

2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

Executive Summary

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) is a portfolio assessment designed to measure progress toward achieving New Jersey's state educational standards for those students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in grade 3 and grade 4 (NJ ASK3 and NJ ASK4), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), or the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). APA students in grades 5-7 will be assessed beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

The 2006 APA was administered in grades 4, 8, and 11 in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science; and Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grade 3. Evidence of student performance as demonstrated in the student portfolio was collected from October 24, 2005, through March 1, 2006, during instructional activities for the 2005-2006 school year. Work samples exemplified each student's abilities as they relate to the standards and to the student's individual education program goals and objectives. A total of 4,174 students were evaluated by the 2006 APA. Of these, 3,362 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 3,128 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 2,261 students had valid Science scores. Valid score indicates an earned proficiency level based on entry scores. When entries are deemed unscorable, the proficiency level is reported as void instead. Proficiency levels and voids are assigned by content areas. Therefore, a student may receive a void in one content area but a proficiency level in another content area.

The APA results are reported as proficiency levels. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, APA proficiency levels were combined with the other New Jersey state assessment results for state and federal accountability. The APA proficiency levels are parallel with other New Jersey state assessment programs. The APA portfolios are classified into the following proficiency levels for each content area:

- **Advanced Proficient** - indicates that the portfolio exceeded the level of proficiency in the content area.
- **Proficient** - means that the portfolio met the state level of proficiency in the content area.
- **Partially Proficient** - indicates that the portfolio is below the state minimum level of proficiency.

Portfolios were scored using a rubric designed to measure student performance and program components in areas identified as important in the education of students with significant disabilities. Results of the program level and student progress may be reviewed by schools and districts to identify strengths and weaknesses in their educational programs, and to determine whether programmatic changes and/or additional instructional support are required.

The student progress score for each content area is classified into three levels:

- Substantial Progress
- Considerable Progress
- Minimal Progress

The student progress level cut scores are used to determine the degree of progress the student made toward the measurable criteria for the targeted skills assessed. Both the measurable criteria and the targeted skills are selected by the teacher, based on the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP), and listed in the portfolio.

A holistic sorting method was used to determine the cut scores for the three program levels:

- Commendable
- Satisfactory
- Needs Improvement

The student progress level and the program level are combined to derive the three proficiency levels. At the recommendation of the APA Advisory Committee, the performance classification weights the program level more than the student progress level due to the use of state assessment results for school and district accountability.

The table below prescribes how a portfolio is classified Advanced Proficient, Proficient, or Partially Proficient.

Proficiency Levels		Student Progress Levels		
		Substantial	Considerable	Minimal
Program Levels	Commendable	Advanced Proficient	Advanced Proficient	Proficient
	Satisfactory	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Partially Proficient

It is important to recognize that the APA system does not report total raw or scale scores. The key components in interpreting portfolio results are the student scores, student progress level, program level, and proficiency level. Proficiency level is not derived based on a total score, but solely by the table presented above. Scale scores are not appropriate for use with the Alternate Proficiency Assessment system so there are no issues of equating involved. There are no sets of test items; therefore, there are no item difficulties, nor is there a need to equate test scores from year to year.

The New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment was developed for two purposes:

- To measure the progress of a small percentage of students with severe cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the regular statewide assessments even with accommodations and/or modifications.
- To ensure that the educational results for all students are included in the statewide accountability system at the individual, school, district, and state levels.

Accountability through assessment provides equity in program and educational opportunities for all students. Alternate assessment ensures an inclusive statewide assessment system and student accountability linked to the common core of learning within the content standards in New Jersey.

This executive summary includes six tables derived from the statewide summary for the 2006 APA. Tables provide the number of participating APA students with valid scores and the percent of students at each APA proficiency level. The percentages may not total to one hundred due to rounding. The percentage of students in Proficient or Advanced Proficient is calculated by subtracting the percentage of students in Partially Proficient from one hundred.

Tables 1 through 3 summarize test results for the state, Non-Special Needs districts, and Special Needs districts. Tables 4 through 6 present statewide performance by demographic groups. Results are presented for the total student group and the following demographic variables: gender, migrant status, ethnicity, economic status, and limited English proficient status. Students are counted in the Total Students category only once, plus in as many other categories that apply. Some students might not be included in a gender group because of incomplete or missing information. Students with only one ethnic code are reported in the appropriate ethnic group. Examiners were asked to code all categories applicable to indicate a student's ethnicity. Students with multiple ethnic codes or no ethnic code are counted in the category called "Other."

The demographic information originates from the data collected on the APA scan sheets submitted for the students by school districts. Demographic information was reviewed by the school district personnel prior to reporting, allowing them an opportunity to correct any errors.

A major change for the 2006 State Summary is that Limited English Proficient (LEP) is reported as LEP (Current plus Former) with two subcategories: LEP Current and LEP Former. Beginning in 2005, students coded as multiple ethnicity and those whose ethnicity was unspecified are counted as "Other."

The 2006 APA state summary reports for performance appear at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/achievement/>

A small number of Grade 12 students participated in the high school level APA because they are either (1) students new to the state that the IEP team determines the APA is the appropriate assessment, or (2) students who were juniors last year and should have participated in the APA last year but did not. Results of these students were extracted in order to report results of the Grade 11 students properly.

Highlights from the 2006 APA Performance Results

Table 1 shows the Language Arts Literacy results for the 2006 APA. This table presents the number of students with valid scores and the percentage of students in each proficiency level for the tested grade levels reported for the state, Non-Special Needs districts, and Special Needs districts. The percentage of APA students scored at or above Proficient on their Language Arts Literacy portfolios in the tested grade levels was:

- Grade 3 – 93.4%
- Grade 4 – 94.3%
- Grade 8 – 93.4%
- Grade 11 – 91.6%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Language Arts Literacy portfolios was 95.6% at Grade 3, 95.5% at Grade 4, 93.9% at Grade 8, and 91.3% at Grade 11. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 87.4% at Grade 3, 90.9% at Grade 4, 92.0% at Grade 8, and 92.5 at Grade 11.

Table 2 shows similar information to Table 1 for the 2006 APA Mathematics content area. The percentage of APA students scored at or above Proficient on their Mathematics portfolios in the tested grade levels was:

- Grade 3 – 90.8%
- Grade 4 – 91.5%
- Grade 8 – 86.7%
- Grade 11 – 85.9%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Mathematics portfolios was 91.2% at Grade 3, 92.0% at Grade 4, 87.0% at Grade 8, and 84.2% at Grade 11. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 89.9% at Grade 3, 90.2% at Grade 4, 85.9% at Grade 8, and 91.5% at Grade 11.

Table 3 shows similar information for the 2006 APA Science content area. The percentage of APA students scored at or above Proficient on their Science portfolios in the tested grade levels was:

- Grade 4 – 91.9%
- Grade 8 – 92.9%
- Grade 11 – 92.4%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Science portfolios was 93.4% at Grade 4, 94.1% at Grade 8, and 91.1% at Grade 11. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 88.0% at Grade 4, 88.9% at Grade 8, and 96.6% at Grade 11.

TABLE 1
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance

Language Arts Literacy

LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
GRADE 3 STATE	908	6.6	58.1	35.2
Non-Special Needs	661	4.4	57.8	37.8
Special Needs	247	12.6	59.1	28.3
GRADE 4 STATE	882	5.7	62.0	32.3
Non-Special Needs	650	4.5	61.5	34.0
Special Needs	232	9.1	63.4	27.6
GRADE 8 STATE	930	6.6	57.4	36.0
Non-Special Needs	706	6.1	56.7	37.3
Special Needs	224	8.0	59.8	32.1
GRADE 11 STATE	642	8.4	54.5	37.1
Non-Special Needs	481	8.7	55.1	36.2
Special Needs	161	7.5	52.8	39.8

TABLE 2
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance

Mathematics

MATHEMATICS	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
GRADE 3 STATE	863	9.2	55.0	35.8
Non-Special Needs	625	8.8	54.2	37.0
Special Needs	238	10.1	57.1	32.8
GRADE 4 STATE	804	8.5	60.4	31.1
Non-Special Needs	600	8.0	59.3	32.7
Special Needs	204	9.8	63.7	26.5
GRADE 8 STATE	852	13.3	52.0	34.7
Non-Special Needs	646	13.0	52.2	34.8
Special Needs	206	14.1	51.5	34.5
GRADE 11 STATE	609	14.1	52.4	33.5
Non-Special Needs	467	15.8	52.0	32.1
Special Needs	142	8.5	53.5	38.0

TABLE 3
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance

Science

SCIENCE	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
GRADE 4 STATE	794	8.1	70.2	21.8
Non-Special Needs	578	6.6	69.9	23.5
Special Needs	216	12.0	70.8	17.1
GRADE 8 STATE	871	7.1	64.6	28.2
Non-Special Needs	664	5.9	64.5	29.7
Special Needs	207	11.1	65.2	23.7
GRADE 11 STATE	596	7.6	60.1	32.4
Non-Special Needs	449	8.9	61.2	29.8
Special Needs	147	3.4	56.5	40.1

Statewide results by demographic groups are presented in Table 4 for Language Arts Literacy, Table 5 for Mathematics, and Table 6 for Science. Results are summarized below:

Gender

Generally, there were about twice as many male students taking the APA as female students. The percentage of male students decreased from approximately 68.1% at Grade 3 to 65-66% for Grades 4 and 8 to 60.1% for Grade 11.

Language Arts Literacy:

For all grades, the percentage of female students scoring at or above proficiency was very close to the percentage of male students scoring at or above proficiency. The greatest difference was at Grade 4 with 93.2% of the female students receiving scores at or above Proficient level and 94.9% of the male students received scores at or above Proficient level.

Mathematics:

At Grade 3, the percentage of female students scoring at or above proficiency was very close to those of the male students. At Grade 4, 92.8% of the females attained scores at or above Proficient while 90.8% of the males scored at or above Proficient level. Grade 8 showed a slightly greater difference with 89.0% of the females receiving scores at or above Proficient while 85.7% of the males scored at or above Proficient level. At Grade 11, male students scored higher with 87.3% of the male students and 84.1% of the female students scoring at or above Proficient.

Science:

For Grade 4, 89.8% of the female students and 93.0% of the male students scored at or above Proficient. Approximately 93.4% of the Grade 8 female students and 92.6% of the Grade 8 male students attained scores at or above Proficient; and 92.5% of the Grade 11 female students and 92.4% of the Grade 11 male students attained scores at or above Proficient.

Migrant Status Only Non-Migrant data appear on this report. Since three or fewer migrant students took the APA in each grade and content area, data are suppressed because of student confidentiality.

Ethnicity The range of the number of APA students with valid scores by ethnicity groups varied as follows:

White	483 students in Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy to 303 students in Grade 11 Science
Black	237 students in Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy to 161 students in Grade 11 Science
Asian	56 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 29 students in Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy
Hispanic	167 students in Grades 3 and 4 Language Arts Literacy to 93 students in Grade 11 Science
Other	16 students in Grade 4 Mathematics to 10 or fewer students in Grade 8 Mathematics and Science and all Grade 11 content areas.

Since 10 or fewer students in the Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander and American Indian or Alaskan Native ethnic groups took the APA, data for these groups were not reported. There were no American Indian/Alaskan Native students in Grades 8 and 11.

Language Arts Literacy:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level ranged from 95.3% of White students to 80.0% of the Other student group.

(The percentages for the ethnic groups not stated fell between the percentages of the noted ethnic groups – in Grade 3, 91.5% of the Black students, 91.1% of the Asian students, and 92.8% of the Hispanic students.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 96.0% of the White students to 89.7% of the Black student group. The percentages ranged from 94.6% for Asian students to 81.8% of the Other student group in Grade 8 and from 93.2% of Hispanic students to 91.0% of White students in Grade 11.

Mathematics:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 98.1% of Asian students to 58.3% of the Other student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 ranged from 96.7% of the Hispanic student group to 87.2% of Black students. For Grade 8, the percentage ranged from 88.5% of the Hispanic student group to

81.1% of the Asian student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 93.3% of the Asian student group to 84.6% of Black students.

Science:

For Grade 4, the percentage ranged from 95.0% of Asian students to 84.6% of the Other student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 8 ranged from 93.8% of the White students to 89.2% of the Asian student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 100% of Asian students to 91.4% of the White student group.

Economic Status The number of economically disadvantaged students taking the APA was approximately one-half of the number of non-economically disadvantaged students. The greatest percentage (34.8%) of economically disadvantaged students took the APA Grade 8 and the smallest percentage (32.4%) of economically disadvantaged students took the APA Grade 11.

Language Arts Literacy:

The non-economically disadvantaged students generally did better than the economically disadvantaged group. The greatest difference was at Grade 4 with 96.1% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 90.7% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11, 93.5% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 90.6% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

Mathematics:

In contrast to Language Arts Literacy, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was generally greater than the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. For Grade 3, 91.3% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 90.6% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. For Grade 8, 89.7% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 85.1% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. For Grade 11, 87.9% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 84.8% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 4, 90.3% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 92.1% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient

Science:

The non-economically disadvantaged students generally did better than the economically disadvantaged group in Grades 4 and 8. The greater difference was at Grade 4 with 93.5% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 89.1% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11, 92.6% of the

economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 92.3% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

LEP Status With the exception of Grade 3, only Not Current Limited English Proficient data appear on this report. Because 10 or fewer limited English students tested with the APA at Grades 4, 8, and 11, their data is suppressed. For the Grade 3 LEP Current and Former students testing, 16 students scored at or above Proficient in Language Arts Literacy and 15 students scored at or above Proficient in Mathematics.

Reporting Rules for State Summary Data File

In order to safeguard student confidentiality, certain information is suppressed from the reports according to the following reporting rules:

- Data are not reported if the number of students with valid scale scores for a particular group is fewer than 11.
- Data are not reported where demographic groups are mutually exclusive (e.g., gender) and there are one or two students with a valid scale score in one of the groups (e.g., male).
- Data are not reported if it is otherwise possible to identify individual student's performance.

TABLE 4
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups

Language Arts Literacy

	GRADE 3		GRADE 4		GRADE 8		GRADE 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
STATE TOTAL	908	93.4	882	94.3	930	93.4	642	91.6
Gender								
Female	289	94.1	294	93.2	319	93.4	249	92.4
Male	612	93.1	585	94.9	611	93.5	391	91.3
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--
Non-Migrant	907	93.4	882	94.3	928	93.5	642	91.6
Ethnicity								
White	449	95.3	451	96.0	483	94.4	334	91.0
Black	213	91.5	203	89.7	237	92.0	168	91.1
Asian	56	91.1	41	92.7	37	94.6	29	93.1
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	167	92.8	167	95.8	158	93.0	103	93.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	--
Other	15	80.0	15	93.3	11	81.8	*	*
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	303	91.7	291	90.7	326	91.7	216	93.5
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	605	94.2	591	96.1	604	94.4	426	90.6
LEP Status								
LEP (Current & Former)	16	100.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Current	14	100.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Former	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	894	93.3	874	94.3	925	93.4	640	91.6

* Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.

TABLE 5
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups

Mathematics

	GRADE 3		GRADE 4		GRADE 8		GRADE 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
STATE TOTAL	863	90.8	804	91.5	852	86.7	609	85.9
Gender								
Female	277	91.0	278	92.8	291	89.0	245	84.1
Male	577	90.8	522	90.8	560	85.7	362	87.3
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	--	--	*	*	--	--
Non-Migrant	862	91.0	804	91.5	851	86.8	609	85.9
Ethnicity								
White	430	90.9	411	91.7	444	87.2	316	85.1
Black	201	91.0	180	87.2	212	84.9	162	84.6
Asian	53	98.1	42	90.5	37	81.1	30	93.3
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	159	90.6	150	96.7	148	88.5	94	88.3
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	--	--	--	--
Other	12	58.3	16	87.5	*	*	*	*
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	289	91.3	248	90.3	300	89.7	207	87.9
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	574	90.6	556	92.1	552	85.1	402	84.8
LEP Status								
LEP (Current & Former)	15	100.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Current	13	100.0	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Former	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	850	90.7	797	91.5	847	86.7	608	85.9

* Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.

TABLE 6
2006 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups

Science

	GRADE 4		GRADE 8		GRADE 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
STATE TOTAL	794	91.9	871	92.9	596	92.4
Gender						
Female	264	89.8	304	93.4	239	92.5
Male	527	93.0	567	92.6	355	92.4
Migrant Status						
Migrant	--	--	*	*	--	--
Non-Migrant	794	91.9	870	92.9	596	92.4
Ethnicity						
White	391	94.4	454	93.8	303	91.4
Black	186	88.2	216	92.1	161	92.5
Asian	40	95.0	37	89.2	30	100.0
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	159	89.9	150	92.0	93	93.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	--	--	--	--
Other	13	84.6	*	*	*	*
Economic Status						
Economically Disadvantaged	274	89.1	313	92.3	217	92.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	520	93.5	558	93.2	379	92.3
LEP Status						
LEP (Current & Former)	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Current	*	*	*	*	*	*
LEP Former	*	*	*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	787	92.0	869	92.9	594	92.6

* Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.