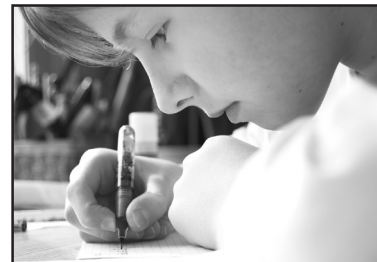


# 8th Grade Promotion Requirements for 2012–13

*Gwinnett schools measure student learning of the school system's curriculum—the Academic Knowledge and Skills or AKS—in a number of ways to ensure students have learned the AKS in order to be successful in the next grade. To be promoted to 9th grade, Gwinnett 8th graders must earn passing grades and satisfy two other requirements. Students must make a passing score on the Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment, which, in Gwinnett, is a Gateway test. In addition, the state requires 8th graders to meet grade-level expectations on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT). As the parent of an 8th grader, you may have questions about promotion requirements for your child. Here are answers to some frequently asked questions.*



## How is promotion determined for GCPs 8th graders?

- **8th grade Gateway/Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment:** Gwinnett set its passing score on this statewide test, based on the state's proficiency standards.
- **8th grade CRCT:** Georgia's 8th grade students must score in the "Meets Standards (Level 2)" range or higher on the reading and mathematics subtests of the CRCT to earn promotion.
- Grades on **Gwinnett students' report cards** also must reflect that a student has learned the 8th grade AKS in order to be successful at the next grade level. For the 2012–13 school year, students must pass four out of five subjects for the school year, with Connections classes being averaged as one grade each semester. Language arts and math must be two of the four subjects passed each semester. Passing a course is determined by the student earning a grade average of no less than 70% each semester. In language arts and math, a grade average of less than 70% *either* semester counts as course failure for the school year.
- Promotion of **special education students** is based on each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- **Students in the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program** may not be required to pass the 8th grade writing Gateway, based on the recommendation of their Test Participation Committee.

## What is the purpose of Gwinnett's 8th grade assessment program and how are students prepared?

All 8th graders are required to take both the Grade 8 Writing Assessment and the CRCT. These state-required tests measure how well students have learned the skills and knowledge included in the state's curriculum, including the state-adopted Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) in the areas of mathematics (K–9) and language arts (K–12). The Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) are in place for other subject areas, including science

and social studies. Test results are used by teachers to identify individual student strengths and weaknesses, and by the state to gauge the quality of education throughout Georgia. Being in school every day is the best preparation for these tests. Gwinnett's AKS curriculum includes all of the state curriculum, so the teaching and learning that goes on in Gwinnett classrooms every day helps prepare students for academic success on the CRCT. The writing your student does in classwork and homework also prepares him for the tests. You can learn more about these tests from the Georgia Department of Education. Go to <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx> and select "CRCT" or "Writing Assessments." Sample writing papers are available online. Find sample CRCT questions at [www.georgiaaoas.org](http://www.georgiaaoas.org) (Online Assessment System), using the generic password and login of Grade8.

## When will students take the writing test?

For 2012–13, the **8th grade Gateway/Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment** will be given **Jan. 23**. Students have 100 minutes to write a draft paper and edit and polish their writing.

## When will students take the CRCT?

8th graders will take the CRCT **April 22–26**, taking a different subtest each day. The 8th grade reading subtest is scheduled for Monday, **April 22**. The mathematics subtest is set for Wednesday, **April 24**. In addition, the 8th grade CRCT covers English/language arts, science, and social studies, though passing scores on these subtests are not promotion requirements. Each subtest takes approximately 2½ hours, including a short break between sections.

## What does a student need to score in order to pass the CRCT? What is the passing score for the writing test?

The CRCT is scored using a scale score that ranges from a low of 650 to 850 and above. A student must score 800 or higher in order to meet grade-level expectations in these

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subjects. The test score range on the writing assessment is from 100 to 350. A student must score a 200 or higher to demonstrate proficiency in writing.

### What if a student does not pass the 8th grade Gateway?

Most students *will* pass because the writing Gateway is a test of the learning and practice that occurs every day in the classroom. For those who are not successful the first time, there are additional opportunities to pass the Gateway.

- Throughout the spring, students continue to work on their writing in class. Once state results are available, students who have not met Gwinnett's passing score on the Gateway may attend targeted writing classes before or after school or on Saturdays, prior to the retest. Students will take a writing retest again before the end of the school year. Students who don't pass the retest may attend academic summer school, offered at no charge to parents, then take the retest.
- A student who cannot attend the additional writing classes or summer school still may take the retest. However, chances of passing the retest are much greater if the student receives extra help with writing.
- Grades are important. For students who earned no semester average lower than a "C" during the year in language arts, but who unexpectedly fail the writing Gateway, an automatic review will take place at the local school. These students should not be retained based on the results of the state writing test. Note: First semester grades are the average of progress report grades for the 1st and 2nd nine weeks. Second semester grades are the average for the 3rd and 4th nine weeks.

### What happens if a student does not meet the state-set expectations on the CRCT?

Extra help is available to students who do not pass in order to prepare them for the retest.

- A student may get extra help during academic summer school, offered at no charge to parents. The student may take the retest in summer school.
- A student who cannot attend summer school still may take the retest at the end of summer school. However, a student is more likely to pass if he or she receives extra help through targeted summer school classes.

- If a student is still unsuccessful after the retest, an appeal may be conducted through the Student Support Team (SST) process to determine placement. The SST process will *automatically* review the placement of all students who have not met the CRCT promotion requirement, but who earned no semester average lower than a "C" during the year in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Parents may also request an appeal.
- Students who do not pass the CRCT after two attempts (in April and in summer school) and who are not promoted through the SST process will be retained in 8th grade, where they will receive additional help to improve their language arts and math skills.

### How will a parent know if a student is making the required grades? What if a student does not earn passing grades in language arts or math in either semester, or does not pass four of five courses for the school year?

During the school year, families receive progress reports showing students' achievement in each subject, in addition to semester report cards. Through these regular progress reports, parents should be aware if their student is struggling in the classroom before report card time. Throughout the school year, you also can review your student's grades on the Parent Portal ([go2.gwinnett.k12.ga.us](http://go2.gwinnett.k12.ga.us)). If you haven't registered for the portal, contact your local school for details.

If a student is not passing one or more classes, the teacher or teaching team will develop and share with parents an Academic Contract to help the student improve in areas of academic weakness. A student's Academic Contract documents additional time and learning opportunities to address academic concerns. These interventions may include tutorials before or after school, Saturday School, tutorial classes offered during Connection time, additional time for language arts and/or math during academic time, other specific school-based intensive interventions, summer school, and/or retention.

Academic Contracts and a student's academic progress are reviewed quarterly by the Student Support Team (SST). At the end of the year, students who have not made satisfactory progress on grade-level AKS will be retained in the 8th grade, where they will receive additional help to improve their academic skills so they can be successful in high school.

If you have other questions about the 8th grade promotion requirements, ask your student's teacher or principal. Local schools can share sample questions with you and can provide more information on how writing is evaluated.

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