

2005 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 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 2005 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 25, 2004, through March 4, 2005, during instructional activities for the 2004-2005 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 3,643 students took the 2005 APA. Of these, 3,059 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 2,961 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 1,987 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 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 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 2005 APA. Results are presented for the total student group and the following demographic variables: gender, migrant status, ethnicity, economic status, and limited English proficient status. 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. Note that in 2005, students coded as multiple ethnicity and those whose ethnicity was unspecified are counted as "Other." The state level performance presented in Tables 1 through 3 summarizes test results for the state, Non-Special Needs districts, and Special Needs districts. Tables 4 through 6 present statewide performance by demographic groups.

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 reporting categories by demographic groups follows:

Gender	Females and males tested.
Migrant Status	Migrant and non-migrant students tested.
Ethnicity	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 all categories applicable to indicate a student's ethnicity.)
Economic Status	Economically disadvantaged (students eligible for free or reduced lunch) and non-economically disadvantaged students tested.
LEP Status	Limited English proficient students and non-limited English proficient students tested.

The 2005 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 2005 APA Performance Results

Table 1 shows the Language Arts Literacy results for the 2005 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 – 89.5%
- Grade 4 – 88.5%
- Grade 8 – 90.1%
- Grade 11 – 91.3%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Language Arts Literacy portfolios ranged from 90.7% to 92% at the four grade levels. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 85.7% at Grade 3, 79.9% at Grade 4, 87.9% at Grade 8, and 92.9% at Grade 11.

Table 2 shows similar information to Table 1 for the 2005 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 – 86.5%
- Grade 4 – 87.9%
- Grade 8 – 84.1%
- Grade 11 – 85.1%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Mathematics portfolios was 86.4% at Grade 3, 88.8% at Grade 4, 85.7% at Grade 8, and 84.9% at Grade 11. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 86.8% at Grade 3, 85.7% at Grade 4, 80% at Grade 8, and 85.6% at Grade 11.

Table 3 shows similar information for the 2005 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 – 90.4%
- Grade 8 – 91.1%
- Grade 11 – 88.4%

The percentage of APA students in Non-Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their Science portfolios was 92.1% at Grade 4, 92.6% at Grade 8, and 88.4% at Grade 11. The percentage of APA students in Special Needs districts scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios was 86.1% at Grade 4, 87.7% at Grade 8, and 88.7% at Grade 11.

TABLE 1
2005 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	784	10.5	62.5	27.0
Non-Special Needs	581	9.1	61.6	29.3
Special Needs	203	14.3	65.0	20.7
GRADE 4 STATE	773	11.5	60.9	27.6
Non-Special Needs	549	8.0	63.0	29.0
Special Needs	224	20.1	55.8	24.1
GRADE 8 STATE	768	9.9	62.5	27.6
Non-Special Needs	544	9.0	59.6	31.4
Special Needs	224	12.1	69.6	18.3
GRADE 11 STATE	657	8.7	61.2	30.1
Non-Special Needs	473	9.3	61.5	29.2
Special Needs	184	7.1	60.3	32.6

TABLE 2
2005 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance

Mathematics

MATHEMATICS	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
GRADE 3 STATE	741	13.5	60.9	25.6
Non-Special Needs	552	13.6	59.1	27.4
Special Needs	189	13.2	66.1	20.6
GRADE 4 STATE	742	12.1	61.2	26.7
Non-Special Needs	519	11.2	60.7	28.1
Special Needs	223	14.3	62.3	23.3
GRADE 8 STATE	755	15.9	55.4	28.7
Non-Special Needs	540	14.3	55.7	30.0
Special Needs	215	20.0	54.4	25.6
GRADE 11 STATE	645	14.9	58.8	26.4
Non-Special Needs	458	15.1	59.0	26.0
Special Needs	187	14.4	58.3	27.3

TABLE 3
2005 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance

Science

SCIENCE	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
GRADE 4 STATE	710	9.6	72.8	17.6
Non-Special Needs	516	7.9	73.3	18.8
Special Needs	194	13.9	71.6	14.4
GRADE 8 STATE	723	8.9	75.1	16.0
Non-Special Needs	511	7.4	75.9	16.6
Special Needs	212	12.3	73.1	14.6
GRADE 11 STATE	554	11.6	69.1	19.3
Non-Special Needs	395	11.6	70.1	18.2
Special Needs	159	11.3	66.7	22.0

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 65-66% for Grades 3, 4, and 8 to 61.1% for Grade 11.

Language Arts Literacy:

Female students did slightly better than male students in all grades. The greatest difference for the gender groups was in Grade 4 and Grade 11. In Grade 4, 89.7% of the female students received scores at or above Proficient level and 87.9% of the male students received scores at or above Proficient level. In Grade 11, 92.9% of the female students received scores at or above Proficient level and 91.1% of the male students received scores at or above Proficient level.

Mathematics:

At Grades 3 and 8, the percentage of male students scoring at or above proficiency was very close to those of the female students. At Grade 4, 86.7% of the females attained scores at or above Proficient while 88.5% of the males scored at or above Proficient level. Grade 11 showed a slightly greater difference with 84.1% of the females receiving scores at or above Proficient while 86.4% of the males scored at or above Proficient level.

Science:

For Grade 4, 93.7% of the female students and 88.9% of the male students scored at or above Proficient. Approximately 92.1% of the Grade 8 female students and 90.6% of the Grade 8 male students attained scores at or above Proficient; and 89.9% of the Grade 11 female students and 88.4% 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	406 students in Grade 8 Mathematics to 288 students in Grade 11 Science
Black	198 students in Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy to 140 students in Grade 11 Science
Asian	38 students in Grade 4 Mathematics to 21 students in Grade 8 Mathematics and Science
Hispanic	141 students in Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy to 77 students in Grade 11 Science
Other	32 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 16 students in Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics

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 11.

Language Arts Literacy:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level ranged from 91.9% of Hispanic students and 91.4% of White students to 81.2% 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, 85% of the Black students and 88.6% of the Asian students.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 94.4% of Asian students to 81.2% of the Other student group. The percentages ranged from 95.7% for Asian students to 82.6% of the Other student group in Grade 8 and from 98.9% of Hispanic students to 87.7% of Black students in Grade 11.

Mathematics:

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 88% of Hispanic students to 78.6% of the Other student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 ranged from 100% of the Other student group to 85.8% of White students. For Grade 8, the percentage ranged from 86.7% of both the White and Hispanic student groups to 65% of the Other student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 94.4% of the Other student group to 82.4% of Asian students.

Science:

For Grade 4, the percentage ranged from 97.2% of Asian students to 82.4% of the Other student group. The percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level for Grade 8 ranged from 94% of the White students to 80% of the Other student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 100% of Asian students to 77.8% of the Other 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 (36.2%) of economically disadvantaged students took the APA Grade 8 Language Arts Literacy and the smallest percentage (31.7%) of economically disadvantaged students took the Grade 4 Science.

Language Arts Literacy:

The non-economically disadvantaged students generally did better than the economically disadvantaged group. The greatest difference was at Grade 4 with 92% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 81.5% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11, 91.6% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 91.2% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

Mathematics:

The percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above the economically disadvantaged students was greater for Grades 3, 4, and 11. The largest difference in the percentage was Grade 11 with 85.9% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 83.6% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 8, 85.2% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient while 83.5% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

Science:

The non-economically disadvantaged students did better than the economically disadvantaged group. The greatest difference was at Grade 4 with 92.2% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 86.7% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient.

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.

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 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
2005 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	784	89.5	773	88.5	768	90.1	657	91.3
Gender								
Female	264	90.2	261	89.7	259	90.7	252	92.9
Male	519	89.2	503	87.9	503	89.7	395	91.1
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	783	89.5	770	88.4	767	90.1	656	91.3
Ethnicity								
White	397	91.4	380	91.3	405	91.4	344	91.0
Black	180	85.0	195	85.1	198	85.4	162	87.7
Asian	35	88.6	36	94.4	23	95.7	37	91.9
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	136	91.9	141	85.1	111	93.7	92	98.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	--	--
Other	32	81.2	16	81.2	23	82.6	19	89.5
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	260	86.2	259	81.5	278	87.8	227	91.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	524	91.2	514	92.0	490	91.4	430	91.2
LEP Status								
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Limited English Proficient	778	89.6	763	88.9	767	90.1	655	91.3

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

TABLE 5
2005 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	741	86.5	742	87.9	755	84.1	645	85.1
Gender								
Female	255	86.7	248	86.7	258	84.1	245	84.1
Male	483	86.3	486	88.5	492	83.9	391	86.4
Migrant Status								
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	740	86.5	739	88.0	754	84.2	643	85.2
Ethnicity								
White	373	87.4	367	85.8	406	86.7	340	84.1
Black	168	85.7	187	86.1	196	78.6	161	84.5
Asian	34	85.3	38	92.1	21	85.7	34	82.4
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	133	88.0	129	93.0	105	86.7	89	88.8
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	--	--
Other	28	78.6	16	100	20	65.0	18	94.4
Economic Status								
Economically Disadvantaged	245	85.7	248	87.5	270	85.2	226	83.6
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	496	86.9	494	88.1	485	83.5	419	85.9
LEP Status								
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Limited English Proficient	736	86.5	736	87.8	754	84.2	643	85.1

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

TABLE 6
2005 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	710	90.4	723	91.1	554	88.4
Gender						
Female	237	93.7	239	92.1	218	89.9
Male	467	88.9	478	90.6	328	88.4
Migrant Status						
Migrant	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Migrant	707	90.4	722	91.1	552	88.4
Ethnicity						
White	359	91.1	384	94.0	288	88.5
Black	172	87.2	187	88.8	140	85.0
Asian	36	97.2	21	85.7	28	100
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	121	91.7	104	88.5	77	92.2
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	--	--
Other	17	82.4	20	80.0	18	77.8
Economic Status						
Economically Disadvantaged	225	86.7	257	89.5	188	87.2
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	485	92.2	466	92.1	366	89.1
LEP Status						
Limited English Proficient	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-Limited English Proficient	707	90.4	722	91.3	553	88.6

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