

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2010 - Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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Type of School: (Check all that apply)     Charter  Title I  Magnet  Choice

Name of Principal: Mr. Chris Mance

Official School Name: Gainesville High School

School Mailing Address:  
830 Century Pl  
Gainesville, GA 30501-3002

County: Hall    State School Code Number\*: 3050

Telephone: (770) 536-4441    Fax: (770) 287-2031

Web site/URL: http://www.gainesvillehighschool.net/    E-mail: chris.mance@gcssk12.net

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge all information is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\*: Dr. Merrienne Dyer

District Name: Gainesville City Schools    Tel: (770) 536-5275

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board President/Chairperson: Mr. David Syfan

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I - Eligibility Certification), and certify that to the best of my knowledge it is accurate.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

*\*Private Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*  
The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and emailed to Aba Kumi, Blue Ribbon Schools Project Manager (aba.kumi@ed.gov) or mailed by expedited mail or a courier mail service (such as Express Mail, FedEx or UPS) to Aba Kumi, Director, Blue Ribbon Schools Program, Office of Communications and Outreach, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave., SW, Room 5E103, Washington, DC 20202-8173

## PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2009-2010 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take the course.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2004.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 or 2009.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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All data are the most recent year available.

### DISTRICT (Questions 1-2 not applicable to private schools)

1. Number of schools in the district: (per district designation)
- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| 5 | Elementary schools (includes K-8) |
| 1 | Middle/Junior high schools        |
| 1 | High schools                      |
|   | K-12 schools                      |
| 7 | <b>TOTAL</b>                      |

2. District Per Pupil Expenditure: 8315

### SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:

- Urban or large central city
- Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
- Suburban
- Small city or town in a rural area
- Rural

4. 2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.

5. Number of students as of October 1 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school only:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total	Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK			0	6			0
K			0	7			0
1			0	8			0
2			0	9	260	232	492
3			0	10	184	163	347
4			0	11	121	128	249
5			0	12	101	124	225
<b>TOTAL STUDENTS IN THE APPLYING SCHOOL</b>							1313

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: \_\_\_\_\_ % American Indian or Alaska Native  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 % Asian  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 23 % Black or African American  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 47 % Hispanic or Latino  
 \_\_\_\_\_ % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 23 % White  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 % Two or more races  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **100 % Total**

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 14 %

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	30
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1 until the end of the year.	160
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	190
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1.	1313
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.145
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	14.471

8. Limited English proficient students in the school: 14 %

Total number limited English proficient 179

Number of languages represented: 9

Specify languages:

Chinese, Czech, German, Gujarati, Portuguese, Spanish, Vietnamese, Other African, and Other Asian.

9. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 69 %

Total number students who qualify: 902

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-price school meals program, specify a more accurate estimate, tell why the school chose it, and explain how it arrived at this estimate.

10. Students receiving special education services: 9 %

Total Number of Students Served: 118

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>8</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>19</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>1</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>47</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>21</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>1</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>1</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>20</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>87</u>	<u>0</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>12</u>	<u>0</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff	<u>8</u>	<u>0</u>
Total number	<u>118</u>	<u>1</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 13 :1

13. Show the attendance patterns of teachers and students as a percentage. Only middle and high schools need to supply dropout rates. Briefly explain in the Notes section any attendance rates under 95%, teacher turnover rates over 12%, or student dropout rates over 5%.

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Daily student attendance	97%	97%	96%	95%	95%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	99%	99%	98%	97%
Teacher turnover rate	4%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Student dropout rate	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%

Please provide all explanations below.

The drop out rate is calculated by the number of students with a withdrawal code corresponding to a dropout divided by the number of students that attended the school. Our current enrollment of 495 ninth graders includes 165 retained freshmen. The retained freshmen are determined to be highly at risk having a great possibility of becoming a dropout. Our retention rate is due to our stringent promotion policy. Through our hybrid block schedule which includes a credit recovery lab, we work diligently to help students graduate on track in a timely fashion. We have an extremely transient population due mainly to socio economic reasons. We are also one of two schools systems in Hall County, Georgia so students have the flexibility to move within the two school systems.

14. For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools).

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2009 are doing as of the Fall 2009.

Graduating class size	211	
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	42	%
Enrolled in a community college	43	%
Enrolled in vocational training	10	%
Found employment	2	%
Military service	2	%
Other (travel, staying home, etc.)	1	%
Unknown	0	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>%</b>

## PART III - SUMMARY

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Gainesville High School (GHS), located in Gainesville, Georgia, near beautiful Lake Lanier, has served the educational needs of students in central part of Hall County since 1892. Gainesville High School is the only high school in the Gainesville City School System with an enrollment of 1,393. Its mascot is “The Red Elephants”. It is a public, four- year, comprehensive high school with a strong college preparatory program. The student body has become more diverse in the last several years and presently has a student population of 48% Hispanic, 23 % Caucasian, 22 % African-American, 3% Multi-racial and 4% Asian. GHS prides itself in its tradition of excellence in academics, fine arts, sports, and community service.

The school’s mission is to promote life-long learning, citizenship, and responsibility by providing challenging programs of study and activities in a nurturing learning environment while encouraging unity among diverse cultures and involving all stakeholders in the achievement of school goals. The goals of the school are to prepare students to live in a multi-cultural world by promoting harmony through open communication and acceptance, sharing power and responsibility, and seeking to include rather than to exclude. The Gainesville High School charge of “Respect, Restraint, and Responsibility” is given to each student every morning in promoting a vision of “Excellence for All” as students and staff work together to promote life-long learning.

Gainesville High School believes that learning is a continuous and rewarding process and is the priority of the school as it provides a rigorous and challenging academic curriculum to meet the needs of each individual student. Classes offered range from advanced placement and honors courses to apprenticeship programs where students receive credit for supervised work experience. A joint enrollment program is available for seniors in cooperation with local colleges and technical schools. The high school celebrates excellence by maintaining high standards for the staff and student body, by sustaining a safe, secure, and nurturing environment where students are the top priority, and by encouraging students to learn how to think, not necessarily what to think. The learning needs of students will be the primary focus of all decision making and will be data driven providing both differentiated instructional strategies and assessments to support their learning style. It is the desire of the faculty to instill in the students a lifelong love of learning.

Gainesville High School is a “model” for excellence in education and is a transparent accountability model that makes sense. GHS has been recognized as a State School of Excellence. With an extensive extracurricular program, Gainesville has received many accolades for academic teams, sports, band, and drama. The drama department was honored as one of 50 high schools chosen to participate in the [Fringe Festival](#) in [Edinburgh, Scotland](#) in 2005. In 2008, Gainesville was named a Georgia School of Character. There is a tradition of [Governors Honors](#) participants and [National Merit](#) Scholar recipients, with test scores consistently in the top 10% in the state.

## PART IV - INDICATORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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### 1. Assessment Results:

Gainesville High School participates in the assessment system created by the state of Georgia. Georgia requires each accredited high school to administer ten, end of course tests (EOCT) in the following subjects: Math I, Math II, Algebra I, Geometry, English I, English III, Physical Science, Biology, United States History and Economics. Georgia also requires each accredited high school to administer the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) and the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHS WT). All of these tests are prepared by Pearson Incorporated and administered and evaluated through the testing and assessment division of the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE). All students must pass the GHS GT and GHS WT to earn a diploma and to graduate from a public high school in Georgia. The GHS WT is administered in the fall of the student's junior year and to pass, one must have a score of 200 or above. The GHS GT is given in the spring of the student's junior year and is composed of percentage-weighted domains in four content areas: math, English Language Arts, science and social studies. For a student to graduate from high school, he/she must score at or above the following: 500 on math (QCC); 200 on English Language Arts (GPS); 200 on science (GPS); and 500 on social studies (GPS). In the 2005-2006 school year, the curriculum taught to Georgia K-12 students began to transition from the Quality Core Curriculum (QCC) to the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). As a result, the assessments that were given to students throughout the year also had to undergo a transition and this is continuing. All state mandated assessments will be correlated to the Georgia Performance Standards by the school year 2011.

The results of these assessments can be accessed through the Georgia Department of Education website at [www.doe.k12.ga.us](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us) via the Data Reporting, Report Card/AYP Report. The website explains the high school testing policy and how data is evaluated by systems and schools in the Report Card. The GHS GT results are used to develop the Georgia Department of Education Report Card and to determine Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) for No Child Left Behind (NCLB). Performance proficiency levels are *exceeds*, *meets* and *does not meet* for the GHS GT and the GHS WT. To meet AYP, each school must meet the following criteria: 95% participation, an Academic Performance (Annual Measurable Objective or AMO), and Second Indicator (graduation rate). Annual Yearly Progress under NCLB requires schools to meet criteria in three areas: test participation (on both mathematics and reading/English Language Arts), academic performance (for both mathematics and reading/English Language Arts), and a second indicator which is the graduation rate. Gainesville High School met the AYP criteria for test participation, academic performance and for second indicator of graduation rate for the school years of 2007-2009. Under the test participation AYP indicator, each school as a whole, and all student subgroups with at least 40 members must have a participation rate of 95% or above.

At Gainesville High School the trends in participation rate for all students from 2007-2009 in mathematics and English Language Arts are as follows: 2007 - 99.4% (all subgroups with 95 to 100 % participation); 2008 - 98.4% (all subgroups with 92% to 100 % participation); and 2009 - 99.6% (all subgroups with 95% to 100% participation). The trends in the second indicator of graduation rate from 2007-2009 are as follows: 2007 - 80.7%; 2008 - 77.1%; and 2009 - 73.3%. As for academic performance, the annual measurable objective (AMO) of *meets and exceeds proficiency* for 2008-2009 on the GHS GT was math – 74.90% and English Language Arts – 87.7%.

When looking at the enhanced GHS GT mathematics data from 2007-2009 for students who are full academic year (FAY) from the October to March attendance counts we see the following: 2007 *meets and exceeds proficiency* = 89.7%, and *does not meet proficiency* = 10.3%; 2008 *meets and exceeds proficiency* = 89.4%, and *does not meet proficiency* = 10.6%; and in 2009 *meets and exceeds proficiency* = 89.4%, and *does not meet proficiency* = 10.6%.

When looking at the enhanced GHS GT English Language Arts data from 2007-2009 for students who are full academic year (FAY) from the October to March attendance counts, we see the following: 2007 *meets and exceeds proficiency* = 96.6%, and *does not meet proficiency* = 3.4%; 2008 *meets and exceeds proficiency*= 96.6%, and *does not meet proficiency* = 4%; and in 2009 *meets and exceeds proficiency*= 89.4%, and *does not meet proficiency*= 10.6%.

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) awarded Gainesville High School with a 2008 Silver Award for Highest Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards (96.1%) and a 2008 Gold Award for Greatest Gain in Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Standards (9.26%). Gainesville High School also met eleven out of eleven AYP areas for a Title I school. The 2007-2008 State Report Card data includes data for all students, not just Full Academic Year (FAY) students. Performance highlights list the academic measurement for Gainesville High School that meets or exceeds 80% as follows: 11<sup>th</sup> grade GHS GT English/Language Arts, 97.13% *meeting and exceeding standards*; 11<sup>th</sup> grade GHS GT mathematics, 97.13% *meeting and exceeding standards*; 11<sup>th</sup> grade GHS GT Science, 96% *meeting and exceeding standards*; 11<sup>th</sup> grade GHS GT social studies, 95% *meeting and exceeding standards*; and Georgia High School Writing Test, 94% *meeting and exceeding standards*.

As previously stated, Georgia requires each accredited high school to administer ten, end of course tests (EOCT) in the following subjects: Math I, Math II, Algebra I, Geometry, English I, English III, Physical Science, Biology, United States History and Economics. The performance levels of pass plus, pass, or fail are determined by the Georgia Department of Education. Gainesville High School uses the best practice of pre/post or benchmark testing and the test data shows this, and other practices, are helping the overall student achievement. The following EOCT data lists the percentages of pass and pass plus at Gainesville High School for the school years of 2006/2007; 2007/2008 and 2008/2009: English I - 56%, 62%, 72%; English III - 84%, 88%, 91%; Algebra I (this test ends in the fall 2009) - 74%, 71%, 49%; Geometry (this test ends in the fall 2010) - 55%, 59%, 45%; Biology - 65%, 69%, 74%; Physical Science - 58%, 74%, 74%; United States History - 60%, 58%, 40%; and Economics - 67%, 65%, 75%.

Gainesville High School improvement in the Georgia High School Graduation Test scores can be traced to several programs that have been instituted. A proactive program is the implementation of a junior class fall diagnostic test in each of the four content areas of the GHS GT, and it has been proven effective to determine students who may be at-risk of not being successful on the GHS GT. Over two days, all juniors take these tests. Gainesville High School created four GHS GT content tests through Thinkgate/Elements allowing ease of scoring and access to analysis of data. The Gainesville High School leadership team determines cut-scores to place students in third nine- week GHS GT review classes. Third nine weeks GHS GT review classes are staffed by content specialists and are provided with various resources and tools. Some of the resources are research based state instructional programs. Other resources have been developed by content specialists at Gainesville High School over the past three years. Part of the Gainesville High School website is dedicated solely to resources and tools to prepare for the GHS GT and the GHS WT. Content specialist teachers create practice tests in Georgia On-Line Assessment (OAS) and encourage all students to use USA Test Prep. Writing reviews and other morning and after school reviews are offered several weeks prior to the testing date. An incentive program entitled "Platinum Pride" is used to encourage juniors to meet AYP scores to obtain certain junior and senior class privileges.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

In preparation for the state mandated end of course tests (EOCT), Gainesville High School requires all students in those courses to take common formative assessments in the form of pre/post or benchmark tests. The pre/post or benchmark tests are developed by the Gainesville High School EOCT teachers and administered and scored using an internet based electronic testing system called Thinkgate/Elements. Gainesville High School was one of the first two school systems in Georgia to work with Thinkgate/Elements in the development of proactive assessments. Each test question is correlated to the Georgia Performance

Standards (GPS) and upon completion of each test, data is analyzed to determine individual proficiency performance levels and to determine the individual needs of students. Various levels of intervention are designed from the data. Thinkgate/Elements creates many types of reports so teachers can easily make necessary changes to instructional learning units to address each learner's needs. Students are also active participants in viewing the reports and data so they have more ownership in preparing for the summative EOCT. Teachers who teach the EOCT classes meet regularly to examine data and redesign common learning units that are correlated to the GPS. Instruction is indeed driven by the data. Proficiency reports and data charts are given to the teachers and discussed with Gainesville City Board of Education members and the community. Data/charts are posted on bulletin boards throughout the main lobby area of the high school.

Data is collected and disaggregated and made available to all of the high school staff members and Gainesville City Board of Education members. EOCT teachers particularly focus on the indicators where their students score the lowest each year, and the curriculum is revised to better address these indicators. The data is also used to identify those students needing additional time on certain standards. Administration requires all students not meeting AYP levels on the GHS GT/GHS WT to attend some type of summer review program. The Georgia DOE provides a regional review program entitled ExPreSS, which stands for Extra Preparation for Science and Social Studies. Gainesville High School registers the students for the ExPreSS program and provides transportation to the regional review center. Gainesville High School offers a two- week morning and afternoon review for math and English before the summer GHS GT is administered.

The assessment results are used to improve instruction, correct areas of concern in the curriculum, and identify students who need additional time to be successful. Through the continuous cycle of data assessment and curriculum revision, Gainesville High School meets the diverse needs of the school population.

### **3. Communicating Assessment Results:**

Assessment results are communicated to students, parents, faculty, board of education members and the community through a variety of methods. At the end of each nine weeks, student progress reports are printed and given to each student to take home to his/her parent(s). Daily progress can be monitored and evaluated by the student and his/her family through a "parent portal" available on the school website. A user identification and individual password are provided to each student for privacy purposes.

Each end of course teacher provides student feedback from pre/post or benchmark testing in the form of various reports showing mastery levels of performance on each Georgia Performance Standard (GPS). The Gainesville High School Student Handbook describes state mandated testing procedures and the state of Georgia's Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) releases state test data electronically, and this information is immediately made available to the teachers. This allows for timely teacher feedback to determine necessary levels of intervention.

GHS GT/GHS WT scores are discussed with each individual student via the principal and/or the student's guidance counselor. Each student receives a copy of the score report and an appropriate action plan is created by the student and the counselor if the student did not pass one or more tests. Each GHS GT/GHS WT review teacher receives a copy of the student score report to address the domain areas that were deficient.

Gainesville High School has created a "war room" to keep an updated list of students who must meet assessment needs to graduate in a timely fashion. The faculty is kept informed of the list and provided a list of resources and tools they can use to help students. Gainesville High School administration and staff mentor students on the "at-risk" list to provide extra encouragement and support.

The Gainesville High School website provides a testing calendar, testing information, review items and a list of resources and tools. An automated call program known as ConnectEd is used to call home to provide information on all assessments. Pamphlets and flyers on testing dates and information are made available to

the community and community mentors help to spread the word and to encourage students to do their best. A GHSGT pep rally is held to inform the students and describe the incentive program. Gainesville High School provides data reports and charts placed on the Gainesville City School System website to better inform all stakeholders.

#### **4. Sharing Success:**

The success of Gainesville High School assessment scores is due to the extensive collaboration of the administration, faculty and community. Gainesville High School has a strong and proud tradition in academics and athletics. Much is expected of our administration, faculty, staff and students and much is given.

Some of these progressive ideas have evolved from earlier administrators and/or have been adapted from other school systems. However, Gainesville High School prides itself of being on the cutting edge of educational reform and most importantly, student success. Because of this success, Gainesville High School has shared many of its unique progressive educational methods and ideas with surrounding districts as well. Many schools contact and visit GHS to learn more about the proactive diagnostic testing and pre/post or benchmark testing procedures, as well as other practices that support student success. Teachers on our staff have visited other schools and trained their teachers and administrators on the use of Thinkgate/Elements. Gainesville High School has an open door policy, which invites schools, educators, and educational partners to view educational techniques which help meet the individual needs of each student.

Because of our educational model and techniques Gainesville has been recognized by our Regional Educational Service Agency, the Georgia Department of Education, and U.S. News and World Report. After numerous opportunities to share our model and successes with others, we would be willing to continue to share successful ideas; consequently, we are always striving to find new ways to improve and to reach more students. We believe that we offer exceptional educational opportunities to all of our students, and with the support of the administration and faculty, we offer hope of a better future to students who may not have had that hope before joining our “Big Red Family.”

## PART V - CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

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### 1. Curriculum:

The goal of GHS's vision, "One Gainesville", is to empower each student to reach his or her potential, regardless of ability level, race, socio-economic status or family background. Teachers, parents, students and community members work together to create a positive learning environment and to promote mutual respect and responsibility. It is the desire of Gainesville High School to instill in the student a lifelong love of learning and to prepare students to live in a multi-cultural world. We have structured our project management teams to increase support for all students, families and teachers. Additionally, the Gainesville High faculty and staff are strongly committed to data driven instruction and improvement of student achievement across the curriculum. Best classroom practices submitted by the Gainesville High School faculty have been published, and daily the Gainesville High School faculty demonstrates use of best practices by engaging students in the learning process. Teachers, teaching the same End-of-Course subjects offer the same formative tests, tied to state mandated curriculum strands, which are then aligned with pacing guides and collaborative framework units. Formative testing is maintained by a testing management system titled "Testgate/Elements". This allows all End-of-Course test teachers and students the opportunity to quickly identify areas of weakness and to address those shortfalls, tying instruction to their needs.

Gainesville High School has a tradition of excellence in delivering a relevant, rigorous, and focused curriculum that drives instruction. Gainesville High School has a stringent promotion policy that requires all students to have a specific number and type of credits and courses before promotion. We believe in instruction that matches our diverse student needs. All GHS students are encouraged to take advanced placement (AP) classes. The Gainesville High family believes that an effective school will have high expectations for all students and will encourage them to accept academic challenges. Rigor involves offering a variety of honors, advance placement courses, college prep and technical/career courses which not only develop depth of content and understanding, but also motivate an environment of life-long learning. Each student takes eight classes each year and must graduate with four years of English, math, and social studies and three years of science, two with labs. College prep students must complete two years of a foreign language and one unit of a Fine Arts course and demonstrate computer literacy. Four units in a career technical pathway must be completed for a Technical/Career diploma seal. Next school year, students will be required to take four units of sciences and complete specific available End-of-Pathway exams upon completion of Technical/Career Pathway course work.

GHS has intentional systems to meet the needs of all students--- credit recovery, school based-assistance programs, co-teaching strategies and ELL/ESOL core classes. A traditional block scheduling allows an in-school program of individualized computer-based study that enables each student who has failed a class to complete lost credit. The Credit Recovery program uses a vendor's technology to deliver instruction aligned to the Georgia Performance Standards. Through this educational program, the student can work at his/her own pace in order to achieve maximum comprehension. All students are provided multiple opportunities for intervention before required formative and summative assessments are administered. Through block scheduling, Gainesville High School is able to provide content specific tutorials based on the school data. As a result, these tutorials are relevant to student needs. Electronic tutorials are also offered through our school website. Another way Gainesville High reinforces and supplements instruction, is through a Homework Lab provided before and after school Tuesday through Thursday. Not only does the Homework Lab employ certified teachers in each of the four academic areas for each session, but it also provides a bus for student transportation needs.

Regular and special education teachers co-teach in all core subjects. Regular education teachers provide the foundation in instruction while special education teachers provide supplemental instruction, all standards

based and data driven. This occurs inside the classroom and may entail one-on-one instruction, re-teaching, or the use of visual representation and oral language to supplement written material and thereby scaffold students' learning. In content areas where a co-teacher offers instruction, he or she joins the relevant department meetings. ELL/ESOL classes are offered in all core academic areas and are taught by ELL/ESOL endorsed teachers.

Math I and II, the new state integrated math curriculum, focuses on high level problem solving and teachers supplement with manipulative, relevant hands-on activities and real world applications that internalize key concepts. Common planning periods for math teachers provide time for collaboration so they may address student intervention and instructional needs. GHS utilizes supplemental materials and programs to enhance student learning and takes time to re-teach standards when students indicate a lack of proficiency. Gainesville High School, like all Georgia public schools, has adopted the Georgia performance standards for mathematics. The standards have been designed to achieve a balance among concepts, skills, and problem solving. The curriculum stresses rigorous concept development, presents realistic and relevant tasks, and keeps a strong emphasis on computational skills. Our school encourages students to reason mathematically, to evaluate mathematical arguments both formally and informally, to use the language of mathematics to communicate ideas and information precisely, and to connect mathematical topics with other disciplines. To ensure student success, Gainesville High's math department makes possible several options for each grade level including accelerated math, math taught in one semester, and math with a concurrent 'support' class which reinforces and forecasts topics in the course.

GHS is focused on not only on meeting individual students needs but also on simultaneously developing talents and abilities. The arts are fundamental in developing individuals with creativity, positive self worth, and appropriate social skills. Students who participate in the Gainesville High arts program enhance learning opportunities in other areas through developing thinking skills and service learning. The Arts and Humanities curriculum has been recognized internationally. Our Fine Arts program actively participates in a national Characters Through the Arts program and Georgia Learn Serve. The purpose of Character through the Arts is to integrate arts agencies/teaching artists and Artful Learning ("Bernstein Model) while Georgia Learn and Serve promotes application of learning to service to one's community. Both are explicitly designed to integrate proven character education strategies with the arts by promoting character growth, community service, and academic growth in all subject areas. A bank of thematic lessons and learning activities has been teacher created, evaluated, and posted on our educational resource center (Pioneer Regional Educational Service Agency). Examples of the learning activities are visible and useful on the Gainesville High School campus: Outdoor Classroom/Sundial, Kudzu Garden Project, and Project Greenhouse. Other Gainesville City Schools use our Character Through the Arts and Service Learning centers to enhance student learning and as a model for integrating these ideas into their own curriculum.

## **2b. (Secondary Schools) English:**

(This question is for secondary schools only)

The goal of the English curriculum at Gainesville High School is to meet the needs of a diverse population of students. In order to meet this goal, the English department has developed a variety of courses in alignment with national and state standards. Each course has clearly defined objectives but all integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking in order to reinforce communication skills across the curriculum. Standards based, the curriculum reflects a focus not only on basic comprehension skills but also on understanding the structures of the various genres and inherent literary devices authors use to create meaning. To develop more proficient writers, different modes of writing, narration, persuasion, exposition, and description are practiced in each course along with the steps of the writing process. Reinforcement of the conventions of writing and grammar is an integral part of this process. Students are challenged to compose for a variety of purposes and thereby expand their formal and informal expression. The English curriculum also develops competent speakers through oral presentations, group discussions, and individual student responses. With course progression, the

level of complexity increases in all levels of reading, writing, listening and speaking in order to develop students' deeper understanding of the literature and also to develop higher level critical thinking skills.

Since Gainesville High School has a diverse student body with varying needs, the English curriculum provides courses to meet those challenges. For the accelerated student, the department offers two different advanced placement English courses with five certified advanced placement teachers. Pre-AP or honors classes are also offered to provide a strong background and preparation for the advanced placement courses. Additionally, courses such as Contemporary Literature and a structured Independent Study provide other options for the college prep and honors student. To meet the needs of students who read below grade level, the English department has developed an outstanding program to scaffold these students' learning. As eighth graders, at-risk students are identified, and as ninth graders, they are placed in a year-long intensive reading class having a certified teacher and a paraprofessional. Teachers are empowered with flexibility to select instructional materials that meet the needs of individual students in these small classes. Intensive reading teachers use a variety of high interest, low vocabulary level reading materials including adaptations of classic novels and short stories. Audio versions of novels and texts are available for students with decoding deficiencies. Teachers utilize read-aloud, paired reading, and frequent comprehension checks to ensure student progress. Additional practice with contextual vocabulary words is important also to ensure comprehension input. Students receive an elective credit the first semester and an English credit the second semester for the Intensive Reading English. The success rate with this structured program has been outstanding. With a large number of English Language Learners at Gainesville High, the English department has four certified ESOL teachers within the department. For the students reading below grade level, the English teachers work with the ESOL department to purchase appropriate texts, audio materials and supplies. These students also have resource classes in reading and writing to reinforce these skills often including practices in English with computer programs.

Other strategies used by the English department to meet the needs of students reading below grade level include individual teacher support with online practices for specific courses, end-of-course tests, the SAT and the Georgia High School Graduation Test. Additionally, teachers post their homework and daily assignments on "Homework Hotline" so students have access to the materials outside of class and at school. An English teacher is also available for the school's Homework Lab both before and after school. For students who have failed an English class with a least a 60, the school has provided a credit recovery lab with a certified English teacher in charge of the program. A variety of study skills classes are also offered in connection with the special education department and English teachers work cooperatively with the special education teachers to assist students with reading weaknesses in the special education program. Reinforcement includes differentiated instruction, individual tutoring, and resource classes.

With materials, the English department has a generous supply of ancillary materials such as EOCT and graduation test preparatory books, adapted texts, and readers based on the standard text used for each class. Since weak reading skills often indicate poor writing skills, the English department uses a reading and writing "blitz" before the graduation tests. This entails pulling out the at risk students from an elective class usually a week before the test and having English teachers tutor these students during a planning period. The English department communicates regularly about students reading below grade level and shares effective strategies as well. Being cognizant of the varying needs of all our students, the English department has developed its curriculum to prepare all students for the challenge of post secondary endeavors.

### **3. Additional Curriculum Area:**

At Gainesville High School we employ a variety of techniques and services to meet the growing needs of our diverse students. Our methods have proven fruitful throughout the years, as we continue to be successful and meet the expectations of the Gainesville City School System and the state of Georgia. As a system, we believe in "One Gainesville", a motto that has helped us move forward in closing the achievement gaps between students. Within the science department, courses have been vertically aligned, beginning with middle grades

life and physical science and continuing on through high school environmental and physical science, biology, chemistry and physics. Our standards are currently being realigned as we integrate grades 3-5 in the upcoming school year.

The science department has also bridged a gap between departments by coordination with other departments in the school by creating cross-curriculum guidelines for student success. This includes the use of technology, reading, math and social sciences within our science classes.

Within each science classroom, our teachers have access to more than 10 student computers, a mounted projector, a smart-board, interactive writing pads, and the use of student electronic response systems. This use of technology has not only helped to carry our students and teachers into and beyond the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it has also helped us achieve such outstanding awards as the National Title 1 Distinguished School Award.

The science department also works in conjunction with the math, technology, and art departments to participate in the Character through the Arts Program. Together, these departments have been recognized for successfully completing and finishing several projects on campus, including a sundial, analemma, and sitting area. Students, teachers, and the community have enjoyed the end product of these cooperative projects.

The science department also works in cross-curricular assignments to improve student comprehension and reading skills. All students are given weekly reading assignments recommended by the reading specialist. The students choose from several articles that relate to math, science, and health and have specific, directed reading assignments to complete. This program has proven especially successful for students who need additional help understanding vocabulary words often associated with school and standardized science tests, as well as helping students who need to expand daily vocabulary use.

The science department was also one of our first to include a mentor program for struggling students. Science teachers continue to offer online tutorials and assessments to students who need additional remedial work for classes and graduation test preparation. Throughout the years, we have seen significant increases in student progress on system and state mandated tests, as well as a significant increase in our overall graduation rate. As "One Gainesville," we will continue to strive for high expectations in order to better our students' overall education and to guarantee their success in life.

#### **4. Instructional Methods:**

Gainesville High School implements a curriculum based on clear and measurable goals and expectations for student learning. Opportunities are provided for students to acquire requisite knowledge and skills as a foundation for lifelong learning. Gainesville High School supports a curriculum that challenges and meets the needs of each student, reflects a commitment to equity, and demonstrates an appreciation of diversity. The school implements diverse interventions to assist students in achieving success in their academic and personal goals.

Innovative programs which serve the diverse school population are utilized for optimum student achievement. The needs of an increasing English Language Learner population are addressed in many ways. An ELL computer lab, utilizing the Rosetta Stone Program, gives students optimum exposure to English and provides appropriate accommodations for testing and class work. An ESL School Improvement Specialist works with ELL students in academic classrooms to provide language and vocabulary support. Beginner and Intermediate ELL classes offer opportunities for the optimum success of each student. The Academic Coach organizes tutorial sessions for students in preparation for standardized testing. ACT and SAT support is offered by the Guidance Office with a Kaplan Class available at no cost.

Career development is addressed through guidance counselor advisement, informal and formal interest inventories, and selected course offerings. Career related course offerings include Apprenticeship, Job

Shadowing, Certified Nurses' Assistant, and Early Childhood Teacher Apprenticeship. Field trips are planned to familiarize students with opportunities available to them outside the high school setting. The Dual Enrollment Program and Advanced Placement classes provide students with more rigorous course options with on-line classes through E-2020 and Georgia Virtual School allowing expanded course offerings. Classroom teachers afford gifted students opportunities to participate in challenging activities and projects. Credit recovery classes are available for students lacking course credits needed to fulfill high school graduation requirements. An alternative academy serves students who are eligible to remain in the regular classroom, but are more likely to succeed in a nontraditional setting.

Student Support Services (SpEd) offer inclusion classes ensuring full exposure to the curriculum while giving regular and special education teachers needed support for success. Resource rooms provide individualized instruction and offer enhanced opportunities in reading, math, and study skills. A Test Lab, with a permanent full-time staff member, provides accommodations based on the student's Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan, and a secure environment for testing. A free homework lab for all students provided both before and after school, includes a special education teacher, an ELL teacher, and regular education teachers in each of the four academic areas. Individual plans are developed and implemented detailing transition to the postsecondary setting. Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Ready personnel from the Ga. Dept. of Labor provide services to our students twice weekly, assisting with transition to higher education, job placement, and job training. Mild and moderate intellectually delayed students are provided job training at Rehabilitative Industries of Northeast Georgia with support from paraprofessional and CTI staff. Gainesville Breakfast Club is composed of students from the MI/MO classroom who plan, purchase, prepare, and serve lunch to the entire faculty and staff in a restaurant type setting. Additional training and learning opportunities are provided through the seasonal greenhouse program, The Little Red Potting Shed. Both these programs are student led and provide many opportunities for success. Additionally, Premier Technology Software is available to all regular and special education students and has replaced the need for multiple software programs. Autism Spectrum Disorder students are encouraged to attend a social skills training session offered twice monthly. A retired guidance counselor and a SpEd teacher host these sessions during a lunch provided for them by various community groups.

In 2009, Gainesville High School partnered with Rehabilitation Industries of Northeast Georgia (RING) to begin a tutoring program specific to GHS students. The program, dubbed "MP3 Tutoring" is an after school program (MP3) that incorporates needed academic assistance as well as job readiness skills and training in preparation of their continued success and transition from high school. The program is supported by referrals from Gainesville High School and a grant from the City of Gainesville.

Gainesville High School continues to develop programs that address the diverse needs of all students and enhance their global awareness. The school staff implements research-based strategies for student learning. Instructional methods are used to facilitate achievement, allow for differentiation, and provide interventions based on individual student needs.

## **5. Professional Development:**

In reaching Gainesville's High School's vision of "One Gainesville", staff development days are built into the school year calendar. Staff development days are devoted to empowering each teacher to become his/her best to improve student achievement. Across curriculum, integrated project management teams, content specific departmental teams, and individual professionals continuously study and learn new techniques to provide students with current effective learning practices in education. On a regular basis, various teams receive books to read that focus on best classroom practices. Implementations of best practices are then evaluated by project managers, department heads or administrators. Some best practices are as follows: use of unit word walls in the classroom, standards and standards checklists post in the classroom, daily agendas with essential questions in the classroom and examples of exemplary student work displayed in the classroom.

Faculty and department meetings are forums for discussing trends, data, best practices and evaluation of achievement and driven by our school data from our School Improvement Plan. Pioneer Regional Educational Service provides various professional learning programs correlated to our teacher and student needs determined from school on-line surveys, feedback of teacher evaluations and data analysis on performance standards. Because of the diversity of our student population, much of our professional learning units are centered around differentiated instruction ( three year program of study), higher order thinking, co-teaching for math 1 and response to intervention. One of the major end products of our professional staff development is M.A.G.I. C. (Making Assessment Gains In the Classroom). Each academic department has posted on-line performance based instructional units. The Gainesville High School Fine Arts department also posts on-line many Character Through the Arts thematic instructional units integrating character, academia, and service learning.

The faculty is strongly encouraged and rewarded to meet reading, gifted, AP and ESOL endorsements to meet the needs of our diverse learners. The Georgia Department of Education, surrounding colleges/universities and our regional service area provide all needed professional endorsement requirements.

Our counselors attend state, regional, and national conferences to enhance professional development in programs that will help create new opportunities for GHS students.

## **6. School Leadership:**

At all levels, Gainesville High School is governed using the simple concept of the 3R's: Respect, Restraint, and Responsibility. The leadership team believes that if these qualities are modeled, expected and rewarded, then a positive school climate will result. The leadership of Gainesville High is composed of experienced, highly qualified administrators. The principal is a twenty-four year veteran educator in his twelfth year of administration; the Freshman Academy principal is a fifteen year veteran in his first year of administration; the Career and Technology principal is also a veteran educator with four years of administration; the Arts and Science administrator is a thirteen year educator in his first year of administration; the administrator for Curriculum and Scheduling is a twenty-three year veteran in her third year of administration. Because of the varying backgrounds of this administrative team, they provide a communicative, productive team and provide a balance of leadership styles. One major focus of the leadership team at Gainesville High School is the fostering of positive relationships not only between teacher and student but also between administrators and students. In order to ensure these relationships, an advisor/advisee contact is an important part. For example, each faculty member is assigned a small group of students and during specified times, students will meet with the advisor in order to discuss needs, goals, and concerns with a caring, patient adult. As a result, students at Gainesville High have an adult with a continued interest in his/her development both inside and outside the classroom from entrance into the school until graduation.

Another area of focus at Gainesville High School is the creation of a trusting environment. Counselors play a vital role in this area as they are required to hold annual conferences with the student and his or her parents to outline goals, check academic progress, and specify course sequences. One theme at Gainesville High is the demonstration of 100% CARE to our constituents. Because the staff strives to help all students become involved and desires academic success for all students, incentives are published to the students to make them aware of positive reinforcements with testing success. Examples include issuing Platinum Pride Cards; these are awarded to students who attain a "Pass Plus" in all areas of the Georgia High School Graduation Test. These cards provide students with discounts in a number of community stores and restaurants. Additionally, these student achievers are given free admission to sporting events and dances throughout the school year. This simple gesture has paid excellent dividends without costing the school financially. Another incentive for our students is the "Principal's Straight 'A' " club; students who qualify are taken to lunch at a local restaurant during their lunch period. With financing coming out of the "coke funds" from the school, this outing is also an excellent motivator for student achievement. Initially, the club only had 51 students the first semester it was offered, but by the second semester, 136 students qualified. This incentive has continued to be

a favorite of the leadership team and students as well. The leadership team also believes in a positive morale within the faculty and providing a sense of family. To accomplish this, each Friday the administration provides food for each faculty member.

Of great importance to the leadership staff is the quest for all students to achieve success on the first administration of the Georgia High School Graduation Test. In order to achieve this, each department administers its own simulated graduation test. If students fail to reach the determined cut score for passing, they are placed in an intensive remediation course for the area of deficiency. Each department has experienced great success using this practice test as a diagnostic tool to identify and intervene with the “at-risk” student. Students who are not successful on the graduation tests with the first try are given a quarter of remediation prior to the re-test. This is accomplished by placing the student in the remediation class in lieu of an elective course. Results using this remediation technique have been successful. In order to further scaffold this at-risk group of students, the leadership of Gainesville High provides mentors. For example, each administrator has three assigned students, each homeroom teacher, coaches, and counselors all mentor students who have not passed any part of the graduation test. These mentors are required to meet with their students, plan strategies for study and preparation, and provide encouragement for the students. To maximize success before the test dates, Gainesville High School provides a GHS GT “BLITZ” a week prior to testing in order to review core concepts, ideas, and skills. Students are removed from elective courses and placed with an academic teacher during his/her planning period in order to review for the exams. Each junior class student is required to attend these review sessions. To ensure all students have received adequate reviews, prior to administration of the specific test of each day, specific Gainesville High faculty provide a 30- minute review with the focus on that day’s test. Through these multi-layered reviews, students have opportunities to practice test questions numerous times thereby ensuring their first time success rate.

One of the most important qualities of the leadership staff at Gainesville High School is in its high expectations of all students. Because of that, students are encouraged to take honors and advanced placement courses and to prepare for college or post-secondary studies by taking the SAT and ACT without pre-established criteria. The administration also encourages students to become involved in the many clubs, sports, and extracurricular opportunities that Gainesville High has to offer. In addition to being a deterrent to discipline issues, these activities also foster shining “points of pride” as students develop confidence, poise, maturity and post-secondary opportunities.

Since Gainesville High School is a charter school, one of the major components of the organization is the Governing Council. Composed of seven members, this group is comprised of teachers, business leaders, parents, and administrators. This group is charged with a number of responsibilities including overseeing of school operations, reviewing and recommending applicants for leadership positions, and approving programs prior to their inception. They also have the option of making recommendations to the Gainesville City Schools’ Board of Education. The board is comprised of five elected members and a superintendent who is hired by the board of education membership. Both the board and the superintendent are highly supportive of Gainesville High School at all levels. These groups are enhanced by the outstanding community support Gainesville High School receives and reflect another philosophy of the leadership team: “it takes a village to raise a child”.



Subject: Reading

Grade:  
11

Test: Georgia High School Graduation Test

Edition/Publication Year: 2004-2009

Publisher: Georgia Department of Education

	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Pass	98	97	98	97	96
Pass Plus	63	72	73	74	64
Number of students tested	232	174	197	222	241
Percent of total students tested	99	99	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	7	5	3	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	3	2	1	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Socio-Economic Disadvantaged/Free and Reduced-Price Meal Students</b>					
Pass	96	95	97	95	96
Pass Plus	55	66	54	64	47
Number of students tested	121	80	89	102	94
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Pass	96	95	97	96	94
Pass Plus	33	52	57	67	50
Number of students tested	57	44	42	52	54
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Pass	97	98	96	94	91
Pass Plus	54	70	57	53	38
Number of students tested	80	46	54	73	72
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Pass	100	0	92	92	94
Pass Plus	77	0	77	54	47
Number of students tested	13	0	13	13	15
<b>5. Limited English Proficient Students</b>					
Pass	0	0	82	87	86
Pass Plus	0	0	9	27	18
Number of students tested	0	0	11	15	40
<b>6. Largest Other Subgroup</b>					
Pass					
Pass Plus					
Number of students tested					

Notes:

**Alternate Assessments** - Students receiving Special Education Diplomas. 2004-2005: Zero students received alternate assessments. Less than Five Years of Data Supplied: #4. Special Education Students 2007-2008 - Less than 10 students. #5. Limited English Proficient Students 2008-2009 & 2007-2008 - Less than 10 students.