



NJDOE News

For More Information Contact the Public Information Office:

Jon Zlock
Richard Vespucci
Ron Rice
609-292-1126

For Release: December 16, 2003

**DOE Submits NJ ASK3 Field Test Data to School Districts
*Commissioner Librera Comments on ETS Delays and Public Statement;
Two Schools Removed from AYP Status on Account of Vendor Errors***

The Department of Education (DOE) this week submitted to school districts preliminary field test data for the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge test for third-graders (NJ ASK3), the brand-new third-grade test that further aligns the DOE's assessments with federal requirements.

Because the test is in its first year and considered non-operational, the data are not released publicly. In announcing the release of NJ ASK3 materials to school districts, Commissioner of Education William L. Librera also thanked ETS, the testing vendor, for the company's public apology for testing delays. The apology was issued by ETS today.

"We have worked very hard with ETS over the last few months to ensure the vendor would rectify any and all of the problems that led to the delays in reporting assessment figures to local districts," Commissioner Librera said. "This test is one of the many examples of how the DOE and Gov. James E. McGreevey continue to raise the bar for our children and it is important that its results are accurate and reported in a timely manner. The NJ ASK3 assessment is an important step in raising standards and aligning them with federal requirements."

The ETS statement on NJ ASK can be found online here:

www.ets.org/news/03121601.html

As a result of identified errors on the part of the vendor, the DOE this week also removed two schools from Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) lists, a requirement under the federal *No Child Left Behind* Act. The two schools notified this week they were being removed from the list are Washington Elementary School of the Hawthorne Public Schools system, and Ann Blanche School of the Hillsdale Public Schools system. The DOE is continuing to address schools incorrectly identified by the vendor as part of the coding process.

"We are confident that ETS will continue to fix the problems associated with the test delays and we are certain that when the test becomes operational next year, the results will be reported accurately, swiftly and on time so that local districts and the DOE can assess the good work being done at the third-grade level," Commissioner Librera said. "We appreciate the efforts of local school districts in achieving this goal."

Final fourth-grade (NJ ASK4) data are expected to be completed and released to school districts by mid-January. Both the NJ ASK3 and NJ ASK4 data were to be released in final form in September of this year.

In releasing the information to school districts, DOE and ETS officials have asked local school district representatives to carefully review all materials so that any problems can be addressed immediately.

In addition, ETS is conducting an internal review of the entire NJ ASK reporting process and continues to meet regularly with DOE officials to discuss future quality control procedures.

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.