

# 2004 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 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).

The 2004 APA was administered in grades 3, 4, 8, and 11 between October 31, 2003 and April 1, 2004 in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics. Evidence of student performance, the student portfolio in each content area, was collected during instructional activities throughout the 2003-2004 collection period. 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 3,314 students took the 2004 APA. Of these, 3,039 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores and 2,978 students had valid Mathematics scores. Approximately 200 Language portfolios and 250 Mathematics portfolios were deemed "unscorable." A student may receive a valid score for a portfolio in one content area, but not in the other due to independence of content area scoring.

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 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 data provided, 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 as 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 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.

The state level performance by demographic groups report summarizes test results for the state, Non-Special Needs districts, and Special Needs districts. Results are presented for the total student group and the following demographic variables: gender, migrant status, ethnicity, economic status, and limited English proficient status. The report provides the number of participating APA students with valid scores and the percent of students at each APA proficiency level in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics for each of the four grades: 3, 4, 8, and 11. The percentages may not total to one hundred due to rounding.

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. An explanation of the categories presented on reports for demographic groups follows:

<b>Gender</b>	Number of females and males tested.
<b>Migrant Status</b>	Number of migrant and non-migrant students tested.
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Number of students coded White, Black or African American, Asian, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic or Latino, and American Indian or Alaskan Native. (Examiners were asked to code <b>all</b> appropriate categories to indicate a student's ethnicity.)
<b>Economic Status</b>	Number of economically disadvantaged (students eligible for free or reduced lunch) and non- economically disadvantaged students tested.
<b>LEP Status</b>	Number of limited English proficient students and non-limited English proficient students tested.

This executive summary includes four tables derived from the statewide summary for the 2004 APA. The 2004 APA state summary reports for performance by the State, Non-Special Needs students, and Special Needs students appear at:

[http://www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/achievement/2005/supressed%2002\\_01\\_05upd.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/achievement/2005/supressed%2002_01_05upd.pdf)

### Highlights from the 2004 APA Performance Results

Table 1 shows the Language Arts Literacy results for the 2004 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, Special Needs districts, and Non-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 – 91.7%
- Grade 4 – 92.9%
- Grade 8 – 91.3%
- Grade 11 – 90.5%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient was approximately 93.5% in Grades 3, 4, and 8. For the APA Grade 11, the percentage was 90.7%.

The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 87.6% at Grade 3, 91.4% at Grade 4, 86.6% at Grade 8, and 89.6% at Grade 11.

Table 2 shows similar information to Table 1 for the Mathematics content area for the 2004 APA. The percentage of APA students scored at or above Proficient on their Mathematics portfolios in the tested grade levels was:

- Grade 3 – 87.9%
- Grade 4 – 88.5%
- Grade 8 – 89.4%
- Grade 11 – 86.7%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient was approximately 90% for Grades 3, 4, and 8. For Grade 11, the percentage was 85.7%.

The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios increased from 83.4% at Grade 3 to more than 86% at Grades 4 and 8 to 89.7% at Grade 11.

**TABLE 1**  
**2004 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance**  
**Language Arts Literacy**

<b>LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY</b>	<b>Number of Students with Valid Scores</b>	<b>% Partially Proficient</b>	<b>% Proficient</b>	<b>% Advanced Proficient</b>
<b>GRADE 3 STATE</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>54.7</b>	<b>37.0</b>
Non-Special Needs	577	6.4	53.7	39.9
Special Needs	258	12.4	57.0	30.6
<b>GRADE 4 STATE</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>56.0</b>	<b>36.9</b>
Non-Special Needs	573	6.5	55.3	38.2
Special Needs	256	8.6	57.4	34.0
<b>GRADE 8 STATE</b>	<b>728</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>55.6</b>	<b>35.7</b>
Non-Special Needs	504	6.5	53.2	40.3
Special Needs	224	13.4	61.2	25.4
<b>GRADE 11 STATE</b>	<b>647</b>	<b>9.6</b>	<b>52.6</b>	<b>37.9</b>
Non-Special Needs	494	9.3	54.3	36.4
Special Needs	153	10.5	47.1	42.5

**TABLE 2**  
**2004 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance**  
**Mathematics**

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>Number of Students with Valid Scores</b>	<b>% Partially Proficient</b>	<b>% Proficient</b>	<b>% Advanced Proficient</b>
<b>GRADE 3 STATE</b>	<b>840</b>	<b>12.0</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>33.9</b>
Non-Special Needs	575	9.9	54.1	36.0
Special Needs	265	16.6	54.0	29.4
<b>GRADE 4 STATE</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>36.4</b>
Non-Special Needs	557	10.8	49.9	39.3
Special Needs	257	13.2	56.8	30.0
<b>GRADE 8 STATE</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>51.9</b>	<b>37.5</b>
Non-Special Needs	484	9.3	49.8	40.9
Special Needs	210	13.8	56.7	29.5
<b>GRADE 11 STATE</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>33.2</b>
Non-Special Needs	475	14.3	52.2	33.5
Special Needs	155	10.3	57.4	32.3

Statewide results by demographic groups are presented by Table 3 for Language Arts Literacy and Table 4 for Mathematics. The percentage of students at or above Proficient is calculated by adding the percentages of students at Proficient and at Advanced Proficient levels. 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 ranged from 69% for Grade 4 to 61% for Grade 11.

**Language Arts Literacy:**

For Grades 3 and 4, the percentage of female students and the percentage of male students scoring at or above Proficient was similar. For Grades 8 and 11, female students did better than male students.

**Mathematics:**

For Grades 3 and 4, approximately 87% of the females and about 89% of the males scored at or above Proficient. For Grades 8 and 11, females did better than males. Grade 11 showed the greater difference with 88.7% of the females attained scores at or above Proficient while 85.3% of the males scored at or above Proficient level.

**Migrant Status** Only Grade 3 Non-Migrant data appear on this report. Since two or fewer migrant students took the APA in each grade and content area, data are not reported for the Non-Migrant category as well as the Migrant category because of student confidentiality.

**Ethnicity** The range of the number of APA students by ethnicity groups varied as follows:  
White – 423 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to  
357 students in Grade 11 Mathematics  
Black – 229 students in Grade 3 Mathematics to  
145 students in Grade 11 Mathematics  
Asian – 42 students in both Grade 4 content areas to  
25 students in Grade 11 Mathematics  
Hispanic – 144 students in Grade 3 Mathematics to  
93 students in Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy  
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 Grade 8.

**Language Arts Literacy:**

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 97.2% of Asian students to 89.5% of Hispanic students. (The percentages for the other ethnic groups fell between the percentage of Asian students and percentage of Hispanic students.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 95.3% of Asian students to 91.7% of Hispanic students. The percentages ranged from 92.8% for White students to 88% of Hispanic students in Grade 8 and from 91.8% of Black students to 87.1% of Hispanic students in Grade 11.

**Mathematics:**

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 94.5% of Asian students to 82.5% of Black students. The percentages of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 and Grade 8 ranged from approximately 90% of White students at both Grade 4 and 8 to 84.8% of Hispanic students in Grade 4 and to 86.8% of Hispanic students in Grade 8. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 88.5% of Hispanic students to 80.0% of Asian students.

**Economic Status** The number of economically disadvantaged students taking the APA was approximately one-half the number of non-economically disadvantaged students. The greatest percentage (36.9%) of disadvantaged students took the APA Grade 8 Mathematics and the smallest percentage (30.5%) of disadvantaged students took the Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy. The greatest differences in the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient as compared to the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was for Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy and Grade 8 Mathematics.

**Language Arts Literacy:**

For Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy, 88.4% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient levels while 93.4% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient levels. However, for Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy, both the economically disadvantaged percentage and the non-economically disadvantaged percentage was 92.9%.

**Mathematics:**

For Grade 8 Mathematics, 86.4% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 91.1% of the non-economically disadvantaged students were at these proficiency levels.

**LEP Status** Only Non-Limited English Proficient data appear on this report. Because 10 or fewer limited English students tested with the APA at each grade and content area, their data is suppressed. Also, since two or fewer limited English students tested with the APA in Grade 11 Mathematics, data are not reported for the Non-Limited English students.

Reporting Rules

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 if 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 3**  
**2004 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups**

**Language Arts Literacy**

	<b>GRADE 3</b>		<b>GRADE 4</b>		<b>GRADE 8</b>		<b>GRADE 11</b>	
	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	835	91.7	829	92.9	728	91.3	647	90.5
Gender								
Female	281	92.2	248	93.1	262	92.4	248	91.9
Male	549	91.8	576	93.1	462	90.9	396	89.4
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	830	91.8	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnicity								
White	423	93.1	416	93.0	372	92.8	372	91.4
Black	222	89.6	215	92.1	184	91.4	147	91.8
Asian	36	97.2	42	95.3	30	90.0	27	88.8
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	143	89.5	133	91.7	133	88.0	93	87.1
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	-	-	*	*
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	285	88.4	295	92.9	268	88.8	197	90.9
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	550	93.4	534	92.9	460	92.9	450	90.3
LEP Status								
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Limited English Proficient	828	91.7	824	92.9	722	91.4	644	90.5

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

**TABLE 4**  
**2004 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups**

**Mathematics**

	<b>GRADE 3</b>		<b>GRADE 4</b>		<b>GRADE 8</b>		<b>GRADE 11</b>	
	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	840	87.9	814	88.5	694	89.4	630	86.7
Gender								
Female	284	87.0	250	87.2	250	90.8	240	88.7
Male	551	88.9	559	89.1	440	88.4	387	85.3
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	835	88.4	*	*	*	*	*	*
Ethnicity								
White	420	90.0	409	90.0	357	90.2	357	86.8
Black	229	82.5	217	88.0	178	89.3	145	86.9
Asian	36	94.5	42	88.1	27	88.9	25	80.0
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	144	89.6	125	84.8	121	86.8	96	88.5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	-	-	*	*
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	290	86.2	287	89.6	256	86.4	199	89.0
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	550	88.9	527	87.9	438	91.1	431	85.6
LEP Status								
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Limited English Proficient	833	87.9	809	88.3	688	89.4	*	*

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