.</p>
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Varies. Students will first take the exam at the end of each assessed course, whenever the course is taken.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	High school standards
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Students who do not score at least at the satisfactory level will be afforded the opportunity to retake each test up to three times each calendar year until they achieve at least at the satisfactory level.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	To be determined; the ACE steering committee will make recommendations to the state board of education.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	Students who do not meet the exit exam requirements may receive a high school diploma by demonstrating mastery of state academic content standards through alternate methods recommended by the ACE steering committee.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Students with individualized education programs (IEPs) under the Individuals with Disabilities Act will be exempt from the exit exam requirements unless taking the exams is part of the student’s IEP.

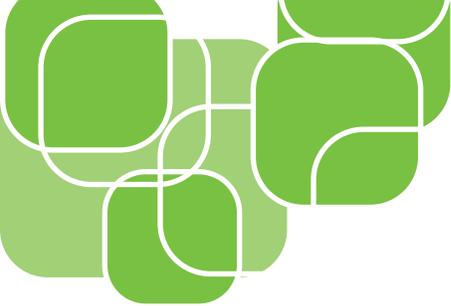
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\* Oklahoma was unable to respond to our survey this year. This profile is based upon publicly available information on the state department of education’s Web site as well as information reported by the state on the survey from CEP’s 2006 report, *State High School Exit Exams: A Challenging Year*.

	According to a presentation on alternate assessment on the Oklahoma Department of Education's Web site, modified assessments were available for eligible students with disabilities for spring 2007 testing in Algebra I, English II, and Biology I. A "modified assessment" is defined as an "alternate assessment scored against modified grade-level standards." Further, portfolio assessments are available, defined as an "alternate assessment scored against alternate achievement standards—appropriate only for students with most significant cognitive disabilities." (Retrieved July 19, 2007, from <a href="http://www.sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultns.html">www.sde.state.ok.us/home/defaultns.html</a> )																																																												
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	Students who do not meet the exit exam requirements may receive a high school diploma by demonstrating mastery of state academic content standards through alternate methods to be determined.																																																												
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	The first test administration of the Algebra I and English II exams are used for NCLB accountability.																																																												
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	To be determined																																																												
<b>Pass rates, 2006</b>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="5">Percentage of Students Passing the End-of-Instruction (EOI) Tests, 2006</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Student Group</th> <th>English II</th> <th>Algebra I</th> <th>Biology I</th> <th>U.S. History</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>All students</td> <td>65%</td> <td>34%</td> <td>49%</td> <td>67%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>White</td> <td>71%</td> <td>40%</td> <td>57%</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>African American</td> <td>43%</td> <td>15%</td> <td>24%</td> <td>48%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Latino</td> <td>46%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>29%</td> <td>51%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Asian</td> <td>70%</td> <td>58%</td> <td>62%</td> <td>73%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Native American</td> <td>59%</td> <td>27%</td> <td>43%</td> <td>63%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>English language learners</td> <td>30%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>16%</td> <td>33%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Students with disabilities</td> <td>17%</td> <td>8%</td> <td>13%</td> <td>28%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Free or reduced-price lunch eligible</td> <td>50%</td> <td>23%</td> <td>35%</td> <td>53%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Passing score</td> <td>700</td> <td>700</td> <td>700</td> <td>700</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Note: Retrieved July 19, 2007, from <a href="http://title3.sde.state.ok.us/studentassessment/05-06/2006%20state%20results%20EOI.pdf">http://title3.sde.state.ok.us/studentassessment/05-06/2006%20state%20results%20EOI.pdf</a></p>	Percentage of Students Passing the End-of-Instruction (EOI) Tests, 2006					Student Group	English II	Algebra I	Biology I	U.S. History	All students	65%	34%	49%	67%	White	71%	40%	57%	73%	African American	43%	15%	24%	48%	Latino	46%	22%	29%	51%	Asian	70%	58%	62%	73%	Native American	59%	27%	43%	63%	English language learners	30%	22%	16%	33%	Students with disabilities	17%	8%	13%	28%	Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	50%	23%	35%	53%	Passing score	700	700	700	700
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<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	According to the CEP 2006 report, there have been no evaluations of the exams. However, the 2006 legislation requires the state board of education to review, realign, and recalibrate the EOI tests as necessary, and to conduct an ongoing study that compares the EOI test content and performance descriptors with those of other states.
<b>State test contractor</b>	CTB McGraw Hill



# South Carolina

## High School Assessment Program (HSAP)

<b>Type of test</b>	English language arts and mathematics tests are standards-based. Science and U.S. History will be assessed through end-of-course examinations.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate students’ achievement based on selected South Carolina academic standards</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	Yes. South Carolina expects to use the state’s end-of-course assessment in physical science for NCLB science assessment purposes at the high school level. Pending the outcome of peer review of the physical science end-of-course test, science assessment for NCLB purposes may change in South Carolina. No definitive timeline has yet been established.
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>Prior to the HSAP, the state administered the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP), a minimum competency exam, as its first exit exam. The BSAP exam was first given in 1986.</p> <p>The HSAP was field-tested for exit exam purposes in spring 2003. Results from this same administration were also used as a baseline for NCLB accountability.</p> <p>Beginning in spring 2004, HSAP was gradually phased in as the state exit examination. HSAP replaced BSAP for all students after the final BSAP administration in summer 2005.</p>
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	For most graduating seniors, 2006 was the first year that diplomas could have been withheld based on the HSAP. A small number of students were required to pass the HSAP in order to graduate before spring 2006.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	<p>English language arts and mathematics</p> <p>Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, it is anticipated that students will be required to pass a high school credit course in science and a course in U.S. history in which end-of-course examinations are administered as part of the requirements for receiving a South Carolina high school diploma.</p>
<b>Grade first administered</b>	HSAP tests are first administered to students in the second spring after their initial enrollment in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade; therefore, an individual student’s first attempt could occur in any grade after or including the ninth grade.



<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The test is aligned to standards that a student would have an opportunity to learn by the second spring after the initial enrollment in the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade. These standards include selected standards across many grades, but do not include 11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> grade standards that students would not have had an opportunity to learn.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	<p>Students who do not pass one or both HSAP tests will be scheduled to retake the test(s) not passed at the next scheduled administration. The HSAP is administered each spring and fall. Students who are expected to graduate before the beginning of the next school year are also eligible to participate in a summer administration of the HSAP.</p> <p>Participation of students with individualized education programs (IEPs) is determined annually by their IEP teams if the students meet specified criteria.</p>
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	A summer administration of the HSAP is available for students who are expected to graduate by the beginning of the next school year. Eligible students enrolled in South Carolina public adult education programs can continue to retake the exam without age limits.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	No. Students who do not pass the HSAP may receive a certificate of attendance.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	No, but students with serious cognitive impairments who cannot participate in the HSAP with accommodations or modifications may meet the criteria for taking the SC-Alt, an alternate assessment. Students who participate in the alternate assessment do not receive a South Carolina high school diploma. Students with disabilities who do not pass the HSAP may receive a certificate of attendance.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No. Students who have limited English proficiency are not required to take the HSAP English language arts test during the first year they are enrolled in a U.S. school, but they must still pass the test to meet the graduation requirement.
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	<p>HSAP results in English language arts and math have been used for NCLB reporting since fall 2004.</p> <p>South Carolina expects to use the state's end-of-course assessment in physical science to meet the NCLB requirement for high school science testing pending the outcome of a peer review.</p>
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	No. The cut score for the exit exam requirement (level 2) is lower than the cut score for NCLB proficiency (level 3).
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and a test administration manual;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and Professional Development on Standards Implementation (PDSI) funds that support increasing teachers' content knowledge and instructional strategies;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which include specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and state lottery funds that help school districts purchase formative assessment instruments;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance, and PDSI funding; and</li> <li>• All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and grants to districts.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Test items (prototype HSAP test forms for English language arts and math) and online materials to help students and teachers understand and practice item types and scoring</li> <li>• Exam preparation materials for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state does <i>not</i> provide specific remediation assistance to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam. Remediation is a district-level responsibility.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>State school districts provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development to help teachers become more proficient in their content areas</li> <li>• Professional development to help teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides</li> <li>• Changes in instructional leadership and support for teachers</li> <li>• Modified curriculum in regular classes</li> <li>• Remediation offered outside the regular school day</li> </ul>

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## Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006		
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math
All students	84.9%	80.2%
White	92.0%	89.5%
African American	75.7%	67.1%
Latino	72.6%	73.4%
Asian	90.0%	92.1%
Native American	85.3%	84.5%
English language learners	55.1%	66.1%
Migrant	48.4%	56.3%
Students with disabilities	41.6%	35.7%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	75.4%	69.2%
Passing score (scale of 100-312)	200 (level II)	200 (level II)

## Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Statewide cumulative pass rate data are not calculated by the South Carolina Department of Education. Pass rate data are calculated for individual school districts and for schools within each school district. These data are published for the state report card and are available on the South Carolina Department of Education Web page listed below.

[www.ed.sc.gov/topics/researchandstats/schoolreportcard/NCLBandEAASchoolReportCards.html](http://www.ed.sc.gov/topics/researchandstats/schoolreportcard/NCLBandEAASchoolReportCards.html)

## Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)

The state does not have information addressing achievement gaps in reading/language arts at this time.

## Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps

No. The state provides funding and technical assistance to school districts as described above; however, the funding and assistance are not targeted to specific subgroups of students.

## Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)

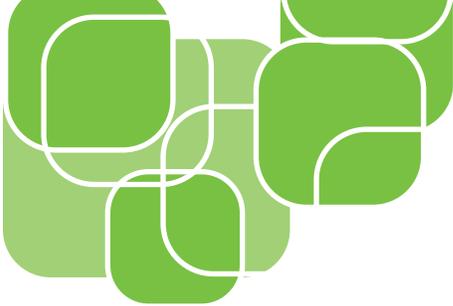
The state does not have information addressing achievement gaps in mathematics at this time.

## Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps

No. The state provides funding and technical assistance to school districts as described above; however, the funding and assistance are not targeted to specific subgroups of students.

<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	The U.S. Department of Education conducted a peer review of the South Carolina assessment system and sent the state superintendent of education a letter of approval on February 15, 2006. The results of this evaluation are available at <a href="http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/sc2.html">www.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/nclbfinalassess/sc2.html</a>
<b>State test contractor</b>	American Institutes for Research (2002-06) Pearson Educational Measurement (2007)





# Tennessee

## Gateway Examinations

<b>Type of test</b>	The Gateway Examinations are end-of-course, criterion-referenced exams. They are also standards-based exams because they align with the state’s content standards.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	2001-02
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2005
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English II, Algebra I, Biology I
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Varies. Students take the exams after completing the course associated with the exam. Most students take the exams in high school, although students who take Algebra I in 7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> grade may take the exam when they complete the course.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> grade standards
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Three administrations each year; students may continue to retake the test at each administration until they pass.
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the exit exams may retake the exams after completing 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, with no limit on age or number of retakes, and still receive a regular diploma.

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<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b></p>	<p>The state does not allow students to earn a regular diploma by passing a substitute test or submitting a waiver or appeal. However, students who do not receive a regular diploma because they could not pass the exit exams are eligible to receive a certificate of attendance.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b></p>	<p>A special education diploma is available for students with disabilities who do not receive a regular diploma because they could not pass the exit exams.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b></p>	<p>No, but English language learners who do not receive a regular diploma because they could not pass the exit exams are eligible for the certificate of attendance available to all students.</p>
<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>Tennessee uses the results from the first time a student takes the graduation exams to meet the requirements of NCLB. Starting in 2007-08, the science test will also be used to meet NCLB requirements.</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and</li> <li>• All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides state-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam and exam preparation materials for students and teachers.</p>

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state does *not* provide assistance or remediation to all districts to help students who have failed in their initial attempt to pass the exit exam.

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Professional development for administrators
- District-designed curriculum materials, including instructional pacing guides
- Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers
- Modified curriculum in regular classes
- Changes in class schedules and offerings
- Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day
- Individualized academic plans for students
- Extended class day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006			
Student Group	English II	Algebra I	Biology I
All students	91%	83%	96%
White	93%	90%	98%
African American	87%	67%	90%
Latino	84%	80%	94%
Asian	91%	94%	98%
Native American	82%	80%	96%
English language learners	68%	71%	87%
Students with disabilities	66%	48%	81%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	85%	75%	91%
Passing score	30	24	19

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Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade				
Student Group	English II	Algebra I	Biology I	All Subjects
All students	98.3%	94.5%	99.0%	93.9%
White	98.9%	96.3%	99.4%	95.9%
African American	96.0%	88.6%	97.5%	87.4%
Latino	98.6%	94.6%	98.8%	93.6%
Asian	99.7%	99.1%	99.8%	98.8%
Native American	98.4%	91.0%	98.4%	91.0%
English language learners	97.5%	91.2%	100%	91.2%
Students with disabilities	87.7%	69.7%	92.4%	67.3%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	96.1%	89.5%	97.7%	88.3%

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. State officials chose not to provide explanation.

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

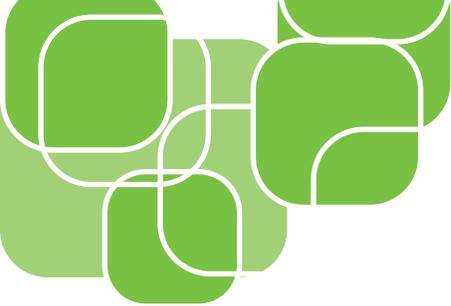
- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the one between students with disabilities and students without disabilities.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. State officials chose not to provide explanation.

<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	Yes. The state had an external evaluation of the state exit exam.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Pearson Educational Measurement



# Texas



## Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills-Inclusive (TAKS-I)

<b>Type of test</b>	The state considers the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) and the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills-Inclusive (TAKS-I) to be criterion-referenced, standards-based exams.
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the test is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide schools with student academic diagnostic information</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>Yes. Senate Bill 1031, which was signed by the governor on June 15, 2007, and will go into effect on September 1, 2007, repeals the TAKS for students who enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011-12. These students will instead be required to take three end-of-course tests in each of the four core subjects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English, I, II, and III</li> <li>• Algebra I, Algebra II, and geometry</li> <li>• Biology, chemistry, and physics</li> <li>• World geography, world history, and U.S. history</li> </ul> <p>Students who enter the 9<sup>th</sup> grade before 2011 are still required to pass the TAKS to graduate.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>The TAKS was administered for the first time in spring 2003 when it replaced the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills, which had served as the state assessment since 1990.</p> <p>The TAKS-I was administered for the first time in spring 2006.</p>
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	In spring 2005, the state began withholding diplomas for students who had not passed the TAKS. Diplomas are not withheld for failure to pass the TAKS-I, but regular diplomas may be awarded to special education students who pass all four tests.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English language arts (an integrated reading/writing test), mathematics, science, social studies
<b>Grade first administered</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>



<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	Varies. The TAKS measures content from various high school courses, including Algebra I, geometry, integrated physics and chemistry, U.S. history, world history, world geography, and English III.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	Four
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who meet all graduation requirements except passing the TAKS may continue to retake the exam after 12 <sup>th</sup> grade without limits on age or number of retakes.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	No
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	Yes. Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams determine testing requirements for graduation for students receiving special education services. Some students with disabilities may be tested using an alternate assessment if their admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee determines that the test is an inappropriate measure of their instruction in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) curriculum. Some students with disabilities may take the TAKS with accommodations. Students who pass the TAKS with accommodations still receive a regular diploma.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No. Limited English proficient (LEP) students are not eligible for an exemption from exit-level testing due to their language status. Like other Texas public school students, they must perform satisfactorily on the exit level test to meet graduation requirements. Although exemptions are not permitted, the language proficiency assessment committee may postpone the initial exit-level administration of the exam for LEP students who first enrolled in a U.S. school no more than 12 months before the exit level administration. This deferral is called an exit-level LEP postponement.
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	No. Grade 10 assessments in math and English language arts, rather than the grade 11 exit exams, are used to fulfill NCLB high school testing requirements.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	The passing standard for the 11 <sup>th</sup> grade TAKS is equivalent to the proficient level set by the state to make annual yearly progress as required by NCLB.
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	The state offers technical assistance to help: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and grants to districts;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes field-based specialists;</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• All districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes field-based specialists.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding for programs specifically designed to increase initial pass rates</li> <li>• Test items from prior years</li> <li>• Exam preparation materials for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state provides targeted remediation programs for students.</p>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>State school districts provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-designed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Professional development for administrators</li> <li>• District-designed curriculum materials, including instructional pacing guides</li> <li>• Changes in class schedules and offerings</li> <li>• Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</li> <li>• Individualized academic plans for students</li> <li>• Extended class day</li> </ul>

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## Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006				
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	88%	77%	75%	94%
White	94%	87%	88%	98%
African American	83%	60%	58%	91%
Latino	82%	69%	63%	90%
Asian	94%	92%	88%	97%
Native American	91%	81%	82%	97%
English language learners	36%	43%	30%	64%
Migrant	74%	62%	51%	85%
Students with disabilities	64%	46%	46%	79%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	81%	66%	60%	89%
Passing score (scale scores range from 1300 to 3200)	2100	2100	2100	2100

Note: Scales vary by subject and test administration. The TAKS has three performance levels: commended performance, met the standard, and did not meet the standard.

## Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade				
Student Group	English Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	94%	84%	83%	96%
White	98%	93%	94%	99%
African American	91%	71%	71%	93%
Latino	90%	78%	74%	94%
Asian	96%	95%	93%	98%
Native American	96%	89%	89%	97%
English language learners	50%	52%	40%	76%
Migrant	83%	71%	63%	90%
Students with disabilities	75%	55%	56%	84%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	89%	76%	72%	93%

Source: Retrieved July 26, 2007, from [www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/results/summary/sum07/taks/exit\\_cumulative\\_octo6\\_tagged.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/results/summary/sum07/taks/exit_cumulative_octo6_tagged.pdf)

Note: Texas provided April 2007 data, (available at [www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/results/summary/sum07/taks/exit\\_cumulative\\_apro7\\_tagged.pdf](http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/reporting/results/summary/sum07/taks/exit_cumulative_apro7_tagged.pdf)) however, to be consistent with the other state profiles in this report, 2006 cumulative pass rate data are provided.

<p><b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between English language learners and non-ELLs.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. Through the state-funded portion of the Texas High School Project, the state provides grant funding to certain school districts that have high schools with high percentages of students who have not passed all sections of the exit-level exam.</p>
<p><b>Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b></p>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between English language learners and non-ELLs.</p>
<p><b>Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps</b></p>	<p>Yes. Through the state-funded portion of the Texas High School Project, the state provides grant funding to certain school districts that have high schools with high percentages of students who have not passed all sections of the exit-level exam.</p>
<p><b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b></p>	<p>Achieve Inc. conducted an evaluation of the Texas assessment program in 2002. The report can be found at <a href="http://www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf">www.achieve.org/files/TestGraduation-FinalReport.pdf</a>.</p> <p>In March 2006 Dr. Norman Webb of the Wisconsin Center for Education Research conducted an independent study to determine the strength of the alignment between the state-mandated curriculum, the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), and TAKS.</p>
<p><b>State test contractor</b></p>	<p>Pearson Educational Measurement</p>



# Virginia

## Standards of Learning (SOL) End-of-Course Exams

<b>Type of test</b>	End-of-course
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exams is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul> <p>Virginia is also planning studies to determine the relationship between performance on the end-of-course tests and success in post-secondary education.</p>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	No
<b>Year first administered</b>	1998
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2004
<b>Subjects tested</b>	English (reading and writing), Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, biology, earth science, chemistry, world history to 1500, world history from 1500 to the present, Virginia and U.S. history, and world geography
<b>Grade first administered</b>	Varies. Tests are administered whenever students complete the associated course. For example, a student who takes Algebra I in middle school would take the Algebra I end-of-course test at that time.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	The SOL tests are aligned to content standards for specific tested courses.
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	At least three retake opportunities each year. In addition, students who fail the exam with a score of 375-399 do not need to wait for the next regularly scheduled retest but may retake the test immediately using an alternate form (expedited retake policy).
<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have completed all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may continue to retake the exams an unlimited number of times as long as they are no older than 20 for general education students and 22 for students with disabilities and English language learners.

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<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b></p>	<p>The state does not have a process for students to request a waiver or appeal the exit exams; however, students may earn a regular diploma by taking substitute tests. The substitute tests include the Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, SAT II, TOEFL, APIEL, Cambridge International Examination, ACT, and CLEP tests. Typically, fewer than 1% of students use the substitute tests to attain a high school diploma.</p> <p>Students who cannot pass the tests may receive a certificate of completion or earn a GED (General Education Diploma).</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b></p>	<p>Students with disabilities who do not meet the requirements for a standard or advanced diploma but meet the credit and literacy and math requirements established by the state board of education may receive a Modified Standard Diploma.</p> <p>Students with disabilities who do not meet the requirements for other diplomas but have completed the objectives in their individualized education program may receive a special diploma.</p>
<p><b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b></p>	<p>Scores from the SOL end-of-course tests in English, Reading, Algebra I, geometry, and Algebra II are used to meet the testing requirements of NCLB. Starting in 2007-08, the earth science, biology, and chemistry tests will be used for NCLB purposes.</p>
<p><b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b></p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p><b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and grants to districts;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and grants to districts;</li> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and grants to districts;</li> <li>• Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency and train-the-trainer workshops; and</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes specialist(s) in the state education agency.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides state-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam and test items from prior years.</p>

**Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam**

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure

**Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam**

School districts in the state provide or make:

- District-designed benchmark/formative assessments
- Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments
- Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas
- Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure
- District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides
- Remediation offered outside of the regular school day

**Initial pass rates, 2006**

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try (or Expedited Retest), 2006						
Student Group	English: Reading	English: Writing	Algebra I	Algebra II	Geometry	Earth Science
All students	89.7%	87.0%	86.8%	84.0%	81.8%	80.4%
White	93.9%	91.7%	90.0%	86.3%	87.9%	88.6%
African American	80.8%	76.9%	78.7%	75.2%	65.3%	65.1%
Latino	81.2%	77.2%	81.7%	77.4%	73.2%	66.3%
Asian	90.0%	90.8%	94.9%	91.1%	90.3%	84.5%
Native American	87.4%	86.5%	83.4%	80.2%	75.6%	80.3%
English language learners	67.6%	67.5%	83.0%	79.9%	72.1%	53.2%
Migrant	58.1%	65.4%	78.7%	79.0%	74.5%	54.0%
Students with disabilities	63.5%	54.2%	63.5%	64.7%	57.9%	55.5%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	80.7%	76.5%	80.1%	78.1%	70.0%	66.8%
Passing score (scale of 0-600)	400	400	400	400	400	400

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Student Group	Biology	Chemistry	World History I	World History II	VA & US History	Geography
All students	81.6%	86.6%	83.7%	88.6%	91.3%	75.5%
White	89.6%	90.6%	89.5%	92.4%	94.7%	82.5%
African American	66.4%	76.8%	70.8%	78.4%	83.5%	60.0%
Latino	65.3%	69.1%	74.7%	78.6%	84.1%	70.1%
Asian	84.4%	88.0%	91.6%	94.2%	94.1%	85.5%
Native American	80.4%	82.2%	82.6%	89.5%	91.6%	74.1%
English language learners	53.2%	66.4%	70.3%	76.0%	78.5%	58.4%
Migrant	58.5%	80.0%	58.2%	75.0%	62.9%	56.3%
Students with disabilities	55.1%	61.4%	61.2%	66.4%	72.1%	46.7%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	66.4%	75.6%	70.8%	76.7%	83.4%	60.7%
Passing score (scale of 0-600)	400	400	400	400	400	400

Note: Pass rates include first time test-takers and students who pass the test within the same test administration through the expedited retake policy. Data for the summer and fall administrations are not included. The SOL end-of-course exams have three performance levels: advanced, proficient, and fail/does not meet standard.

<b>Cumulative pass rates, 2006</b>	Virginia is not able to produce a cumulative pass rate at this time.
<b>Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)</b>	<p>There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students and African American students</li> <li>• White students and Latino students</li> <li>• English language learners and non-ELLs</li> <li>• Students with disabilities and students without disabilities</li> <li>• Low-income students and students who are not low-income</li> </ul> <p>The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.</p> <p>The state reported the following gap comparisons were not applicable (no students in the subgroups or subgroups not identified):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• White students compared with Asian students</li> <li>• White students compared with Native American students</li> </ul>

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**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Technical assistance is provided. Although it is not targeted to close the gaps for specific subgroups, the assistance provided is tailored to the needs of the school. More information is available at [www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/suptsmemos/2005/inf202a.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/suptsmemos/2005/inf202a.pdf).

In addition to this technical assistance, the state has several programs designed to address the needs of students who are having difficulty in the areas of reading and mathematics. These programs are:

- Project Graduation
- Algebra Readiness Initiative
- Mathematics and Science Partnership (MSP)

Project Graduation and the Algebra Readiness Initiative are remedial programs. The state does not collect demographic data on these students, so this program cannot be categorized specifically as a gap-reduction program. The MSP provides for teacher training; a significant part of the project funding has targeted teachers in schools where student and subgroup performance is below the state's 70% passing benchmarks.

The state wrote a proposal for and received a federal grant to provide test fee reimbursement to schools for low-income students taking AP tests. In 2007 the grant totals over \$250,000.

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The state chose not to answer which gap will be the most challenging to close.

The state reported the following gap comparisons were not applicable (no students in the subgroups or subgroups not identified):

- White students compared with Asian students
- White students compared with Native American students

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

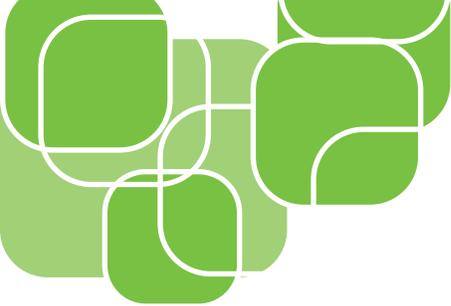
Please see the explanation under "targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts" for reading/language arts.

**Evaluations of the state exit exam**

In fall 2006 Virginia conducted an external alignment study of its mathematics and reading assessments.

**State test contractor**

Pearson Educational Measurement, with ETS as the subcontractor for test development, is responsible for the entire Virginia testing program.



# Washington

## Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

<b>Type of test</b>	Standards-based
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ knowledge and skill levels relative to those needed for entry-level employment and postsecondary education</li> <li>• Determine prospective high school graduates’ mastery of the state curriculum</li> <li>• Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions</li> <li>• Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards</li> <li>• Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups</li> <li>• Meet a state mandate</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes/pending changes in exit exam policy</b>	<p>Yes. The state legislature passed a bill postponing the requirement for passing the mathematics WASL from the class of 2008 to the class of 2013; it also postponed the requirement for passing the science WASL from 2010 to 2013. In May 2007, the governor signed this bill. The legislature and the governor also asked the state board of education to research the use of end-of-course exams to augment or replace the WASL.</p>
<b>Year first administered</b>	1999
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	<p>The class of 2008 will be the first required to pass the reading and writing WASL to receive a diploma. The math and science test will become a graduation requirement in 2013.</p>
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, writing, math, and science
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> (9 <sup>th</sup> graders can also take the test voluntarily)
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	10 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12</b>	<p>Two retakes per year, starting in the summer after the first administration. The state will fund up to four retakes for students who have not passed the exam. After four retakes, students may continue to take the exam at their own expense. Students may also retake the exam at their own expense if they have met the standard but wish to improve their score.</p>



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<b>Retakes after grade 12</b>	Students who have met all graduation requirements except passing the WASL may continue to retake the exam after completing 12 <sup>th</sup> grade.
<b>Alternate paths to graduation for general education students</b>	<p>Four alternate methods to meet the state’s learning standards and receive a diploma have been approved by the legislature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembling a collection of classroom-based evidence of a student’s learning that includes specified work samples; or</li> <li>• Comparing a student’s grades in certain classes with the grades of other students who took the same classes and met the standard; or</li> <li>• Meeting a specific cut score on the SAT, ACT, or PSAT tests. The cut score will be determined by the state board of education by December 1, 2007. After August 31, 2008, the PSAT will no longer be an approved alternative.</li> <li>• Scoring a three or higher on select Advanced Placement (AP) exams.</li> </ul>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Three alternative options are available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WASL-Modified, in which students take the high school WASL (with or without accommodations) but IEP (individualized education program) teams adjust passing criteria</li> <li>• Washington Alternate Assessment System Portfolio, in which students unable to take paper-and-pencil tests show their skills and knowledge through a collection of their work</li> <li>• Developmentally Appropriate WASL (DAW), in which students in grades 11 and 12 only take the WASL (with or without accommodations) at the grade level that best matches their abilities</li> </ul>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB)?</b>	The state is using the initial 10 <sup>th</sup> grade administration of the WASL to meet the requirements of NCLB. The state will begin to use the results of the WASL science test to meet NCLB requirements in 2010.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance provided by the state to all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>The state offers technical assistance to help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops;</li> <li>• All teachers prepare students for the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> <li>• Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes train-the-trainer workshops and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance; and</li> <li>• Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, and train-the-trainer workshops.</li> </ul> <p>The state also provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-developed courses specifically designed to prepare students for the exam</li> <li>• Test items from prior years</li> <li>• Exam preparation materials for students and teachers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of assistance or remediation provided by the state to all districts to help students who have failed their initial attempt to pass the exit exam</b></p>	<p>The state provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted remediation programs for students</li> <li>• Additional professional development for teachers in their content area</li> <li>• Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Additional professional development for administrators</li> </ul>
<p><b>Types of support provided by school districts to help raise pass rates on the exit exam</b></p>	<p>State school districts provide or make:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District-designed benchmark/formative assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in the formative use of benchmark assessments</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers become more proficient in their content areas</li> <li>• Professional development in helping teachers meet specific instructional needs of students at risk of academic failure</li> <li>• Professional development for administrators</li> <li>• District-designed curriculum materials, such as instructional pacing guides</li> <li>• Changes in instructional leadership and supports for teachers</li> <li>• Modified curriculum in regular classes</li> <li>• Changes in class schedules and offerings</li> <li>• Remediation offered during and outside the regular school day</li> <li>• Individualized academic plans for students (districts are required by law to provide this support)</li> <li>• Extended class day</li> <li>• State-approved alternatives to high school exit exams available (districts are required by law to provide this support)</li> </ul>

*continues* ➤

## Initial pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try, 2006				
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
All students	85.52%	83.58%	53.76%	37.82%
White	89.18%	86.96%	58.85%	42.16%
African American	72.43%	72.14%	25.56%	13.94%
Latino	67.41%	64.93%	27.90%	16.11%
Asian	87.03%	87.16%	61.70%	42.07%
Native American	74.70%	72.90%	34.70%	21.59%
Multiracial	74.34%	72.94%	40.98%	29.77%
English language learners	38.83%	36.39%	14.01%	5.09%
Migrant	52.87%	51.18%	14.01%	7.58%
Students with disabilities	46.33%	44.12%	13.56%	6.71%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	72.65%	70.47%	33.23%	19.87%
Passing score (scale for writing is 0-24)	400	17	400	400

Note: The scale varies by test and year for reading, math, and science.

## Cumulative pass rates, 2006

Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade				
Student Group	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
All students	86.53%	85.43%	56.67%	37.82%
White	89.97%	88.59%	61.80%	42.16%
African American	74.28%	75.48%	28.40%	13.94%
Latino	69.39%	67.77%	30.24%	16.11%
Asian	88.33%	89.18%	65.50%	42.07%
Native American	76.18%	74.87%	37.29%	21.59%
Multiracial	74.91%	74.06%	42.39%	29.77%
English language learners	41.77%	41.05%	15.62%	5.09%
Migrant	48.37%	47.32%	15.13%	6.71%
Students with disabilities	74.12%	73.03%	35.60%	19.87%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	54.93%	55.19%	16.05%	7.58%

**Achievement gaps in reading/language arts (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in reading/language arts between:

- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the gap between low-income students and students who are not low-income.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. The state receives Title I Part A funds that are specifically for the populations addressed above, especially for those students that are at risk of not meeting state standards. These funds are allocated to school districts based on census data on poverty. Districts must apply for the funds and describe how they will use them to support low-achieving students.

The state also has a Learning Assistance Program that mirrors Title I. Districts apply for these funds and services must be provided to district students who have not met state standards. Technical assistance comes through the Title I office. Opportunities are provided to schools and districts to participate in summer and fall institutes or practitioners' workshops.

Schools may receive Title I School Improvement funds. They apply for these funds and if approved must work with OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) to determine the services that will support the student populations that have placed the school in improvement status. These schools often receive in-depth technical assistance that focuses on the nine characteristics of high-performing schools.

The qualifier for these three sources of federal and state support is that the students served must be students who have not met state standards or are at risk of not meeting state standards. These students cross over all of the subgroups mentioned above.

**Achievement gaps in mathematics (based on exit exam administered in 2005-06)**

There is a gap in student performance in mathematics between:

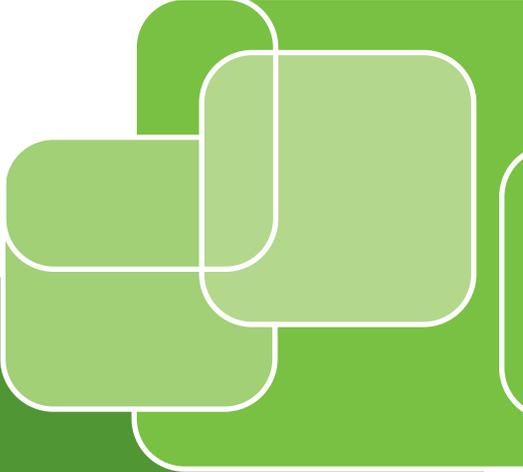
- White students and African American students
- White students and Latino students
- White students and Asian students
- White students and Native American students
- English language learners and non-ELLs
- Students with disabilities and students without disabilities
- Low-income students and students who are not low-income

The most challenging gap to close will be the one between low-income students and students who are not low-income.

**Targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts that have the above identified achievement gaps**

Yes. Please see the explanation under "targeted funding or technical assistance to school districts" for reading/language arts.

<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	SRI International completed studies of the reading, writing, and math assessments. The math study is posted at <a href="http://www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/SRIFinalReport.pdf">www.k12.wa.us/research/pubdocs/pdf/SRIFinalReport.pdf</a> .
<b>State test contractor</b>	Pearson Educational Measurement



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**Center on Education Policy**

1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 522  
Washington, D.C. 20036

tel: 202.822.8065  
fax: 202.822.6008

e: [cep-dc@cep-dc.org](mailto:cep-dc@cep-dc.org)  
w: [www.cep-dc.org](http://www.cep-dc.org)