



BOARD OF EDUCATION

John Abraham
David Banks
Alison Bartlett
Holli Cash
John Crooks
Lynnda Crowder-Eagle
David Morgan

For Immediate Release

For more information contact:

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Jay Dillon (770) 426-3345

SUPERINTENDENT

Fred Sanderson

Cobb Eighth Grade Writing Test Scores Continue To Top State, Metro Averages

Key Subgroups Show Marked Improvement

Eighth grade students in Cobb County schools continued to outperform their peers on the 2009 Eighth Grade Writing Assessment, despite a slight dip in scale scores. The district-wide average of 217 is seven points higher than the state average score and two points higher than the average of other metro Atlanta districts. Among Cobb eighth graders, 83 percent ranked in either the “Meets” or “Exceeds” categories, eight points higher than the statewide percentage and three points higher than other metro districts. (See Table I).

Two key student subgroups, English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities, showed improvement on the writing test this year. English Language Learners (ELL) continued an upward trend in student proficiency, improving from 42 percent to 51 percent of students meeting or exceeding writing standards, along with a seven-point increase in the subgroup’s average scale score. Students with Disabilities (SWD) showed a one-point increase in their scale scores, but remained at the same level of proficiency as last year (55 percent) (Chart I, II).

The progress made by subgroups on Cobb’s eighth grade writing assessment can be attributed to a proactive approach taken by the District and schools to identify and address the needs of these students. Middle schools have given mock writing tests to students in sixth and seventh grades, providing early feedback to students and teachers about how Cobb students’ writing skills compare to state standards. The mock tests also allow teachers time to help students strengthen writing skills before they reach eighth grade. Lindley Middle School Principal Sandra Ervin credits the increase in scale scores at her school to a focus on reviewing student writing samples, and more collaboration with parents and the Lindley community. James Snell, principal at Dodgen Middle School, requires teachers to incorporate student reading and writing in unit plans throughout the year.

A majority of Cobb schools topped the state scale scores, with scores ranging from 164 to 244. Highest scores were for Dickerson (244), Hightower Trail (237), and Dodgen (235). At several schools more than 90

percent of students met or exceeded standards (Daniell, Dickerson, Dodgen, Hightower Trail, Lost Mountain, Mabry, and Simpson).

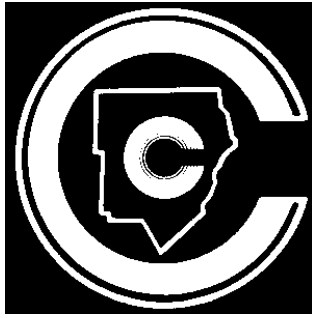
Cobb's overall scores were strong, but District academic officials remain concerned about the continued gap between the performance of regular education students and students in special populations (Special Education and English Language Learners). This same gap is apparent on other assessments at both the state and district levels. Although both the Special Education and ELL subgroups made gains this year, the percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards in both groups was significantly smaller than that of students in the regular education program (Table II).

As a part of the statewide testing program, the Eighth Grade Writing Assessment was administered in January and requires students to write a composition on an assigned topic. The assessment provides eighth graders with a measurement of their writing performance. This information can help students, parents, and teachers understand areas where students may need to focus their efforts to improve writing skills before taking the writing portion of the Georgia High School Graduation Test in their junior year.

Each student paper is scored by professionals who have been trained to evaluate writing. Evaluators score student compositions on four domains, or qualities of effective writing, including ideas, organization, style, and convention. Domains are rated on a scale of 1 to 5. The performance of Cobb students was similar across all domains, ranging from 3.1 in organization to 3.2 in conventions. The scale score range for the new Grade 8 Writing Assessment is 100 to 350. Writing scores are reported in the following performance levels: *Does Not Meet* (100-199), *Meets* (200-249), and *Exceeds* (250-350).

More information about the Cobb County School District's testing programs is available on the District Web site at www.cobbk12.org.

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COBB COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

TESTING BRIEF

Eighth Grade Writing Assessment

Winter 2009

Georgia law (O.C.G.A. §20-2-281) states “writing assessments shall be administered to students in grades three, five, eight, and eleven.” The purpose of the Grade 8 Writing Assessment is to assess student achievement in the Georgia Performance Standards in writing and to improve writing and writing instruction. The Grade 8 Writing Assessment provides predictive information to eighth graders about their future writing performance in advance of taking the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT).

The percentage of Cobb County School District students achieving the Meets and Exceeds standards in 2009 ranged from 51 percent for English Language Learners (ELL) to 92 percent for Asian students. The mean scaled scores for Cobb student ranged from a 193 for ELL students to 235 for Asian students.

The scale score range for the Grade 8 Writing Assessment is 100 to 350. Writing scores are also reported in the following performance levels: Does Not Meet (100-199), Meets (200-249), and Exceeds (250-350).

KEY FINDINGS

- A total of **8043** Cobb students were assessed in the 2009 Grade 8 Writing Assessment. **Eighty-three (83)** percent of all students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scaled score of **217**. This group includes all students with scorable papers. This represents a 1% decrease from last year in the number of students meeting/exceeding standards and a two point decrease in the average scale scores for the district.
- A total of **952** Special Education students were assessed in writing. **Fifty-five (55)** percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scaled score of **197**. There was no increase or decrease in the percent of students meeting/exceeding standards from the previous year. While the percentage remained the same as the previous year, there was a one point increase in the average scale score for the group.
- A total of **255** English Language Learner (ELL) students were assessed in writing. **Fifty-one (51)** percent of students achieved the Meets or Exceeds standards set for writing with a mean scaled score of **193**. Increases were 9% for number of students/meeting or exceeding standards and seven points for the average scale score.

KEY FINDINGS (CONTINUED)

- **Eight Cobb Schools had increases ranging from 1% to 5% in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards from 2008 to 2009.**

Daniell (2%)	Garrett (1%)	Palmer (3%)	Simpson (5%)
Dickerson (1%)	McClure (1%)	Pine Mountain (2%)	Tapp (1%)

- **Five of Cobb middle schools remained the same in the percentage of students meeting or exceeding standards as in the previous year.**

Dodgen	East Cobb	Hightower Trail	Lost Mountain	McCleskey
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- **All other middle schools showed decreases of 1% to 11% in the number of students meeting or exceeding standard from 2008-2009.**

- **Sixteen (16) of Cobb's middle schools had overall mean scale scores higher than the state mean scale score of 210.**

Barber	Durham	Lovinggood	Palmer
Daniell	East Cobb	Mabry	Pine Mountain
Dickerson	Hightower Trail	McCleskey	Simpson
Dodgen	Lost Mountain	McClure	Tapp

- **Fourteen (14) of Cobb's middle schools had overall mean scale scores equal to or higher than the mean scale score of 215 for Metro RESA.**

Barber	Durham	Mabry	Pine Mountain
Daniell	East Cobb	McCleskey	Simpson
Dickerson	Hightower Trail	McClure	
Dodgen	Lost Mountain	Palmer	

- **Ten (10) of Cobb's middle schools had mean scale scores equal to or higher than the mean scale score of 217 for Cobb.**

Daniell	Durham	Mabry	Simpson
Dickerson	Hightower	McCleskey	
Dodgen	Lost Mountain	McClure	

- **Seventeen (17) of Cobb's middle schools had higher percentages than did the state for students meeting or exceeding standards (75%).**

Barber	Durham	Lost Mountain	McClure	Tapp
Daniell	East Cobb	Lovinggood	Palmer	
Dickerson	Garrett	Mabry	Pine Mountain	
Dodgen	Hightower Trail	McCleskey	Simpson	

- **Fifteen (15) of Cobb's middle schools had higher percentages of students meeting or exceeding standards when compared to the overall percentages for Cobb (83%).**

Barber	Durham	Mabry	Pine Mountain
Daniell	Hightower Trail	McCleskey	Simpson
Dickerson	Lost Mountain	McClure	Tapp
Dodgen	Lovinggood	Palmer	

**Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment: 2009
All Students**

Table I

	# Tested	Mean Scale Score	% DNM	% M	% E	% M+E	WRITING DOMAINS**			
							Ideas	Organization	Style	Conventions
Cobb	8,043	217	17.0	74.0	9.0	83.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2
Metro Resa*	43,812	215	20.0	72.0	8.0	80.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1
Georgia	119,435	210	25.0	69.0	6.0	75.0	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.0
Awtrey	272	208	28.0	69.0	3.0	72.0	2.8	2.8	3.0	3.0
Barber	303	216	14.0	80.0	6.0	86.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1
Campbell Middle	313	203	38.0	61.0	1.0	62.0	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7
Cooper	314	205	26.0	72.0	2.0	74.0	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9
Daniell	318	217	9.0	87.0	4.0	91.0	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1
Devereux Academy	22	164	91.0	9.0	0.0	9.0	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Dickerson	367	244	2.0	66.0	32.0	98.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
Dodgen	391	235	5.0	70.0	25.0	95.0	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7
Durham	383	222	14.0	74.0	11.0	85.0	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
East Cobb	392	216	18.0	73.0	9.0	82.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1
Floyd	269	207	27.0	68.0	4.0	72.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8
Garrett	316	209	21.0	77.0	2.0	79.0	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9
Griffin	295	203	36.0	62.0	2.0	64.0	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7
Hightower Trail	343	237	3.0	71.0	26.0	97.0	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7
Imagine Intl Acad of Mableton	39	206	23.0	77.0	0.0	77.0	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9
Imagine Intl Acad of Smyrna	16	195	56.0	44.0	0.0	44.0	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.6
Lindley	402	203	33.0	66.0	1.0	67.0	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7
Lost Mountain	392	223	7.0	84.0	10.0	94.0	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.4
Lovinggood	476	214	15.0	81.0	4.0	85.0	3.1	3.0	3.2	3.1
Mabry	310	233	5.0	73.0	22.0	95.0	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6
McCleskey	245	217	12.0	83.0	5.0	88.0	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2
McClure	379	219	11.0	81.0	8.0	89.0	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3
Palmer	377	216	16.0	79.0	5.0	84.0	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2
Pine Mountain	247	215	16.0	79.0	5.0	84.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1
Simpson	288	234	5.0	74.0	21.0	95.0	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.6
Smitha	294	204	32.0	66.0	2.0	68.0	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7
Tapp	280	213	18.0	78.0	5.0	83.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.1

*RESA: Atlanta, Buford, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fulton, Forsyth, Gwinnett and Rockdale Counties, Decatur, and Marietta City systems

DNM = Did Not Meet Standards (Score of 100 - 199)

M = Met Standards (Score of 200 - 249)

E = Exceeded Standards (Score of 250 - 350)

% M+E = Percentage of students meeting and exceeding standards

**Scoring Information for Domains

Range 1 (low) to 5 (high)

Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment: 2009
Percentages of Students in Performance Levels by Program Type

Table II

	# Tested	Average Scale Score	Percentages		
GEORGIA			DNM	M	E
All Students	119,435	210	25	69	6
Regular Program Students			21	72	7
Limited English Proficient			60	40	0
Special Education			62	37	1
COBB COUNTY			DNM	M	E
All Students	8043	217	17	74	9
Regular Program Students	7091	220	13	76	10
Limited English Proficient	255	193	49	50	1
Special Education	952	197	44	53	2
AWTREY			DNM	M	E
All Students	272	208	28	69	3
Regular Program Students	242	211	23	74	3
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	30	179	70	30	0
BARBER			DNM	M	E
All Students	303	216	14	80	6
Regular Program Students	277	218	12	82	7
Limited English Proficient	12	192	42	58	0
Special Education	26	196	38	62	0
CAMPBELL			DNM	M	E
All Students	313	203	38	61	1
Regular Program Students	282	204	36	63	1
Limited English Proficient	20	192	60	40	0
Special Education	31	196	58	42	0
COOPER			DNM	M	E
All Students	314	205	26	72	2
Regular Program Students	279	208	21	77	3
Limited English Proficient	10	139	90	10	0
Special Education	35	181	69	31	0
DANIELL			DNM	M	E
All Students	318	217	9	87	4
Regular Program Students	277	220	6	89	5
Limited English Proficient	12	203	25	75	0
Special Education	41	202	27	73	0
DEVEREUX ACADEMY			DNM	M	E
All Students	22	164	91	9	0
Regular Program Students	11	175	82	18	0
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	11	154	100	0	0

TFC = Too Few To Report (If a school had fewer than 10 students scores are not listed.)

DNM = Did Not Meet Standards

M = Met Standards

E = Exceeded Standards

Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment: 2009
Percentages of Students in Performance Levels by Program Type

Table II

	# Tested	Average Scale Score	Percentages		
DICKERSON			DNM	M	E
All Students	367	244	2	66	32
Regular Program Students	315	246	0	65	35
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	52	229	10	71	19
DODGEN			DNM	M	E
All Students	391	235	5	70	25
Regular Program Students	338	238	3	69	28
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	53	214	17	75	8
DURHAM			DNM	M	E
All Students	383	222	14	74	11
Regular Program Students	342	225	9	78	13
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	41	196	59	41	0
EAST COBB			DNM	M	E
All Students	392	216	18	73	9
Regular Program Students	356	218	16	74	10
Limited English Proficient	23	210	26	70	4
Special Education	36	198	36	64	0
FLOYD			DNM	M	E
All Students	269	207	27	68	4
Regular Program Students	237	210	23	72	5
Limited English Proficient	18	184	44	56	0
Special Education	32	185	56	44	0
GARRETT			DNM	M	E
All Students	316	209	21	77	2
Regular Program Students	270	213	16	81	3
Limited English Proficient	12	196	50	50	0
Special Education	46	187	52	48	0
GRIFFIN			DNM	M	E
All Students	295	203	36	62	2
Regular Program Students	253	206	30	68	2
Limited English Proficient	31	189	58	42	0
Special Education	42	185	69	31	0
HIGHTOWER TRAIL			DNM	M	E
All Students	343	237	3	71	26
Regular Program Students	304	240	2	69	28
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	39	213	13	82	5

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M = Met Standards

E = Exceeded Standards

**Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment: 2009
Percentages of Students in Performance Levels by Program Type**

Table II

	# Tested	Average Scale Score	Percentages		
IMAGINE INTL ACAD OF MABLETON			DNM	M	E
All Students	39	206	23	77	0
Regular Program Students	35	212	14	86	0
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
IMAGINE INTL ACAD OF SMYRNA			DNM	M	E
All Students	16	195	56	44	0
Regular Program Students	16	195	56	44	0
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
LINDLEY			DNM	M	E
All Students	402	203	33	66	1
Regular Program Students	356	206	29	70	1
Limited English Proficient	32	187	75	25	0
Special Education	46	184	67	33	0
LOST MOUNTAIN			DNM	M	E
All Students	392	223	7	84	10
Regular Program Students	358	224	5	84	11
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	34	206	24	76	0
LOVINGGOOD			DNM	M	E
All Students	476	214	15	81	4
Regular Program Students	425	218	9	87	5
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	51	188	67	31	2
MABRY			DNM	M	E
All Students	310	233	5	73	22
Regular Program Students	284	235	4	73	24
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	26	213	19	73	8
McCLESKEY			DNM	M	E
All Students	245	217	12	83	5
Regular Program Students	199	221	6	87	7
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	46	199	37	63	0
MCCLURE			DNM	M	E
All Students	379	219	11	81	8
Regular Program Students	335	222	7	84	9
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	44	195	41	59	0

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Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment: 2009
Percentages of Students in Performance Levels by Program Type

Table II

	# Tested	Average Scale Score	Percentages		
			DNM	M	E
PALMER					
All Students	377	216	16	79	5
Regular Program Students	328	219	10	84	6
Limited English Proficient	11	193	45	55	0
Special Education	49	197	55	45	0
PINE MOUNTAIN					
All Students	247	215	16	79	5
Regular Program Students	223	217	13	81	6
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	24	195	46	54	0
SIMPSON					
All Students	288	234	5	74	21
Regular Program Students	254	236	4	73	23
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	34	219	9	82	9
SMITHA					
All Students	294	204	32	66	2
Regular Program Students	253	207	27	71	2
Limited English Proficient	34	195	47	53	0
Special Education	41	183	63	37	0
TAPP					
All Students	280	213	18	78	5
Regular Program Students	242	215	14	80	5
Limited English Proficient	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC	TFC
Special Education	38	198	39	61	0

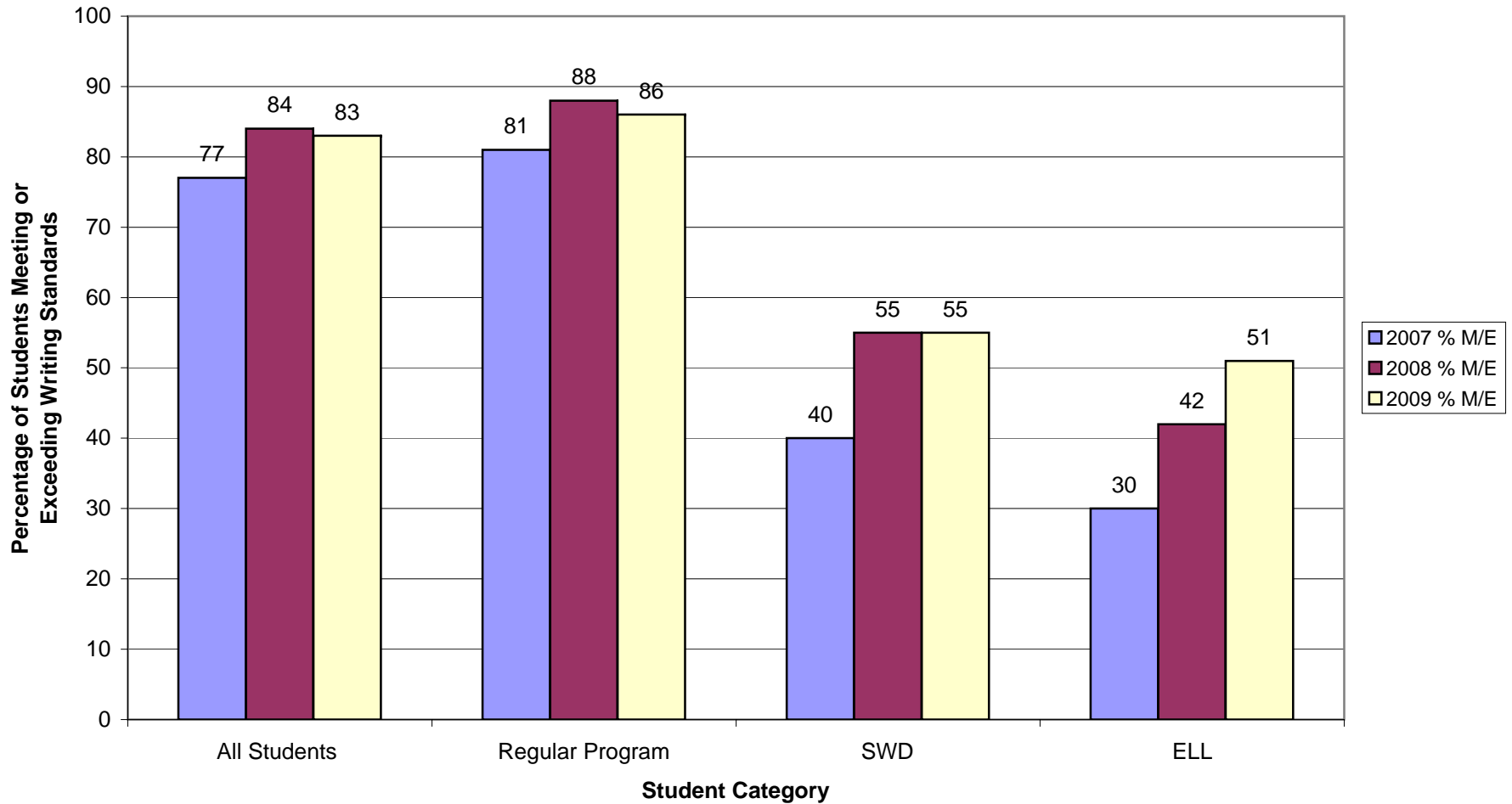
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DNM = Did Not Meet Standards

M = Met Standards

E = Exceeded Standards

**Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment (2007-2009)
Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding State Standards in Writing**



**Cobb County School District
Eighth Grade Writing Assessment (2007 - 2009)
Mean Scale Score Comparison**

