

## Alabama

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

\* The data here reflects the AHSGE, which will be phased out starting with freshmen entering in the 2011-12 school year.

#### Part I: Policy Trends

<b>Type of test</b>	Comprehensive 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> <li>• Meet federal requirement for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) for reading, math, and science</li> </ul>
<b>Major changes in exit exam policy since 2007-08 school year or any pending changes</b>	<p>In September 2009 the Alabama board of education approved a plan to replace the Alabama High School Graduation Exam (AHGSE) with end-of-course tests. In addition, 11<sup>th</sup>-graders will be required to take the ACT college entrance exam. The new requirements could take effect as soon as the 2011-12 school year.</p> <p>The new FIRST CHOICE program will allow for Credit Recovery and Credit Advancement options for nontraditional paths to graduation. Credit Advancement will allow students to receive course credit for passing an end-of-course exam.</p>
<b>Status of state's decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies</b>	<p>Alabama has adopted the Common Core State Standards in both English language arts and math.</p> <p>The graduation exam is being phased out and end-of-course assessments are being phased in. Therefore, the common core should not have an impact on the graduation exam.</p>
<b>Test used by colleges or universities for undergraduate admission?</b>	Public universities and community colleges use the Alabama High School Graduation Exam. Some community colleges and universities require students who graduate from non-accredited high schools to pass this exam or receive a GED as a requirement for admission.
<b>Year first administered</b>	<p>The 1<sup>st</sup> edition of the 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.</p> <p>End-of-course exams will be first administered to incoming</p>

	freshmen during the 2011-12 school year. The ACT will be administered for the first time to 11 <sup>th</sup> -grade students in 2013-14.
<b>Year diplomas first withheld</b>	2001 for the 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition (1985 for the 1 <sup>st</sup> edition)
	End-of-course exams will count 20% of final course grade.
<b>Subjects tested</b>	Reading, mathematics, biology , social studies, language
<b>Types of questions</b>	Multiple choice
<b>Grade first administered</b>	10 <sup>th</sup> (considered a pre-graduation administration, but if students pass one or more subjects they receive credit toward graduation)
	New end-of-course exams for selected high school courses are given in the grade year the courses are completed.
<b>Grade(s) exam aligned to</b>	11 <sup>th</sup>
<b>Number of retakes allowed before the end of grade 12</b>	Four, including the option of retaking the exam 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>Does the state have reciprocity with other states?</b>	No
<b>Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?</b>	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 used the new science (biology) section of the AHSGE for NCLB purposes in 2007-08.
	The new end-of-course exams will not be used for NCLB reporting at this time. It is possible that they will be used after the graduation exam is phased out.
<b>Same cut score for graduation and NCLB?</b>	Yes
<b>Has the state considered raising the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes? If so, please explain.</b>	Yes, the state board of education has asked that the scores be reviewed and that consideration be given to raising the cut scores.
<b>Evaluations of the state exit exam</b>	The state did an alignment evaluation of the reading, mathematics, and science exams that was used for internal review. Data Recognition Corporation conducted this evaluation in 2005 for

	reading, language, mathematics, science, and social studies, and in 2007 for biology.
<b>State test contractor</b>	Data Recognition Corporation
<b>Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?</b>	<p>Yes, the state offers FIRST CHOICE- Credit Recovery and Credit Advancement.</p> <p>Credit Recovery requires an application process and parental consent in order to receive computer-based instruction. Course-specific, skill-based extended learning opportunities are designed for students who have been unsuccessful in mastering content or skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion. Instruction is based on deficiencies rather than a repeat of the entire course. LEA's determine grading formulas, but final grade is not to exceed 70%.</p> <p>Credit Advancement is provided for students who exhibit proficiency beyond the level required for all students. The 2008-09 school year served as the pilot year. Guidelines will be refined through this pilot program, but currently an end-of-course assessment may be administered before taking a course, or students may work ahead and take an end-of-course assessment during a course to receive credit.</p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners</b>	<p>No. However, accommodations for English language learners are available. More information about these accommodations can be found online at <a href="ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/54/PoliciesProcedures.pdf">ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/54/PoliciesProcedures.pdf</a></p>
<b>Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities</b>	<p>Yes. Students with disabilities may receive an Alabama Occupational Diploma, which does not require passing the AHSGE, or the school system may offer students with disabilities a waiver for one subject-area test in the student's major disability so the student can receive a regular diploma.</p> <p>Accommodations for students with disabilities are provided. More information about these accommodations can be found online at <a href="ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/54/PoliciesProcedures.pdf">ftp://ftp.alsde.edu/documents/54/PoliciesProcedures.pdf</a></p> <p>In the 2008-09 school year, 973 students (9.0% of exiting students) received the occupational diploma and in 2009-10, 853 (7.8%) students received the occupational diploma.</p>
<b>Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?</b>	The individualized education program team makes decisions on whether a student receiving special education services is eligible for the alternate paths. The state provides guidance for local decision making under the "Special Education" section of the Alabama State Department of Education Web site.

<b>How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?</b>	The local school system and school determine whether a student receiving special education services meets the state standards using alternate paths. There is no appeals process if a student has been ruled not to meet the standards.
<b>When calculating the graduation rate for adequate yearly progress (AYP) purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?</b>	IEP team (see above) identifies students.
<b>How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department are involved in implementing alternate paths?</b>	Yes
<b>Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise <i>initial</i> pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam</b>	<p>One</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, graduation coaches, 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 include formative assessment, which includes 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;</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>

	The state also provides exam preparation materials for teachers.
<b>Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam</b>	The state provides funds for remediation and additional professional development for teachers, including uses of formative assessment.
<b>Does the state provide funding for remediation?</b>	Yes
<b>Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?</b>	Yes
<b>Are students required to participate in remediation?</b>	Yes

## Part II: Student Performance

### Initial pass rates, 2008-09

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 11 <sup>th</sup> grade, 2008-09					
Student Group	Reading	Language Arts	Math	Science	Social Studies
All students	82%	82%	86%	76%	79%
White	88%	88%	90%	86%	87%
African American	71%	72%	77%	57%	66%
Latino	72%	72%	83%	64%	70%
Asian	88%	91%	96%	88%	88%
Native American	83%	84%	89%	82%	83%
English language learners	44%	48%	70%	27%	42%
Migrant	70%	67%	74%	68%	72%
Students with disabilities	29%	28%	36%	33%	36%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	71%	72%	78%	62%	68%

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 were retrieved on May 18, 2010 from the Alabama Department of Education Web site at <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp>

**Denominator used for calculating these rates:** The number of students enrolled on the first day of testing

**Initial pass rates, 2009-10**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 11<sup>th</sup> grade, 2009-10</b>					
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Biology</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
All students	82%	78%	84%	93%	73%
White	87%	85%	89%	97%	81%
African American	72%	67%	75%	87%	59%
Latino	72%	65%	84%	90%	65%
Asian	85%	86%	96%	96%	83%
Native American	85%	83%	88%	97%	77%
English language learners	38%	33%	72%	76%	35%
Migrant	63%	54%	88%	96%	55%
Students with disabilities	30%	24%	35%	66%	32%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	73%	68%	76%	89%	61%
<b>Passing score (scale of 0-999)</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>477</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>509</b>

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.

Data provided by the state department of education.

**Denominator used for calculating these rates:** The number of students enrolled on the first day of testing

**Cumulative pass rates, 2008-09**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2008-09</b>					
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Science</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>
All students	94%	93%	95%	94%	92%
White	97%	96%	97%	97%	95%
African American	89%	88%	92%	87%	86%
Latino	88%	86%	95%	88%	86%
Asian	95%	96%	98%	95%	94%
Native American	97%	96%	98%	97%	95%
English language learners	67%	68%	90%	69%	67%
Migrant	96%	98%	96%	98%	87%
Students with disabilities	54%	53%	59%	64%	58%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	90%	88%	92%	89%	86%

Note: These data were retrieved on May 18, 2010 from the Alabama Department of Education Web site at <http://www.alsde.edu/Accountability/Accountability.asp>

**Denominator used for calculating these rates:** The number of students enrolled on the first day of testing

**Cumulative pass rates, 2009-10**

<b>Percentage of Students Passing by the End of 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, 2009-10</b>					
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language Arts</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Biology</b>	<b>Social Studies</b>

All students	94%	91%	95%	94%	90%
White	96%	95%	97%	95%	95%
African American	89%	85%	91%	92%	83%
Latino	88%	84%	93%	93%	84%
Asian	96%	96%	99%	98%	95%
Native American	96%	93%	97%	92%	94%
English language learners	66%	58%	84%	86%	60%
Migrant	88%	86%	95%	95%	93%
Students with disabilities	53%	50%	60%	82%	59%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	89%	86%	92%	92%	85%

Note: Data provided by the state department of education.

**Denominator used for calculating these rates:** The number of students enrolled on the first day of testing

Student Group	State Graduation Rates	
	2008-09	2009-10
All students	87%	NA
White	89%	NA
African American	82%	NA
Latino	82%	NA
Asian	96%	NA
Native American	92%	NA
English language learners	72%	NA
Migrant	85%	NA
Students with disabilities	61%	NA
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	85%	NA

Note: These data were retrieved from the Alabama Department of Education Website on May 18, 2010 at [http://www.alsde.edu/general/2008-2009\\_NCLB\\_Report\\_Card.pdf](http://www.alsde.edu/general/2008-2009_NCLB_Report_Card.pdf)

**Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes.**

Alabama uses the Leaver Rate.