

2007 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 students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), or the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). APA students in grades 5-7 were assessed beginning with the 2006-2007 school year.

The 2007 APA was administered in grades 4, 8, and 11 in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science; and Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. Evidence of student performance as demonstrated in the student portfolio was collected from October 23, 2006, through February 23, 2007, during instructional activities for the 2006-2007 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.

As seen in Table 1, overall summary, a total of 7,644 students were evaluated by the 2007 APA. Of these, 7,055 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 6,925 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 2,768 students had valid Science scores. A 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.

APA standard setting was conducted in February 2003 to determine the cut scores for the program-level classifications. These cut scores were applied to all grade levels for both mathematics and language arts literacy. When science was added to the APA in 2005, the same

program-level cut scores were applied. In 2007, the APA test design of the program level document collection related to Social Interaction, Independence, and Generalization was reduced to half of the original requirements. The scoring rubrics were revised to reflect the changes.

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 four tables derived from the statewide summary for the 2007 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 2 through 4 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.

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

The 2007 APA state summary reports for performance appear at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/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 for whom IEP teams determine 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 2007 APA Performance Results

During 2007, the APA has been in transition. In order to meet the requirements of NCLB and the federal peer review process the APA is being revised, including changes to content that may be assessed and the dimensions on which that content is scored. These changes will be fully implemented in the 2008-2009 school year. In the interim, changes are being introduced gradually to the APA to provide administrators, teachers, and students' time to absorb and implement the changes in a meaningful way. As a result longitudinal analyses and comparisons across or including the transition years are not recommended, nor are they likely to be interpretable.

Statewide results for 2007 by demographic groups are presented in Table 2 for Language Arts Literacy, Table 3 for Mathematics, and Table 4 for Science. Results are summarized below:

Table 2 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. The percentage of APA students scored at or above Proficient on their Language Arts Literacy portfolios in the tested grade levels was:

- Grade 3 – 89.6%
- Grade 4 – 87.8%
- Grade 5 – 88.6%
- Grade 6 – 90.0%
- Grade 7 – 86.6%
- Grade 8 – 85.7%
- Grade 11 – 87.3%

Table 3 shows similar information for the 2007 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 – 86.9%
- Grade 4 – 84.6%
- Grade 5 – 87.0%
- Grade 6 – 87.8%
- Grade 7 – 86.1%
- Grade 8 – 83.4%
- Grade 11 – 81.7%

Table 4 shows similar information for the 2007 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 – 73.0%
- Grade 8 – 77.0%
- Grade 11 – 77.5%

Gender

Generally, there were about twice as many male students taking the APA as female students. The percentage of male students generally decreased ranging from 67.9% at Grade 3, 67.1% at Grade 4, and 66.7% at Grade 7 to approximately 65% for Grades 5, 6, and 8 with the lowest percentage of 63.5% at Grade 11. Overall, 65.8% were male students and 34.2% were female students.

Language Arts Literacy:

For all grades, the percentage of female students scoring at or above Proficient was very close to the percentage of male students scoring at or above Proficient. The greatest difference was at Grade 11 with 89.9% of the female students receiving scores at or above Proficient and 86.0% of the male students received scores at or above Proficient.

Mathematics:

At Grades 3 and 4, the percentage of female students scoring at or above Proficient was very close to the percentage of male students. Grade 6 showed the greatest difference with 90.3% of the females receiving scores at or above Proficient while 86.5% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 5, 88.4% of the females received scores at or above Proficient and 86.3% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 7, 87.4% of the females received scores at or above Proficient and 85.3% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 8, 85.0% of the females attained scores at or above Proficient while 82.6% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 11, 83.2% of the females attained scores at or above Proficient while 81.1% of the males students scored at or above Proficient.

Science:

For Grade 4, 72.8% of the female students and 73.1% of the male students scored at or above Proficient. Approximately 78.5% of the Grade 8 female students and 76.4% of the Grade 8 male students attained scores at or above Proficient; and 80.0% of the Grade 11 female students and 76.0% 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 for student confidentiality.

Ethnicity

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

White	557 students in Grade 8 Mathematics to 437 students in Grade 4 Science
Black	258 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 214 students in Grade 4 Science
Asian	64 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 40 students in Grade 11 Science
Hispanic	219 students in Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy to

	141 students in Grade 11 Science
Other	18 students in Grade 7 Mathematics to 10 or fewer students for Science in all grades and several other grades and 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.

Language Arts Literacy:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level ranged from 91.7% of Other students to 86.6% of the Hispanic student group. (The percentages for the ethnic groups not stated fell between the percentages of the noted ethnic groups – in Grade 3, 90.9% of the White students, 89.5% of the Black students, and 89.1% of the Asian students.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 88.9% of the Asian and Hispanic students to 84.1% of the Black student group. The Grade 5 percentages ranged from 89.1% for White and Black students to 85.5% of the Asian student group. The Grade 6 percentages ranged from 92.7% of White students to 83.0% of Asian students. The Grade 7 percentages ranged from 88.3% of White students to 73.3% of Other students. The Grade 8 percentages ranged from 88.6% of Hispanic students to 76.5% of Asians. The Grade 11 percentages ranged from 89.7% of White students to 72.7% of Other students.

Mathematics:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 100% of the Other student group to 81.4% of the Hispanic student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 ranged from 86.5% of the White student group to 82.3% of Black students. For Grade 5, the percentage ranged from 90.4% of the Asian student group to 83.9% of the Hispanic student group. For Grade 6, the percentage ranged from 90.6% of the White student group to 71.4% of Other students. For Grade 7, the percentage ranged from 88.6% of the White student group to 72.2% of Other students. For Grade 8, the percentage ranged from 85.8% of the White student group to 68.6% of Asian student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 84.2% of the Hispanic student group to 74.4% of Asian student group.

Science:

For Grade 4, the percentage ranged from 73.9% of White students to 70.3% of the Hispanic student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 8 ranged from 78.7% of the White students to 70.6% of the Asian student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 83.7% of Hispanic students to 73.1% of the Black 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 (36.0%) of economically disadvantaged

students took the APA Grade 5 and the smallest percentage (30.2%) 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 6 with 92.6% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 84.8% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11, 87.6% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 87.2% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

Mathematics:

The percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was generally greater than the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. For Grade 6, 90.5% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 82.2% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. For Grade 8, 83.8% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 83.2% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. For Grade 11, 82.2% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 81.6% 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 8 with 77.8% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 75.4% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11, 77.6% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 77.5% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

LEP Status

With the exception of Grades 4 and 5, only Not Current Limited English Proficient data appear on this report. Because 10 or fewer limited English students tested with the APA at Grades 3, 6, 7, 8, and 11, their data is suppressed. For Grade 4, 41.7% of the 12 Current LEP students testing in Language Arts Literacy and 36.4% of the 11 Current LEP students testing in Mathematics attained at or above Proficient. For Grade 5, 50.0% of the 12 Current LEP students testing in Language Arts Literacy and 72.7% of the 11 Current LEP students testing in Mathematics attained at or above Proficient. Also for Grade 5, 58.8% of the 17 LEP (Current and Former) students testing in Language Arts Literacy and 81.2% of the 16 LEP (Current and Former) students testing in Mathematics attained at or above Proficient.

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 performance.

TABLE 1

2007 NEW JERSEY ALTERNATE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT													
Year	Total Students Enrolled	LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY				MATHEMATICS				SCIENCE			
		Number of Valid Scale Scores	%Partially Proficient	% Proficient	%Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scale Scores	%Partially Proficient	% Proficient	%Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scale Scores	%Partially Proficient	% Proficient	%Advanced Proficient
Grade 3 2007	1037	1005	10.4	52.7	36.8	956	13.1	51.8	35.1	-	-	-	-
Grade 4 2007	1049	997	12.2	53.7	34.1	982	15.4	52.0	32.6	894	27.0	58.3	14.8
Grade 5 2007	1115	1037	11.4	55.3	33.4	1016	13.0	52.7	34.4	-	-	-	-
Grade 6 2007	1085	1015	10.0	50.0	40.1	1006	12.2	49.1	38.7	-	-	-	-
Grade 7 2007	1074	990	13.4	47.9	38.7	975	13.9	46.9	39.2	-	-	-	-
Grade 8 2007	1132	1033	14.3	48.1	37.6	1037	16.6	47.3	36.1	989	23.0	58.0	19.0
Grade 11 2007	1049	978	12.7	47.9	39.5	953	18.3	45.4	36.3	885	22.5	59.5	18.0
Grade 12 2007	103	90	8.9	56.7	34.4	88	15.9	47.7	36.4	-	-	-	-
All Grades 2007	7644	7145	12.0	50.9	37.1	7013	14.6	49.3	36.0	2768	24.1	58.6	17.3

Note: 2007 APA Design Change - Program level document collection related to Social Interaction, Independence, and Generalization were reduced to half of the original requirements. The scoring rubrics were revised to reflect the changes.

TABLE 2
2007 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups
Language Arts Literacy

	GRADE 3		GRADE 4		GRADE 5		GRADE 6		GRADE 7		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	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	1,005	89.6	997	87.8	1,037	88.6	1,015	90.0	990	86.6	1,033	85.7	978	87.3
Gender														
Female	320	89.7	326	87.7	355	87.6	348	90.5	327	85.9	353	86.7	356	89.9
Male	684	89.5	671	87.8	681	89.1	667	89.8	662	86.9	679	85.3	621	86.0
Migrant Status														
Migrant							*	*			*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	1,005	89.6	997	87.8	1,037	88.6	1,014	90.0	990	86.6	1,032	85.7	977	87.3
Ethnicity														
White	473	90.9	498	88.8	524	89.1	519	92.7	489	88.3	547	87.2	517	89.7
Black	258	89.5	233	84.1	229	89.1	249	85.9	254	85.0	245	82.4	248	86.3
Asian	64	89.1	63	88.9	55	85.5	53	83.0	49	81.6	51	76.5	45	77.8
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	187	86.6	189	88.9	219	87.2	179	90.5	176	86.4	175	88.6	151	84.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	12	91.7	*	*	*	*	13	84.6	15	73.3	*	*	11	72.7
Economic Status														
Economically Disadvantaged	336	88.4	305	86.9	365	87.1	336	84.8	334	85.3	317	85.5	291	87.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	669	90.1	692	88.2	672	89.4	679	92.6	656	87.2	716	85.8	687	87.2
LEP Status														
LEP (Current & Former)	*	*	12	41.7	17	58.8	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Current LEP	*	*	12	41.7	12	50.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Former LEP	*	*			*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	1,002	89.5	985	88.3	1,025	89.1	1,015	90.0	989	86.6	1,028	85.8	976	87.3

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

TABLE 3
2007 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups
Mathematics

	GRADE 3		GRADE 4		GRADE 5		GRADE 6		GRADE 7		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	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	956	86.9	982	84.6	1,016	87.0	1,006	87.8	975	86.1	1,037	83.4	953	81.7
Gender														
Female	310	87.4	325	84.6	352	88.4	349	90.3	318	87.4	359	85.0	345	83.2
Male	645	86.7	657	84.6	663	86.3	657	86.5	655	85.3	677	82.6	607	81.1
Migrant Status														
Migrant							*	*			*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	956	86.9	982	84.6	1,016	87.0	1,005	87.9	975	86.1	1,036	83.4	952	81.7
Ethnicity														
White	453	88.7	490	86.5	509	88.4	512	90.6	483	88.6	557	85.8	498	82.1
Black	248	86.3	232	82.3	227	85.9	249	83.1	243	83.1	245	81.6	250	81.2
Asian	60	90.0	62	83.9	52	90.4	51	88.2	49	81.6	51	68.6	43	74.4
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	172	81.4	184	83.2	218	83.9	176	87.5	176	85.2	169	81.1	146	84.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	12	100.0	*	*	*	*	14	71.4	18	72.2	*	*	*	*
Economic Status														
Economically Disadvantaged	318	85.8	303	82.2	361	86.1	331	82.2	333	84.7	321	83.8	286	82.2
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	638	87.5	679	85.7	655	87.5	675	90.5	642	86.8	716	83.2	667	81.6
LEP Status														
LEP (Current & Former)	*	*	11	36.4	16	81.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Current LEP	*	*	11	36.4	11	72.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Former LEP	*	*			*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	954	86.9	971	85.2	1,005	87.2	1,006	87.8	972	86.0	1,030	83.4	951	81.7

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

TABLE 4
2007 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	894	73.0	989	77.0	885	77.5
Gender						
Female	287	72.8	344	78.5	335	80.0
Male	607	73.1	644	76.4	550	76.0
Migrant Status						
Migrant			*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	894	73.0	988	77.0	884	77.5
Ethnicity						
White	437	73.9	527	78.7	453	77.5
Black	214	73.4	234	73.9	242	73.1
Asian	58	70.7	51	70.6	40	80.0
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	172	70.3	163	76.7	141	83.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	*	*	*	*	*	*
Economic Status						
Economically Disadvantaged	277	72.9	305	75.4	281	77.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	617	73.1	684	77.8	604	77.5
LEP Status						
LEP (Current & Former)	*	*	*	*	*	*
Current LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*
Former LEP			*	*	*	*
Not Current LEP	884	73.5	983	76.9	882	77.4

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