



NJDOE News

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State Testing for Students in Grades 5-8 Begins

An estimated 425,000 students in grades 5 through 8 are expected to participate in a four-day round of testing during the period April 28 to May 15, 2008.

The New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for grades 7 and 8 will be administered this week, with make-up testing for these grades completed next week. In addition, regular testing for grades 5 and 6 will be conducted the week of May 5, 2008, with make-up testing for those grades to be completed by May 15. Students in all four grades will be assessed in language arts literacy and mathematics. Grade 8 students will also be assessed in science.

The NJ ASK 8 replaces the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). The assessments at each of these grades reflect new test design and administrative features that resulted from a redesign of the statewide assessment system carried out by the Department of Education's Assessment Advisory Committee organized by Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy shortly after she joined the Department in September 2005.

Previously, the statewide assessments for these grades were administered annually in March. Starting this year, and extending to grades 3 and 4 four in 2009, the elementary and middle grades assessments are being administered at least six weeks later in the school year. In addition, the shorter reading comprehension passages in the language arts literacy (LAL) assessments will allow the state to use more reading passages and more test questions in order to obtain deeper information about student reading achievement.

For the first time in the history of the statewide assessment system, the Spanish-language versions of the tests are available, based on local district determinations, to students for whom the Spanish version is a more appropriate assessment instrument.

Test scores will be released later this summer, following the establishment of new cut scores marking the three proficiency levels: partially proficient, proficient, advanced proficient.

The assessment results are used by districts to help evaluate curriculum and instructional practices. They are also used by the department for federal accountability reporting in accordance with the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), as well as for state accountability and analysis purposes.

Information about the statewide assessments is available on the Department of Education web site at <http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/>.