

[<<Back to Georgia Education News](#)

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IN THIS ISSUE:

[Scores Rise, Gap Closes on New CRCT](#)

[AYP Report Shows Progress](#)

[Georgia ACT Scores Rise as Nation Slips](#)

[Gwinnett County Public Schools launch largest known Classroom Technology Integration Program in the U.S.](#)

[Forsyth County Schools Deploys High Performance Wi-Fi Network District-wide](#)

Scores Rise, Gap Closes on New CRCT

Student performance is rising and the achievement gap is closing in every area where the state's new curriculum has been implemented for more than one year.

The official statewide results of the Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) show improvement across the board on the 25 exams that have been aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) for two or three years.

Among the highlights of the report:

- Mathematics, grade 7: The pass rate was 80 percent, an increase of six points in one year.
- Science, grade 7: Seventy-five (75) percent of students passed the science CRCT, an increase of 12 points in two years.
- Reading, all grades: Eighty-seven (87) percent or more of students in all grades passed the reading CRCT and the pass rate increased in all areas.

Achievement Gap is Closing

Even as student achievement increased in all racial subgroups, the achievement gap between minority students and white students closed in all areas where the GPS has been in place for more than one year.

Among the highlights of the score report:

- Reading, grade 4: The pass rates for African-American (81%) and Hispanic (83%) students have increased 11 points respectively in two years. The achievement gap has closed 8 points for each group.
- Mathematics, grade 7: The pass rates for African-American (70%) and Hispanic (77%) students increased 8 points respectively in one year. The achievement gap closed 5 points in each area.
- Science, grade 7: The pass rates for African-American (62%) and Hispanic (69%) students have increased 15 points and 16 points respectively in two years. The achievement gap has closed by 6 or more points.

Performance on New Tests

In 2008, there were eight CRCTs that were aligned to the GPS for the first time – mathematics in grades 3–5 and 8; science in grade 8 and social studies in grades 6–8.

The results of these tests are not comparable to last year, when the test was aligned to the old curriculum. In each case, the new test was more rigorous and required higher order thinking.

Seventy-two (72) percent of 5th graders and 62 percent of 8th graders passed the new GPS-aligned CRCT in mathematics. In science, about 60 percent of 8th graders passed the new CRCT.

The results of the grade 6 and 7 social studies exams were invalidated due to alignment issues on the test. Groups of educators and curriculum experts have made preliminary revisions to the curriculum in these areas. These revisions will be made available for public comment by the end of the week.

- State/District/School-level CRCT Results:
- http://public.doe.k12.ga.us/pea_communications.aspx?ViewMode=1&RctPressView=Enewsletter&obj=1641
-

AYP Report Shows Progress

More than two-thirds of Georgia's public schools made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2008, even as the bar was raised across the board.

HIGHER BAR, MORE RIGOR

In 2008, it was harder for all schools to make AYP for two main reasons. First, the percentage of students that had to pass state tests in math, reading and English went up for all grade levels. Secondly, students were doing more rigorous work and taking more rigorous tests in 2008, especially in mathematics.

About 69 percent of all schools made AYP, including 76 percent of elementary schools. About 65 percent of middle schools and 48 percent of high schools made AYP in 2008.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT SCHOOLS

There are 340 schools in Georgia that are in Needs Improvement status, meaning these

schools have missed AYP for two or more consecutive years. Needs Improvement (NI) schools must offer options to parents – such as tutoring or school choice – and may need to take specific action to improve student performance. The consequence a school faces depends on how long it has been in Needs Improvement.

In 2008, 37 schools made AYP for the second consecutive year and got out of Needs Improvement status -- including six that had been in NI status for five or more years (see attached list).

GRADUATION RATE

The state's preliminary graduation rate is 74.4 percent -- the highest it has ever been. This rate is expected to increase once summer graduates are included.

Under the state's NCLB plan, the graduation rate represents the percentage of students who received a full diploma in four years and a summer. This figure does not include special education diplomas or certificates of attendance.

37 SCHOOLS THAT CAME OUT OF NEEDS IMPROVEMENT STATUS

Atlanta Public Schools, Sutton Middle School
Bartow County, South Central Middle School
Ben Hill County, Ben Hill County Middle School
Chatham County, West Chatham Middle School
Clayton County, Kilpatrick Elementary School
Clayton County, Babb Middle School
Clinch County, Clinch County Elementary
Cobb County, Norton Park Elementary School
Cobb County, South Cobb High School
Coweta County, East Coweta High School
DeKalb County, Chapel Hill Middle School
DeKalb County, Henderson Middle School
DeKalb County, Woodward Elementary School
Dodge County, Dodge County Middle School
Early County, Early County Middle School
Effingham County, Effingham County High School
Fulton County, Riverwood High School
Gilmer County, Gilmer Middle School
Glynn County, Glynn Middle School
Gordon County, Ashworth Middle School
Greene County, Greene County High School
Gwinnett County, Norcross High School
Gwinnett County, Shiloh Middle School
Gwinnett County, Lilburn Middle School
Gwinnett County, Summerour Middle School
Hall County, Chestatee Middle School
Hall County, Lyman Hall Elementary School
Hall County, Myers Elementary School
Houston County, Northside Middle School
Houston County, Perry High School
Long County, Long County High School
Meriwether County, George E. Washington Elementary School
Richmond County, Hornsby Elementary School
Sumter County, Staley Middle School
Tattnell County, Tattnell County High School
Taylor County, Taylor County Upper Elementary

Whitfield County, North Whitfield Middle School

**NINE CONTRACT-MONITORED SCHOOLS THAT MADE AYP
(Needs Improvement for Seven Years)**

Atlanta Public Schools, Kennedy Middle School
Dougherty County, Merry Acres Middle School
Hall County, East Hall Middle School
Mitchell County, Mitchell County Middle School
Muscogee County, Baker Middle School
Richmond County, Morgan Road Middle School
Richmond County, Tubman Middle School
Stewart County, Stewart-Quitman High School
Thomasville City, MacIntyre Park Middle School

31 SCHOOLS THAT HAVE MADE AYP FOR 10 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

Atlanta Public Schools, Fain Elementary School
Atlanta Public Schools, D. H. Stanton Elementary School
Bacon County, Bacon County Primary School
Berrien County, Berrien Primary School
Bleckley County, Bleckley County Primary School
Burke County, Waynesboro Primary School
Charlton County, Bethune Elementary School
Crisp County, Blackshear Trail Elementary School
Crisp County, J. S. Pate Elementary School
Dalton City, Roan Elementary School
Dublin City, Susie Dasher Elementary School
Dublin City, Saxon Heights Elementary School
Emanuel County, Swainsboro Primary School
Fayette County, Robert J. Burch Elementary School
Fayette County, North Fayette Elementary School
Fulton County, Randolph Elementary School
Gainesville City, Enota Multiple Intelligences Academy
Jasper County, Jasper County Primary School
McDuffie County, Thomson Elementary School
McDuffie County, Maxwell Elementary School
Mitchell County, Mitchell County Primary School
Monroe County, T.G. Scott Elementary School
Monroe County, Samuel E. Hubbard Elementary School
Oconee County, Oconee County Primary School
Terrell County, Cooper Primary School
Thomas County, Garrison-Pilcher Elementary School
Washington County, Crawford Primary School
Washington County, Elder Primary School
White County, Jack P Nix Primary
Wilkes County, Washington-Wilkes Primary School
Worth County, Worth County Primary School

SYSTEMS THAT HAD 100% OF THEIR SCHOOLS MAKE AYP

Bremen City
Buford City
Cartersville City
CCAT
Chickamauga City
Clay County
Commerce City

Echols County
Evans County
Fayette County
Franklin County
Hancock County
Heard County
Jefferson City
Jefferson County
Lee County
Long County
Miller County
Monroe County
Morgan County
Oconee County
Oglethorpe County
Pierce County
Pike County
Quitman County
Rabun County
Randolph County
Stephens County
Stewart County
Towns County
Trion City
Union County
Wheeler County
Wilkes County

Georgia ACT Scores Rise as Nation Slips

Georgia's ACT scores continued to rise in 2008, even as the national average dropped, according to results released today.

Additionally, high school seniors in Georgia's three largest subgroups – Caucasian, African-American and Hispanic – outscored their peers across the nation.

Georgia's composite ACT score rose to 20.6 in 2008, up from 20.3 in 2007. The national average dropped to 21.1, down .1 from 2007. Georgia's scores also increased in every subject area tested by the ACT – English, Reading, Mathematics and Science -- and the state's national ranking increased to 41st, up from 44th last year and from 47th in 2002.

In 2008, about 38 percent of Georgia's high school seniors took the ACT, an increase of about four percentage points from 2007. In the past five years, the number of seniors taking the ACT has increased from 20,510 to 33,238.

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test designed to measure college readiness and preparation. The ACT includes four separate exams in English, reading, mathematics and science. There is also an optional writing portion. The exam is scored on a scale from 0 to 36.

AT OR ABOVE THE NATION

In 2008, Georgia's African-American students scored .5 points higher than African-American students across the nation and Georgia's Hispanic students scored 1.5 points higher than Hispanic students across the nation. For the first time in recent history, Georgia's white students also outscored their peers across the nation.

SUPPORTING RIGOR

The ACT results show that students who take higher-level mathematics courses do better on the test. That means these students are more likely to get into the college of their choice and be prepared for the work they will face.

Students that took advanced mathematics and trigonometry courses scored 3.4 points higher than the national average math score. Those who also took calculus scored 7.3 points higher.

Beginning this year, all Georgia high school students will be required to take four years of mathematics in order to graduate. After four years of the state's new mathematics curriculum, all students will have taken the equivalent of core mathematics, advanced mathematics and trigonometry. Accelerated students will also have taken the equivalent of calculus.

SCHOOLS WITH THE 25 HIGHEST SCORES

District, Schools, ACT Score

COBB COUNTY, GEORGE WALTON COMP HIGH, 25
COLUMBIA COUNTY, LAKESIDE HIGH, 24.9
FAYETTE COUNTY, MCINTOSH HIGH, 24.8
FULTON COUNTY, NORTHVIEW HIGH, 24.6
FAYETTE COUNTY, STARR'S MILL HIGH, 24.2
CHATHAM COUNTY, SAVANNAH ARTS ACADEMY, 24.1
FULTON COUNTY, CHATTAHOOCHEE HIGH, 24.1
GWINNETT COUNTY, PARKVIEW HIGH, 24
FULTON COUNTY, ROSWELL HIGH, 23.9
GWINNETT COUNTY, BROOKWOOD HIGH, 23.8
MUSCOGEE COUNTY, COLUMBUS HIGH, 23.8
FULTON COUNTY, ALPHARETTA HIGH, 23.8
COBB COUNTY, WHEELER HIGH, 23.7
FULTON COUNTY, CENTENNIAL HIGH, 23.7
FULTON COUNTY, RIVERWOOD HIGH, 23.6
COBB COUNTY, ALAN C POPE HIGH, 23.5
OCONEE COUNTY, NORTH OCONEE HIGH, 23.5
FULTON COUNTY, MILTON HIGH, 23.5
DEKALB COUNTY, CHAMBLEE HIGH, 23.4
GWINNETT COUNTY, COLLINS HILL HIGH, 23.4
COBB COUNTY, LASSITER HIGH, 23.3
FORSYTH COUNTY, SOUTH FORSYTH HIGH, 23.3
GWINNETT COUNTY, DULUTH HIGH, 23
COBB COUNTY, KENNESAW MOUNTAIN HIGH, 22.9
DEKALB COUNTY, LAKESIDE HIGH, 22.9
GWINNETT COUNTY, PEACHTREE RIDGE HIGH, 22.9
OCONEE COUNTY, OCONEE COUNTY HIGH, 22.9

SCHOOLS WITH 25 MOST IMPROVED SCORES

District, High School, Score, Change

CLARKE COUNTY, CEDAR SHOALS HIGH 21.1, 3.4
HEARD COUNTY, HEARD COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE HIGH 20.7, 3.4
LAMAR COUNTY, LAMAR COUNTY COMP HIGH 20.2, 3.2
APPLING COUNTY, APPLING COUNTY HIGH 20.8, 3.1
TOWNS COUNTY, TOWNS COUNTY HIGH 21.5, 3.1
JACKSON COUNTY, JACKSON CO COMPREHENSIVE HIGH 22.1, 2.8
JONES COUNTY, JONES COUNTY HIGH 21, 2.5
UNION COUNTY, UNION COUNTY HIGH 21.4, 2.5
COLUMBIA COUNTY, LAKESIDE HIGH 24.9, 2.4
BARTOW COUNTY, ADAIRSVILLE HIGH 21.3, 2.3
RICHMOND COUNTY, AUGUSTUS R JOHNSON HEALTH 21.6, 2.2
BIBB COUNTY, NORTHEAST COMPREHENSIVE HIGH 17.2, 2.1
BURKE COUNTY, BURKE COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE HIGH 19.5, 2.1
BREMEN CITY, BREMEN HIGH 20.4, 2
DALTON CITY, DALTON HIGH 21.5, 2
JENKINS COUNTY, JENKINS COUNTY HIGH 19.3, 2
PAULDING COUNTY, PAULDING COUNTY HIGH 20, 2
BULLOCH COUNTY, SOUTHEAST BULLOCH CO HIGH 21.6, 1.9
DEKALB COUNTY, OPEN CAMPUS HIGH 17.8, 1.9
CHATHAM COUNTY, SOL C JOHNSON HIGH 18.5, 1.9
BRYAN COUNTY, BRYAN COUNTY HIGH 17.8, 1.8
EMANUEL COUNTY, SWAINSBORO HIGH 18.6, 1.8
CHATHAM COUNTY, SAVANNAH ARTS ACADEMY 24.1, 1.8
TERRELL COUNTY, TERRELL MIDDLE-HIGH 17.5, 1.8
THOMAS COUNTY, THOMAS COUNTY CENTRAL HIGH 20.9, 1.8

Gwinnett County Public Schools launch largest known Classroom Technology Integration Program in the U.S.

An audio visual and distance learning technology solution provider, was recently awarded an AV bid contract to integrate technology in Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) elementary school classrooms. This project is part of the school district's three-part plan to provide classroom technology for students and teachers.

According to GCPS director of broadcast and distance learning, Greg LaHatte, this technology project is funded by recent voter approval of a \$750M General Obligation (G.O.) Bond Referendum. "Our citizens value public education. Through their vote, they have ensured that our students have the facilities and tools they need to be successful."

Under this contract, SBCG will integrate Gwinnett elementary classrooms with ceiling-mounted DLP projection systems, sound reinforcement technology, and wall-mounted system controls which allow teachers to power up and down, adjust volume, select equipment sources and automatically shut down the system at the end of day. Plans are underway to kick off the integration program with more than 1,000 classrooms in summer 2008. Completion of the 5,000+ classroom integrations is slated for January 2010.

Mr. LaHatte added, "SBCG was awarded the contract through the county's RFP process and based on an evaluation of their capabilities to meet the system's needs. We also appreciate that SBCG is based in Gwinnett County."

Gwinnett County Public Schools, located in the metro-Atlanta area, is the largest school system in Georgia and continues to grow as the system is expected to welcome about 4,000 new students for the 2008-09 school year. One of every five Gwinnett County residents is a GCPS student. Gwinnett County citizens highly value the important role education plays in building a thriving, diverse community and strongly support the school system's pursuit of excellence. The finest teachers in the profession, involved parents, and a supportive community are key elements in the school system's quest to become a system of world-class schools. For more information, please visit www.gwinnett.k12.ga.us.

Forsyth County Schools Deploys High Performance Wi-Fi Network District-Wide

Forsyth County Schools, has chosen Xirrus for their district-wide Wi-Fi network, servicing over 35,000 students, faculty, and staff district-wide. As the largest employer in Forsyth County, the school district needed the highest performing and most robust Wi-Fi network available today. The school district tested numerous Wi-Fi products, and found Xirrus capable of delivering the wireless performance and user density needed to meet their network demands.

"These guys get it! They planned for the success of Wi-Fi and solved the performance and density problems by taking the switch out of the closet and putting it at the edge of the network with the radios where it belongs," said Bailey Mitchell, both CTO and CIO at Forsyth County Schools. "We did extensive testing over the years and determined that Xirrus was the best fit for our extensive educational enterprise. We will be able to provide our students, teachers, and faculty high performance broadband wireless access throughout our district—anytime, anywhere, anyplace with the same quality of service as a wired network—enabling them to pursue new methods of teaching and communicating without worrying if the infrastructure can handle it."

"Let me say it straight—if you are thinking about putting Wi-Fi in a K-12 educational network you should have Xirrus on your short-list for evaluation," said Bailey.

"We put Xirrus through the paces for over a year—we started with six schools, analyzing the results in detail before selecting Xirrus for the entire district," said Mark Klingler, Director of Technical Services at Forsyth County Schools. "We considered the usual suspects, but no solution garnered our attention like Xirrus with respect to how few devices were needed to complete our wireless coverage needs. We are putting in the same number of radios (4,000+) as other offerings, but doing it with only 500 Arrays instead of our original estimation of 2000 access points—Xirrus saved the district over 1,500 cable pulls and will be easier to support."

"On top of the resource savings, Xirrus performed active site surveys at all our schools, took the time to sit with us and plan the implementation, and then carefully executed

the installation along side us at no additional charge. Many vendors talk about partnerships, but Xirrus actually delivers on it. Xirrus took the time to educate us," Mark added.

Established in 1860, Forsyth County Schools was one of the first free public school systems in Georgia. The school district continues to expand at a rapid pace as more and more families move in due to the school district's smaller class sizes and personalized education for children. Currently, the Forsyth County Schools serve over 31,000 students adding 2,000 new students each year. Technology is a focal point for the schools: All teachers have a notebook computer for online grading, reporting, and email. All computers within the Forsyth County schools are networked and have a high-speed connection to the Internet. The student to computer ratio is 2:1. Students produce live television broadcasts within their schools and work with equipment such as scanners, handheld computing units, and digital cameras. Additionally, parents can check their child's portfolios, assignments, grades and discipline online. These systems, coupled with a wealth of on-line learning software, serve to meet the needs of "today's" students and prepare them for success in an ever-changing global society. For more information, please visit www.forsyth.k12.ga.us