

Study: Georgia teachers guilty of ‘grade inflation’

By [HEATHER VOGELL](#)

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Teachers statewide are much easier on high school students than the state’s mandatory End of Course Tests, a study released today by state education officials found.

For most of the eight subjects tested in 2007, the percentage of students who failed the standardized exam was two to three times higher than the percentage who failed the class. The most startling disparity was in economics: While nearly 36 percent of students failed the test, only about 6 percent failed the class.

End of Course Tests account for 15 percent of students’ class grades, suggesting the gap between test scores and teacher-given grades is even larger.

“Both EOCTs and course grades are based on the same state standards, so we should expect general alignment between the two,” said Kathleen Mathers, executive director of the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, in a news release. The office commissioned the statistical study from Chris Clark, a Georgia College and State University professor.

For some districts, the study reveals either pervasive grade inflation or grading so tough that some students who ace the End of Course Tests are still struggling to maintain class grades high enough to qualify for the state’s merit-based HOPE scholarship.

Individual district and subject results, plus the research study, can be viewed at: www.gaosa.org/research.aspx.