

Assessment Brief

Number 7

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STANDARDS OF LEARNING TESTS ANNUAL DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

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ABSTRACT

Eighty-one of eighty-two Virginia Beach City Public Schools were projected to earn full accreditation based on data from 2007-2008. Passing rates for English, mathematics, history, and science increased or remained steady over the past five years on the elementary level, with the exception of grade 5 history, which showed a steady decline of 8 percentage points from 2004 to 2008. Middle school passing rates in the core areas (English, mathematics, and science) have either remained stable or steadily increased over the past five years. There was a decrease noted in grade 8 mathematics from spring 2004 to spring 2006. The high school passing rates in the core areas have fluctuated over the past five years, with six end-of-course (EOC) tests remaining at or over 89%, four EOC tests remaining at or over 84%, and two EOC tests at or increasing to over 80%.

BACKGROUND

The Standards of Learning (SOL) for Virginia public schools describe the commonwealth's expectations for student learning and achievement in grades K-12 in English, mathematics, science, history/social science, technology, the fine arts, foreign languages, health and physical education, and driver education. Students participate in state-mandated assessments in the core areas of English, mathematics, history/social science, and science.

In 1995, the first SOLs were approved by the Virginia Board of Education. The first SOL tests were administered in 1998. Student achievement continues to increase across all subject areas. Students in secondary schools take online versions as well as paper/pencil forms of the SOL tests. Elementary students participate in SOL testing using paper/pencil versions of the test. Virginia Beach City Public Schools continues to provide the highest quality instruction to ensure the success of every child in the division.

Key Topics:

Percent Passing: Elementary p. 2

Percent Passing: Middle p. 3

Percent Passing EOC: High School p. 5

METHODOLOGY

The Virginia Beach City Public Schools data summarized herein were extracted from the district's data warehouse after SOL scores were linked to student demographic records. The scores used in the SOL percent passing for all levels were unadjusted. Substitute testers, retakers, and Virginia Alternative Assessment Program (VAAP) were excluded from these results. Virginia Grade Level Assessment (VGLA) were included in these results. Center students (Center for Effective Learning, Virginia Beach Central Academy, and Open Campus) are included in the division summary results shared in this report.

OVERALL PERCENTILE RANKS

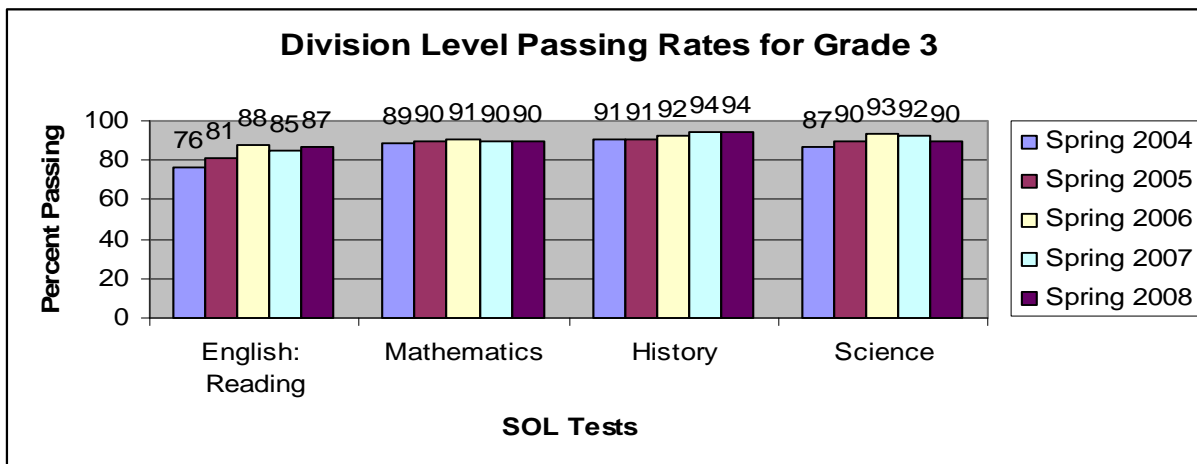
Spring 2004, Spring 2005, Spring 2006, Spring 2007, Spring 2008

Percent Passing: Elementary

Grade 3

As seen in Figure 1, grade 3 English has shown the greatest fluctuation over the past five years. The division level English passing rate for grade 3 increased 11 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008. Passing rates in grade 3 mathematics remained steady from spring 2004 to spring 2008. History passing rates remained relatively stable and increased 3 percentage points from 2004 to 2008. Division level passing rates for science showed a little fluctuation over the past five years, but increased 3 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008.

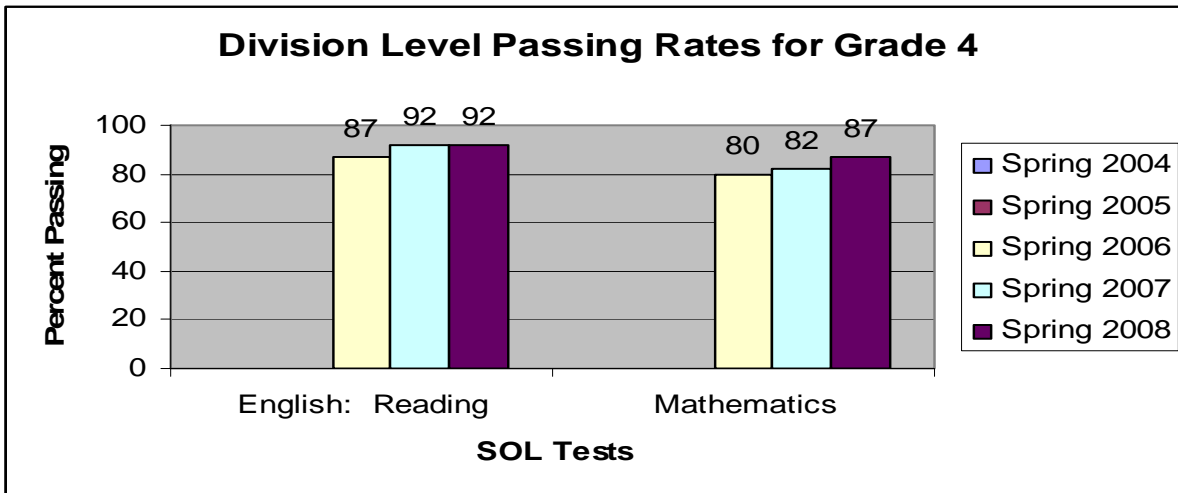
Figure 1



Grade 4

Grade 4 English: Reading and mathematics tests were first administered statewide during the spring 2006 test administration. The division level passing rate for grade 4 English: Reading increased from 87% to 92% and from 80% to 87% for grade 4 mathematics over the past three years. The division level English: Reading passing rate, as shown in Figure 2, increased 5 percentage points from spring 2006 to spring 2008, while the division level mathematics passing rate increased 7 percentage points in the same time period.

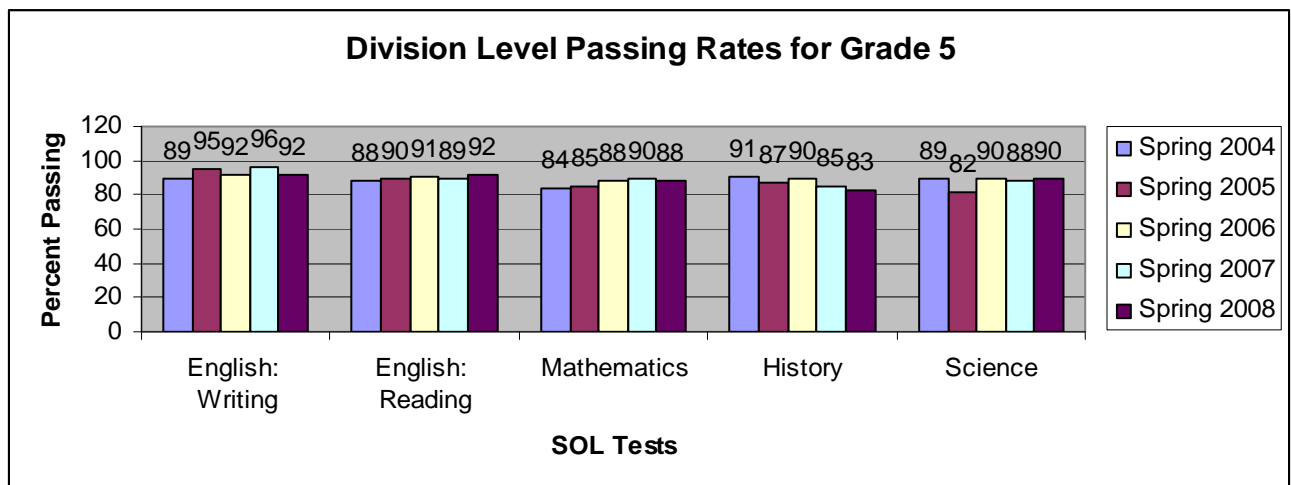
Figure 2



Grade 5

Figure 3 denotes the division level passing rates for grade 5 SOL tests. The division level passing rate for grade 5 English: Writing has ranged from 89% to 96% over the past five years. The division level English: Writing passing rate decreased 4 percentage points from 96% in spring 2007 to 92% in spring 2008. Passing rates in grade 5 English: Reading increased 4 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008. The passing rate for grade 5 mathematics increased steadily by 1 percentage point to 3 percentage points each year until spring 2008 in which the scores decreased 2 points, from 90% to 88%. There has been a steady decline in grade 5 history (8 percentage points) over the past five years. With the exception of spring 2005, the passing rate for grade 5 science ranged from 88% to 90%.

Figure 3

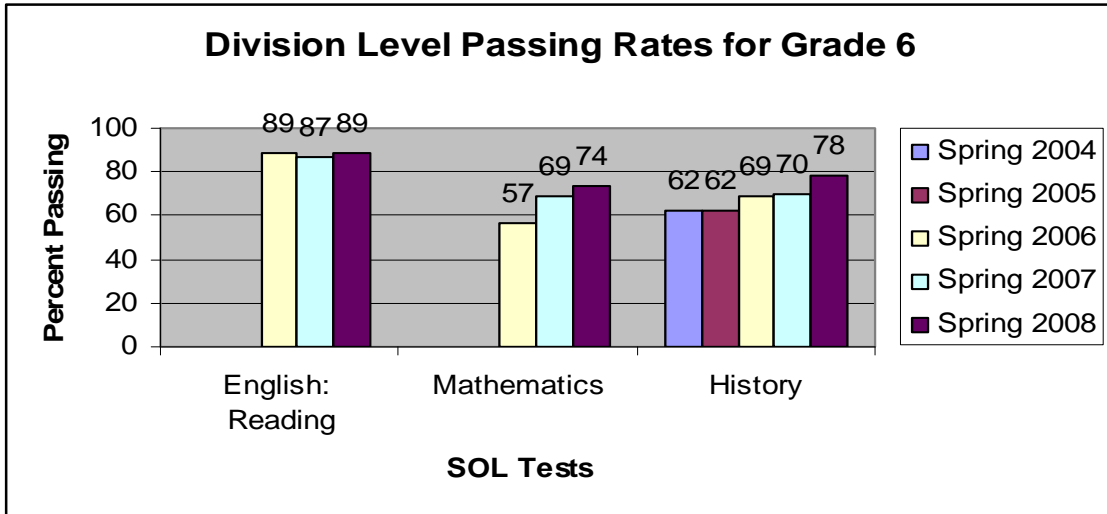


Percent Passing: Middle

Grade 6

Grade 6 English: Reading and mathematics tests were first administered in spring 2006. Figure 4 depicts the division level passing rates for grade 6 SOL tests. English: Reading passing rates have remained stable over the past three years. Grade 6 mathematics and history scores have been consistently lower than scores in reading. The division level mathematics scores for grade 6 have shown an increase of 17 percentage points over the past three years. The division level history passing rate for grade 6 increased 16 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008 and 8 percentage points from last year. Spring 2008 had the highest passing rates for all subjects in grade 6.

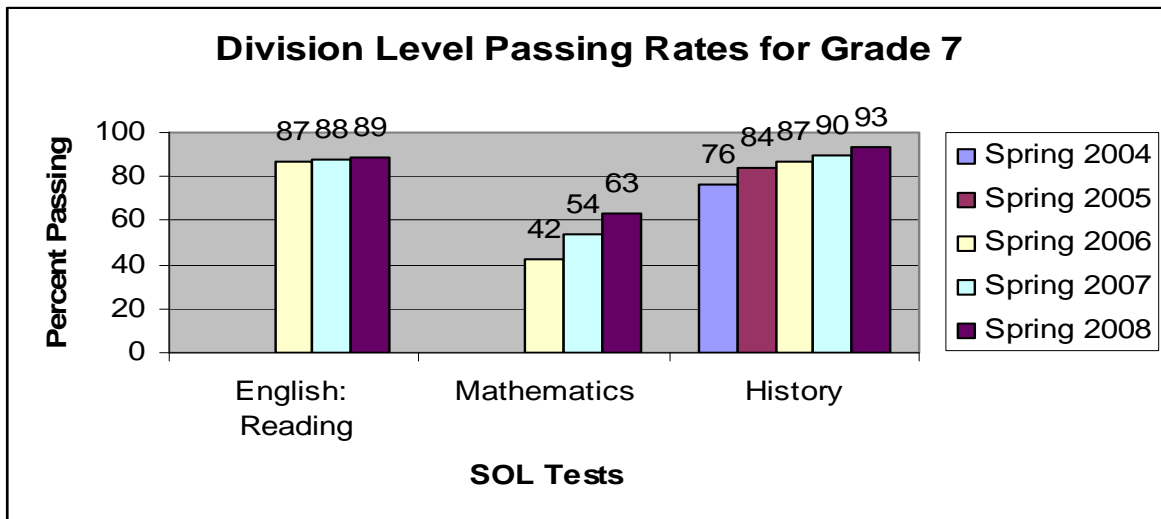
Figure 4



Grade 7

Grade 7 English: Reading and mathematics tests were first administered in spring 2006. As noted in Figure 5, the division level passing rate for grade 7 English: Reading increased from 87% to 89% over the past three years. While mathematics scores in grade 7 have been consistently low, the greatest increases in passing rates have occurred in mathematics. The division level mathematics passing rate increased 21 percentage points from spring 2006 to spring 2008. The passing rate for spring 2008 was 63%, an increase of 9 percentage points from the previous year. In addition, history passing rates for grade 7 increased 17 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008 and 3 percentage points from last year.

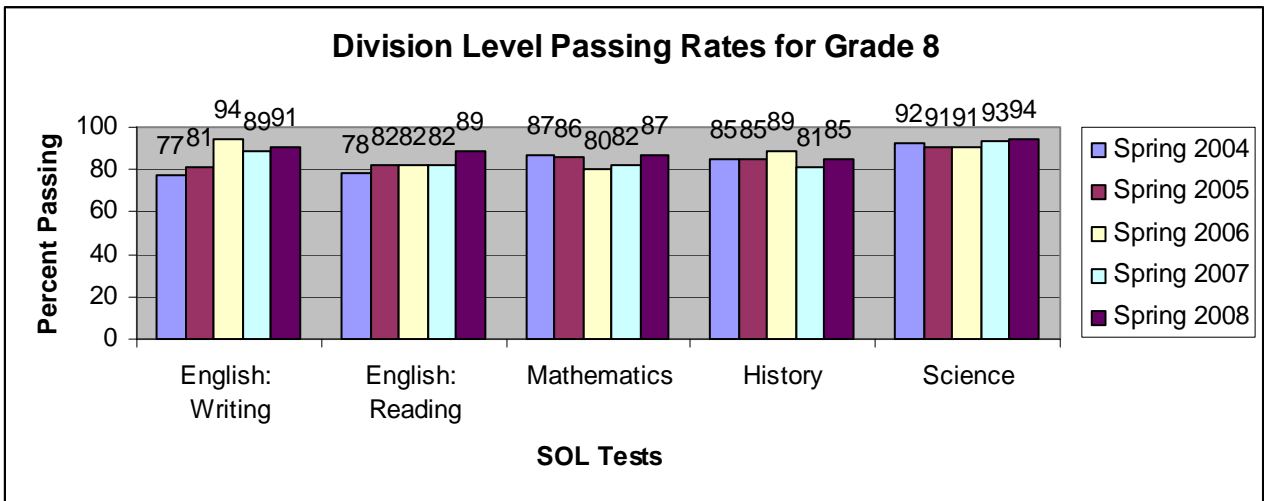
Figure 5



Grade 8

Figure 6 depicts division level passing rates for grade 8 SOL tests. The division level English: Writing passing rate for grade 8 increased 14 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008, but decreased 5 percentage points between spring 2006 and spring 2007. Grade 8 English: Reading has increased 11 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008 and increased 7 percentage points from last year. Grade 8 mathematics scores have shown slight fluctuations with a decrease of 7 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2006 and an increase of 7 percentage points in the last two years. The passing rate for grade 8 history increased 4 percentage points from last year, while the division level passing rate for grade 8 science ranged from 91% to 94% over the past five years. The science passing rate for spring 2008 was the highest at 94%.

Figure 6

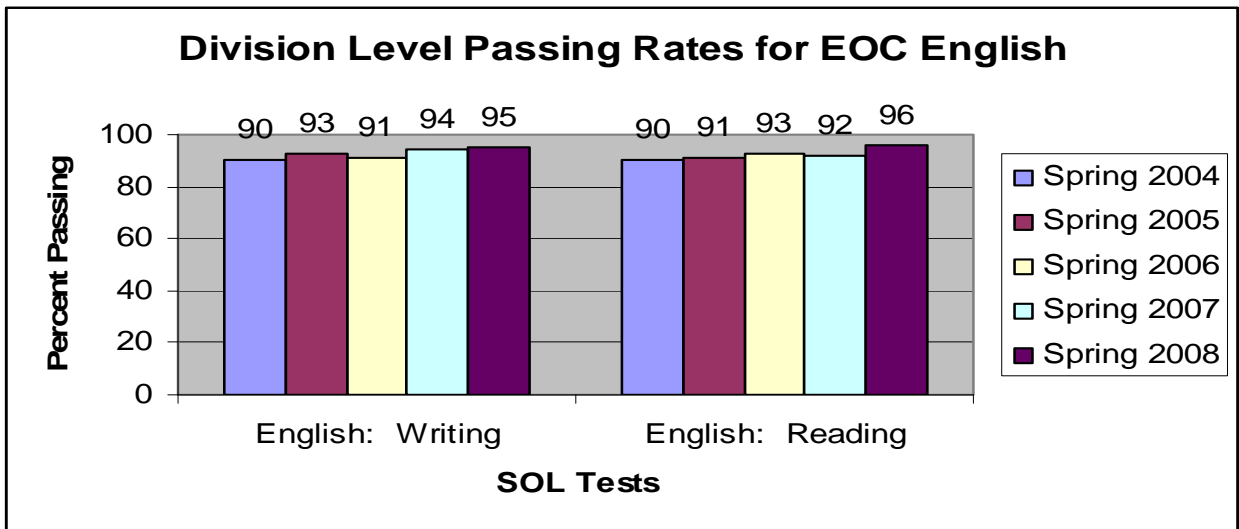


Percent Passing EOC: High School

English

The division level passing rates for English: Writing and English: Reading have remained stable over the past five years as noted in Figure 7 below. The division level English: Writing passing rate increased 5 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008, while the division level English: Reading passing rate increased 6 percentage points from spring 2004 to spring 2008 and increased 4 percentage points from spring 2007 to spring 2008. The passing rates have stayed at or over 90% from spring 2004 to spring 2008.

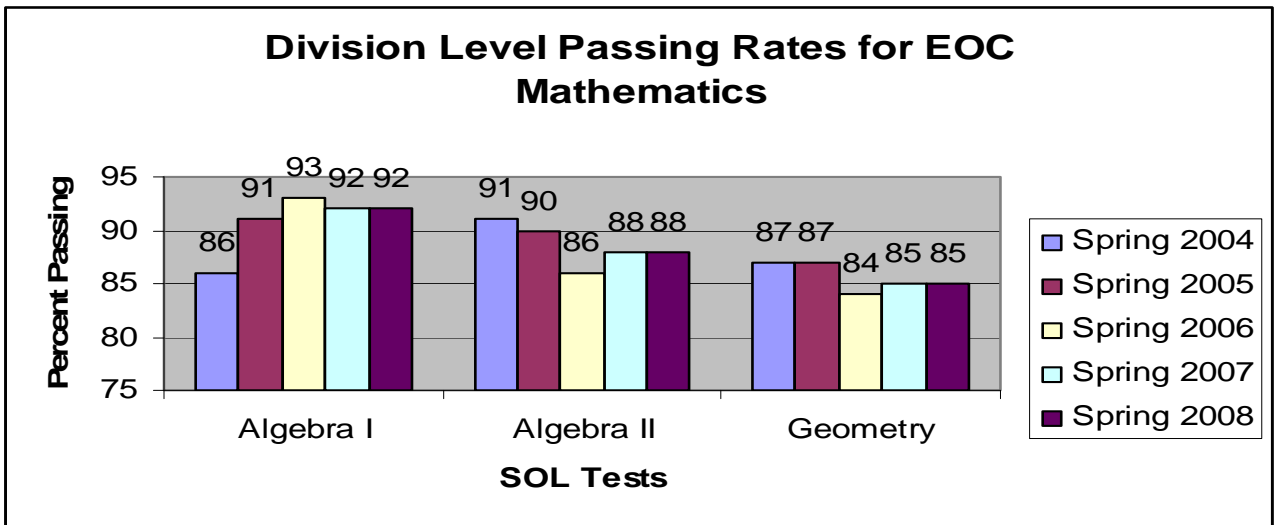
Figure 7



Mathematics

The division level passing rate for Algebra I increased from 86% to 93% over the past five years. While the division level passing rate for Algebra II decreased 3 percentage points from spring 2004 (91%) to spring 2008 (88%), the passing rate decreased steadily from spring 2004 (91%) to spring 2006 (86%) and then increased to 88% during spring 2007 and spring 2008. Geometry passing rates declined in spring 2006, but have remained relatively steady over the past three years.

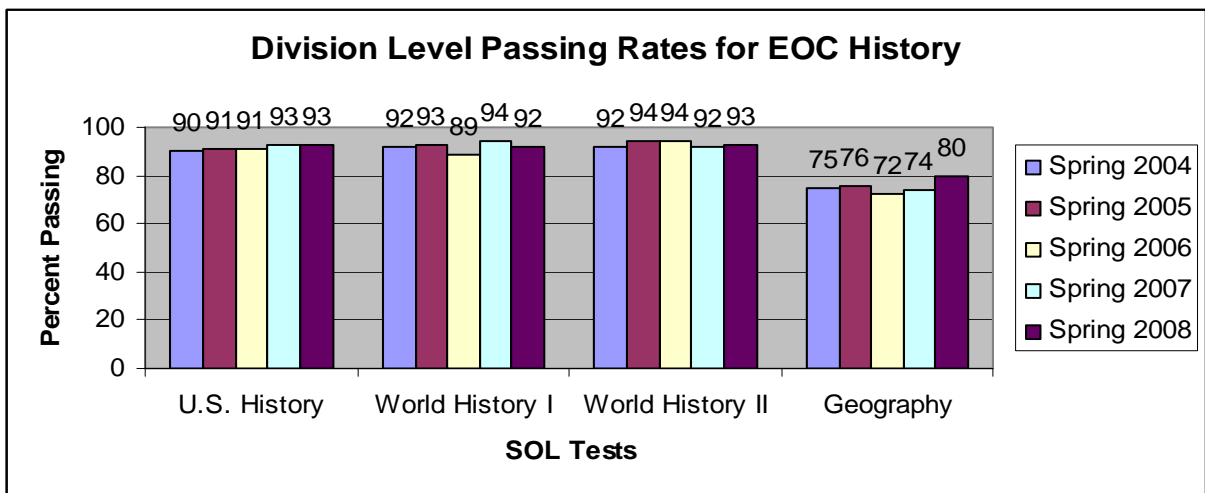
Figure 8



History

Figure 9 denotes the division level passing rates for EOC History SOL tests. The division level passing rates for U.S. History, World History I, and World History II have been relatively stable over the past five years. The division level passing rates for World Geography ranged from 72% to 80% over the past five years and have consistently been the lowest of the history and social science scores.

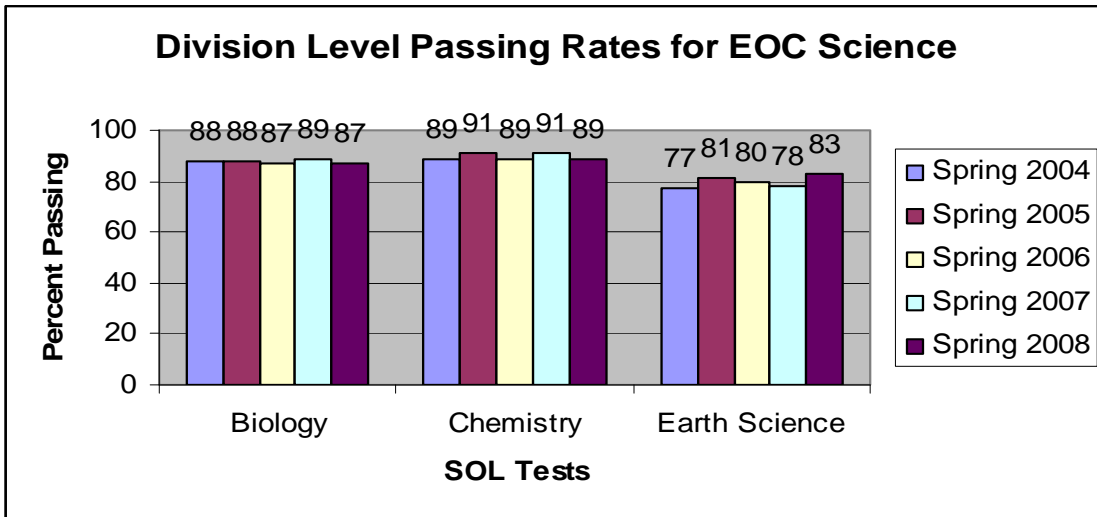
Figure 9



Science

The division level passing rate for Biology has remained stable over the past five years. The passing rate for Chemistry has fluctuated slightly over the past five years and decreased 2 percentage points from last year. The passing rate for Earth Science has shown a significant change, as depicted in Figure 10, with an increase of 6 percentage points from spring 2004 (77%) to spring 2008 (83%).

Figure 10



Summary

Overall, division level passing rates for English, mathematics, history, and science increased or remained steady over the past five years on the elementary level. Grade 5 history is the exception for elementary as it showed a steady decline of 8 percentage points from 2004 to 2008. Middle school passing rates in the core areas have either remained stable or steadily increased. There was a decrease noted in grade 8 mathematics from spring 2004 to spring 2006. The high school passing rates in the core areas have fluctuated over the past years, with six EOC tests remaining at or above 89%, four EOC tests remaining at or over 84%, and two EOC tests at or increasing to over 80% in the past five years.