

GSO to GO

NEWS FOR
MAY
2008



The Monthly Teacher Resource Newsletter from GeorgiaStandards.Org



GeorgiaStandards.Org
GATEWAY TO EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

General Information

Georgia Students Perform Well on Graduation Tests

An overwhelming majority of Georgia's students are meeting expectations on the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT), including two of the exams that are aligned to the state's more rigorous curriculum.

"Overall, these results are good news: most of Georgia's students are showing that they have the basic knowledge they need in order to graduate from high school," said State Superintendent of Schools Kathy Cox.

"However, the results of the two new GHSGTs show that we still have work to do in getting students fully prepared to be highly successful in college and the work world."

For the first time this year, the GHSGTs in English Language Arts and Science are fully aligned to the state's new curriculum, the

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). Besides testing more rigorous material, the new exams call for higher order thinking. These new exams are scored at four levels – below proficiency, basic proficiency, advanced proficiency and honors. About 90 percent of first-time test takers scored at basic proficiency or above on the new GHSGT in English Language Arts. Slightly more than 86 percent scored at basic proficiency or above on the new GHSGT in Science. The results of GHSGTs in Mathematics and Social Studies remained very strong, but were essentially flat when compared to 2007.

Superintendent Cox said Georgia has a strong commitment to building students' writing skills. For instance, Georgia is one of few states that tests students in writing at every level of education – elementary (grades 3 & 5), middle (grade 8) and high school (grade 11).

Spreadsheets containing system-level and school-level results will be added later this month under the "more information" section of this [press release that was issued from the GaDOE Communications Office](#):

> [Charts and Other Information on Georgia High School Graduation Results](#)

GSO Categories

General Information	1
Continuing Education	4
Celebrating May	6
New GSO Content	7

May

2008

Tell Us Your Story

We are always interested in hearing how GeorgiaStandards.Org helps teachers, parents, and students. If you have a success story you'd like to share with us, please let us know.

Send stories to: [Kathy Politis](#)



Kick Your Heels Up with Georgia Read More

Put your bandana on and get ready to Do-Si-Do for this month's Georgia Read More Video. Country Music Singer and Grammy Award Winner, Travis Tritt, [reads Bubba the Cowboy Prince](#) to the students at Hiram Elementary School in Paulding County. The book is authored by [Helen Ketteman](#) and illustrated by James Warhola. This Cinderella spoof with a Texas twist is sure to delight all the cowboys and cowgirls in your class. A CinderFELLA story if you will, that is accompanied by the best illustrations this side of the Rio Grande. Now before you go off rustlin' up some cattle or getting them doggies along be sure to download the [vocabulary list that accompanies Bubba the Cowboy Prince: A Fractured Texas Tale](#). Y'all come back now, ya hear?

The Georgia Department of Education has implemented a literacy program aimed at third grade students called the "[Georgia Read More](#)" program. The concentrated efforts of the

[Library Media Services Department](#) have resulted in this award winning [series](#). This program encourages children to read, supports parent-child interaction, and promotes literacy and libraries. Simply select from the many videos of dignitaries and celebrities reading a children's book aloud to a group of students. Each video supplies a link to a vocabulary list that accompanies the story and some of the videos are also available in Spanish. Included with most books are a Lexile score and links to author websites.

> [Watch Travis Tritt read Bubba the Cowboy Prince: A Fractured Texas Tale](#)

Comics and Cartoons for Educational Purposes

Teachers may have made it into a comic book store for [Free Comic Book Day](#) on May 3, . [Free Comic Book Day](#) is a single day when participating comic book shops across North America and around the world give away comic books absolutely FREE to anyone who comes into their stores. Use this [comic book store locator](#) to see what retailers were participating in your area. Contact them to see if there were any surplus supplies from the May 3rd event. You may be able to start a classroom comic collection for leisure reading time that may interest the most reluctant of readers. GSO found additional links highlighting comics in the classroom. In the past, [educator Jeff Sharpe has had students create art history comics](#) as a way for them to express their knowledge on a subject. [Teaching with comics by flummery.com](#) provides many resources in cartooning, handouts in developing skills in panel sequencing, content specific comics, templates and a comic evaluation rubric. [Comics in the Classroom as an Introduction to Genre Study](#) is worth a look as an engaging literary activity for students. The instructional plan from this [Read, Write, Think learning activity](#) links to an [Online Comic Creator Student Interactive](#), which is sure to put the kapow, boff and zap into reading and writing!

FREE COMIC BOOK DAY



Comics and editorial cartoons can also help teach students to identify issues, analyze symbols, acknowledge the need for background knowledge, recognize stereotypes and caricatures think critically and appreciate the role of irony and humor. [The Dirksen Congressional Center](#) has posted the following page that enlightens us on the [value of cartoons for educational purposes](#). Here is a [chronological listing](#) of over 300 editorial and political cartoons from many famous cartoonists.

There are also [lesson plans](#) to analyzing editorial cartoons

ranging from [Foreign Aid](#) to [The Death of a Statesman](#). You can even view the editorial cartoon collection by [subject listing](#) if you prefer.

> GPS Tags: [ELA5R1](#), [ELA6R1](#), [ELA7R1](#)

GSO Data Points

Year-To-Date (As of 1/2008)

Visitors to [GeorgiaStandards.Org](#)
651,978

Unique Visitors
286,821

Page views for all visitors
3,004,529

Average Time on Site
4 minutes 48 seconds

Number of Units that are
Approved and Searchable in GSO
1,386

Number of Georgia Educators
trained on GSO
5,011

Educators signed up to have
access to GSO Unit Builder
13,308

Number of GSO Teacher Groups
1,216

Number of GSO Training Videos
212

Now Playing: Clarke County Schools



The Clarke County School District located in Athens, Georgia has much in common with other Georgia school districts such as building a foundation for lifelong learning and a vision of excellence. Learn more about this school district by visiting the [Clarke County Schools web-site](#) or tune-in to this video titled "[Dream Job](#)." The video highlights some achievements that Clarke County Schools has accomplished along with other innovations that are geared to improve academic achievement.

Thinkfinity Literacy Network



Thinkfinity provides many educational and literacy resources for parents and other stakeholders. That's why teachers should share the [Thinkfinity Literacy Network](#) with parents and students. This network is a powerful educational platform created through the merger of two highly-acclaimed programs – Verizon Literacy Network and Verizon MarcoPolo. This site has several literacy podcasts and PDFs available for download. Since literacy is a lifelong pursuit, the Thinkfinity Literacy Network offers the following areas for all ages:

Adult Literacy

- [Six Steps for Using the Think Aloud Technique](#) (PDF)
- [The Think Aloud Technique - Introduction](#) (MP3)
- [The Think Aloud Technique - Modeling the Think Aloud Technique](#) (MP3)
- [The Think Aloud Technique - Integrating the Think Aloud Technique](#) (MP3)
- [Think Aloud Script](#) (PDF)

English-as-a-Second-Language

- [Episode 1: Volunteering in ESL](#) (MP3)
- [Episode 2: The Needs, Challenges and the Benefits of Being an ESL Volunteer](#) (MP3)

For Parents of Preschoolers – Talking About Stories

- [Episode 1: The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#)
- [Episode 2: Owl Moon](#)
- [Episode 3: The Little Engine That Could](#)
- [Episode 4: Good Night, Gorilla](#)
- [Episode 5: Chicka Chicka Boom Boom](#)
- [Episode 6: Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten](#)
- [Episode 7: The Little Red Hen](#)
- [Episode 8: Alphabet Under Construction](#)
- [Episode 9: I Wanna Iguana](#)

The Thinkfinity Literacy Network offers much more to parents of elementary school-age children where they can listen to episodes discussing building vocabulary and fluency. The resources on the Thinkfinity Literacy Network could be a site that students and parents can peruse during the summer.

Thinkfinity
Supported by the Verizon Foundation

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Continuing Education

Summer Course Offerings at UGA ETTC



Teachers have a great opportunity to meet their PLU needs this summer at the [University of Georgia ETTC](#). The [UGA ETTC](#) is offering [Cool Tools sessions](#) for teachers, instructional technology specialists, media specialists, and media support personnel. Pick and choose from a full-course menu of three-and-a-half hour sessions (morning or afternoon) in Gwinnett. Topics include Giving Students a Voice with Recording, Dynamic Digital Cameras, Movie Maker, Blogging, Student Response Devices, Google Tools and more! Attend three sessions for 1 PLU or six sessions for 2 PLUs. Visit the [Cool Tools page](#) for session dates and times and registration information. The [UGA ETTC](#) is happy to partner with you to plan customized classes. These classes can include SMART Board, Activboard and Classroom Performance System that can meet your time and location needs. Contact [UGA ETTC](#) to schedule a class for your group. You can also visit this ETTC website for all their [course topics](#). While at the UGA ETTC website you might want to peruse their great archive of [educational technology newsletters](#).

The Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTCs) work collaboratively to provide professional learning, consulting, and service for Georgia educators to promote the appropriate use of technology in support of teaching, learning, and leadership. The [UGA ETTC](#) is one of [thirteen ETTC training centers](#) that are located throughout the state for your convenience.

Must See Teacher TV



Teachers will soon be getting ready for the summer and start reflecting on all the successes of the 2007-08 school year. This is also a time that many educators start to look forward to the next school year to begin contemplating a curriculum with more engaging activities that is performance-based and at the same time meeting the needs of a 21st century world. Here are two videos from North Carolina that can start that reflection process. One video discusses an overview of a [virtual public school](#) and the other video highlights an [interdisciplinary, Web 2.0 approach to learning](#) by Walkertown Middle School.

Write a Winning Grant Proposal

[How to Write a Winning Proposal](#) is a hands-on workshop, for K-12 teachers and administrators, in which each participant develops a working draft of a proposal for funding. The workshop will be held at the GTRI Conference Center (formerly the GCATT building), 250 14th Street, Atlanta 30318, just west of I-75 and I-85. For directions, please [visit this page](#). After learning about each of the sections of a proposal, you will brainstorm and write the sections of a proposal tailored to a current grant opportunity. You will be able to revise the proposal after the workshop and submit it for funding to your preferred funding source!

Example project ideas include, 1) linking middle school students with high school technology mentors; 2) developing and finding international collaborators to enhance your social studies programs 3) creating a focused professional development program for selected teachers; or 4) updating technology resources for learning. At the workshop, each participant will write a draft proposal based on his or her idea. Participants may bring their own laptops. Participants are requested to review open grant opportunities in the [Foundations for the Future's Funding Forecast](#) prior to attending the workshop. The workshop fee of \$100 includes grant writing workbook, grant-writing resources on CD, hands-on Internet sessions, two PLU credits, certificate of completion, refreshments and lunch on Thursday. Lunch is on your own Tuesday and Wednesday.

Reserve a space by completing the [reservation form](#) and mailing it with payment to Karen Boyle, Georgia Tech Research Institute, 250 14th St NW, Atlanta, Georgia 30332-0832. Make checks payable to the Georgia Tech Research Institute. Participation is limited, so call early! Reservations will be held on a first come-first served basis. For more information, please contact Karen at (404) 407-6838 or karen.boyle@gtri.gatech.edu.

Thinkfinity Professional Development Coming in Fall 2008

Targeting the needs of educators, Georgia will begin to offer Thinkfinity Professional Development courses in the fall of 2008. Courses will be made available through our [state network of ETTCs](#). A customized professional development program will feature Thinkfinity's rich resources aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards and easily shared within public and private groups.

To Be, Or Not To Be

Early this summer, teachers of grades 4-12 have the opportunity to earn five Professional Learning Units (PLUs) by registering for [No Fear Shakespeare](#), a class which is accredited by the Georgia Department of Education.

Learn the newest techniques behind making Shakespeare fun for your students in a casual, relaxed environment. Teachers of grades 3-5 will become acquainted with Shakespeare's stories and explore innovative ways of introducing them to young students. Teachers of grades 6-12 will have the opportunity to blow off the dust of the pages and look at Shakespeare's material differently, making the work more relevant to today's older students. Georgia Shakespeare's professional staff will help make sure your student's eyes don't glaze over at the mere mention of the "bard," ensuring that they achieve the building blocks necessary for future education. [Click here](#) for more information.



Celebrating May	communicate	collaborate	connect
	<p>8 1886 - The first Coca-Cola fountain drink was sold in Jacobs Pharmacy in Atlanta.</p> <p>19 1959 - Maynard Jackson, a future Atlanta mayor, became the first African American to receive a library card.</p> <p>27 1956 - Little Richard's "Long Tall Sally" topped the popular music charts. "The Georgia Peach," declared himself "the innovator and the architect of rock and roll."</p>	<p>For more Georgia facts for May visit The New Georgia Encyclopedia.</p>	<p>Downloads > May calendar template</p> <p>Links > New GSO Content > Virtual Public School Video > Interdisciplinary, Web 2.0 Project Video</p> <p>Themes > Better Hearing and Speech Month > Teacher Appreciation Week</p>

May in Georgia History



THE NEW GEORGIA
ENCYCLOPEDIA

[May has many significant events](#) that make history in Georgia during this month, such as first Europeans known to have set foot on Georgia soil arrived with Spaniard Pedro de Quejos. They landed two ships at the mouth of the Savannah River on an exploratory expedition. [The New Georgia Encyclopedia](#) has [this article](#) and [18 more articles](#) celebrating important events that occurred in Georgia during the month of May.



May EDSITEment Calendar of Special Events

The [May calendar](#) from [EDSITEment](#) is posted and as always full of holidays, special events, lesson plans and websites for teachers.

May Themes and Celebrations

May is a month that has many themes and celebrations. [Edhelper.com](#) features many great units and teaching ideas to support educators. [Edhelper.com](#) highlights [Mother's Day](#), a [Disabilities Theme Unit](#), [Memorial Day](#), [Cinco de Mayo](#) and of course an [End of School Theme Unit](#). These links feature an impressive amount of printable resources for the classroom; for example, the [Mother's Day](#) page has printables for reading comprehension, critical thinking, writing, puzzles, hidden pictures, math worksheets, patterns and so much more!

May is Better Hearing and Speech Month

[Better Hearing and Speech Month \(BHSM\)](#) is an annual event to raise awareness about communication disorders and to promote treatment that can improve the quality of life for those who experience problems with speaking, understanding or hearing. The [American Speech-Language-Hearing Association \(ASHA\)](#) website offers



several resources for this annual event. You can also listen to the [ASHA podcasts](#) that feature interviews with people that are making news in the professions of Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.



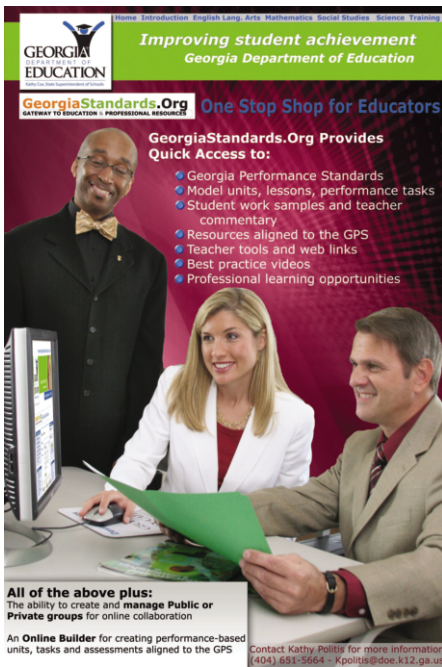
Teacher Appreciation Week

May 5-9, 2008 is [Teacher Appreciation Week!](#) The GeorgiaStandards.Org team wants to thank the teachers of Georgia for all that they do for our children! You make a difference to students every single day and have a profound impact on them far beyond the walls of the classroom. Ever Garrison eloquently affirms this by stating, "A teacher is a compass that activates the magnets of curiosity, knowledge, and wisdom in the pupils." If there any administrators, parents, or students reading this article, show teachers just how much they mean during this week. Go to [Education World](#) to get some [great ways to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week](#).

Celebrating May

GSO Posters

GeorgiaStandards.Org posters are available to all Georgia school systems. This year's GSO poster features Georgia teacher of the year Emily Jennette pictured alongside teacher of the year finalists Anthony Stinson and William Haskin. Contact [Kathy Politis](mailto:Kathy.Politis@doe.k12.ga.us) for more information for your school posters.



May GSO to GO Calendar Template


Download the [May Calendar](#) template now.



2008 Testing Newsletter

Superintendent Kathy Cox states, "A good testing program, combined with a strong curriculum, can pave the way for targeted, focused instruction that will help Georgia improve student achievement like never before in our history." And with that message in mind, educators who need to know more about the state's testing program, should download the [2008 Testing Newsletter](#). This comprehensive newsletter is prepared by the Office of Standards, Instruction and Assessment. The [newsletter](#) covers the following testing topics:

- Georgia's CRCT
- ACCESS for ELLs
- GHSGT
- End-of-Course Tests
- Assessing Kindergartners
- Lexiles
- Georgia's Online Assessment System
- Georgia's Writing Assessment Program
- New Writing Assessments in Grades 5, 8, and 11
- Highlights of the Georgia Writing Assessments
- The New Georgia Alternate Assessment
- National Assessments

What Georgia educators need to know about... 

Georgia's Testing Program

"We will lead the nation in improving student achievement." - Kathy Cox, State Superintendent of Schools

A Message from the Superintendent:

No one understands the importance of testing more than our teachers. A good testing program, combined with a strong curriculum, can pave the way for targeted, focused instruction that will help Georgia improve student achievement like never before in our history.

I hope this newsletter will provide the answers to some of the questions you have about our testing program and some of the questions you hear from parents and the public. On these pages, you'll find in-depth details about each of the state's standardized tests, including how the exams came into being, how the questions are developed, and the technical quality of the tests.

Please take some time to read through this newsletter and keep it nearby should you have questions in the future. And, as always, please feel free to contact Assessment and Accountability at (404) 656-2688 should you have any further questions.

I am so grateful for the work that our teachers and administrators do every day for the children of Georgia. It is an honor to be your colleague.

Kathy Cox

Table of Contents			
	Page	Page	
Overview of Test Development	2	Georgia's Online Assessment System	19
Georgia's CRCT	3	Georgia's Writing Assessment Program	21
The ACCESS for ELLs	5	New Writing Assessments in Grades 5, 8, and 11	28
GHSGT	7	Highlights of the Georgia Writing Assessments	31
End-of-Course Tests	10	The New Georgia Alternate Assessment	32
Assessing Kindergartners	12	National Assessments	36
Lexiles	16	Notes	39

Other GaDOE News

New GSO Content

[Click here](#) to view the new content that was added to GeorgiaStandards.Org.

May Media Matters

A [newsletter](#) for people who love Library Media Centers. You can also access the [Media Matters archives](#).

GaDOE Press Releases

[Click here](#) to access media information for encouraging K-12 education in Georgia.

GSO Press Releases

Read all the [latest news](#) regarding Georgia Standards.

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GeorgiaStandards.Org is a program under the office of Instructional Technology within the Georgia Department of Education

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KATHY COX

"WE WILL LEAD THE NATION IN IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT"

Kathy Cox
State Superintendent
of Schools