# 2008 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 the most severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general assessments: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK), or the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA).

The New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment was developed for two purposes:

- To measure the progress of a small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the regular statewide assessments even with accommodations.
- 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.

The 2008 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 22, 2007, through February 22, 2008, during instructional activities for the 2007-2008 school year. A portfolio is a collection of student work, student data, and instructional information that relates to a student's progress on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standard (CCCS).

### Changes to the 2007-2008 Test Design

Based on Federal Peer Review findings, the skills being assessed for Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science in the 2007-2008 APA must be academic in nature and be linked to a grade-level cumulative progress indicator (CPI). For the purpose of Adequate Yearly Progress reporting, only the dimensions of Student Progress and Connection to Standards were assessed. Though Social Interaction, Independence, Self-Determination, and Generalization would be considered best practice, these dimensions that were assessed in previous years were not assessed. The 2008 APA proficiency levels are based on the total score which consist of the sum of the Connection to Standards and Student Progress scores.

<u>Language Arts Literacy/Mathematics</u>. Each content area requires two entries which assess targeted skills linked to the grade-level CPIs. Each entry is a collection of at least four pieces of teacher graded/scored evidence that document a student's knowledge and application of one selected skill pertaining to one particular grade-level content standard. Evidence is collected during a minimum span of twelve weeks.

<u>Science</u>. Science contains two entries. Each entry is a collection of a minimum of four pieces of evidence that document a student's knowledge and application of one skill pertaining to one particular grade-level content standard during a minimum span of eight weeks. To maintain an alignment with the general statewide standard assessment, the targeted skill had to be selected from Science standards 5.5-

5.10 for grade 4 and 8, and Science standards 5.5 and 5.10 for grade 11. New to 2007-2008 is that APA students in grade 11 who are taking a biology course must also be assessed in science.

# **Scoring Process**

The entries of the APA portfolio are scored based on two dimensions described below:

- **Student Progress** This dimension is used to evaluate student progress toward achieving the targeted skills related to the CCCS.
- **Connection to Standards** This dimension is used to determine the extent to which instruction is linked to the CCCS.

Scores are reported by content area. Entries that are incomplete, inappropriate, missing, or when the student took the general assessment in a content area, are reported as unscorable. If all entries in a content area are unscorable, then the proficiency level, Student Progress subtotal and total, and Connection to Standards subtotal and total will be reported as Void. Of the required two entries, only one scorable entry is required to assign a proficiency level. If the "subject portfolio" contains only one scorable entry, the total score and proficiency level are reported based on the dimension scores of that entry.

As seen in the Table 1 summary data, a total of 7,782 students were evaluated by the 2008 APA. Of these, 7,188 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 7,066 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 1,916 students had valid Science scores. (Note: Portfolios for students in grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 12 do not include Science. Grade 11 portfolios may not include Science since a Science APA was only required for those students taking a biology course.)

The final classification of each content area in the portfolio, or the proficiency level, is derived by combining the Student Progress score and the Connection to Standards score. Each content area assessed receives a proficiency level. The three proficiency levels are:

- **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.

The proficiency level classification allows the APA results to be combined with other state assessment results for accountability purposes as required by the United States Department of Education.

New test standards should be set whenever a testing procedure is adopted that is judged to be meaningfully different from previous testing procedures. Because the 2007-2008 test design was an interim design with further changes planned for the 2008-2009 test design, a single set of cut scores was determined and applied to all grades and subjects. Further transitions for the 2008-2009 APA will result in subject- and grade-specific performance level descriptors and cut scores.

In April 2008, a standard setting was conducted to develop the interim performance level descriptors and recommend the single set of cut scores. The standard-setting committee consisted of a panel of eighteen special education teachers, child study team members, general education teachers, and administrators. Participants were chosen because of their qualifications as well as their educational expertise. The selection criteria included number of years teaching, student population served, district

factor group (DFG), type of educational facility, and regional location. Special care was taken to ensure gender and racial/ethnic representation on the committee.

It is important to recognize that the APA system does not report scale scores. The data provided, Student Progress scores and Connection to Standards scores, are the key components when interpreting the portfolio results. The APA scores are based solely on the information provided in the portfolio submitted. Scale scores are not used for the APA 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.

This executive summary includes four tables derived from the statewide summary for the 2008 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.

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, they are also counted in as many other categories as 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." Beginning in 2005, students coded as multiple ethnicity and those whose ethnicity was unspecified were counted as "Other." In 2006, Limited English Proficient (LEP) began being reported as LEP (Current plus Former) with two subcategories: LEP Current and LEP Former.

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.

The 2008 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 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 2008 APA Performance Results**

During 2008, 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.

Statewide results for 2008 by demographic groups are presented in Table 2 for Language Arts Literacy, Table 3 for Mathematics, and Table 4 for Science. These tables present the number of students with valid scores and the percentage of students in each proficiency level for the tested grade levels. The subject area results are summarized below in presentations of the percentages of students who scored at or above proficient by grade. This percentage, the students in Proficient or Advanced Proficient, was calculated by subtracting the percentage of students in Partially Proficient from one hundred.

### Language Arts Literacy:

- Grade 3 77.8%
- Grade 4 74.5%
- Grade 5 70.8%
- Grade 6 73.0%
- Grade 7 69.9%
- Grade 8 61.4%
- Grade 11 64.5%

### Mathematics:

- Grade 3 82.7%
- Grade 4 77.8%
- Grade 5 73.0%
- Grade 6 71.4%
- Grade 7 64.6%
- Grade 8 54.2%
- Grade 11 44.0%

### Science:

- Grade 4 76.7%
- Grade 8 68.5%
- Grade 11 74.2%

# Gender

There were about twice as many male students taking the APA as female students. The percentage of male students showed a decreasing trend across grades 3 to 11. The percentage of male students was 69.7% at Grade 3, 67.6% at Grade 4, 66.5% at Grade 5, and 64.5% at Grade 6. However, the Grade 7 and Grade 8 percentage of male students increased to 65.3% and 66.9%, respectively. The lowest percentage of

male students was 62.1% at Grade 11. Overall, 66% were male students and 34% were female students.

## **Language Arts Literacy:**

For Grades 3, 4, and 7, the percentage of female students scoring at or above Proficient was similar to the percentage of male students scoring at or above Proficient. The greatest difference was at Grade 8 with 57.4% of the female students scoring at or above Proficient and 63.2% of the male students scoring at or above Proficient. At Grade 5, 67.9% of the females scored at or above Proficient and 72.5% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 6, 70.8% of the females scored at or above Proficient and 74.4% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 11, the difference shifted, showing 66.8% of the females received scores at or above Proficient and 63.3% of the males scored at or above Proficient.

#### **Mathematics:**

For Grades 4, 6, 7, and 11, the percentage of female students scoring at or above Proficient was similar to the percentage of male students scoring at or above Proficient. At Grade 3, 85.5% of the females received scores at or above Proficient and 81.4% of the males scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 5, the difference shifted, showing 70.7% of the females scored at or above Proficient and 74.3% of the males scored at or above Proficient. Similar to Language Arts Literacy, Grade 8 showed the greatest difference with 50.6% of the females receiving scores at or above Proficient and 56.0% of the males scoring at or above Proficient.

#### **Science:**

Similar to Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics, Grade 8 showed the greatest difference with 62.0% of the females receiving scores at or above Proficient and 71.8% of the males scoring at or above Proficient. For Grade 4, 75.9% of the female students and 77.1% of the male students scored at or above Proficient. At Grade 11, the difference shifted, showing 78.3% of the females scored at or above Proficient and 72.1% of the males scored 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 students with valid APA scores by ethnicity groups varied as follows:

White 562 students in Grade 11 Language Arts Literacy to

429 students in Grade 4 Science

**Black** 292 students in Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy to

206 students in Grade 8 Science

**Asian** 80 students in Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy to

40 students in Grade 11 Mathematics

**Hispanic** 206 students in Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy to

170 students in Grade 8 Science

Other 14 students in Grade 4 Science and Grade 11 Mathematics to 10 or

fewer students for 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.

Because Grade 11 Science was required only for students taking a biology course, the total number of students with valid scores was 66. Of these, 36 students were white and 19 students were Hispanic.

### **Language Arts Literacy:**

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level ranged from 82.7% of Hispanic students to 73.4% of the Black student group. (The percentages for the ethnic groups not stated fell between the percentages of the noted ethnic groups – in Grade 3, 81.5% of the Asian students and 78.0% of the White students.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 77.0% of the Asian students to 71.9% of the Black student group. The Grade 5 percentages ranged from 73.0% for White students to 63.6% for the Other student group. The Grade 6 percentages ranged from 74.5% of White and Asian students to 71.2% of Black students. The Grade 7 percentages ranged from 81.8% of the Other student group to 68.7% of White students. The Grade 8 percentages ranged from 67.9% of Black students to 59.6% of Asians. The Grade 11 percentages ranged from 75.0% of the Other student group to 56.1% of Asian students.

#### **Mathematics:**

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 86% of the Hispanic student group to 80.0% of the Asian student group. The percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 ranged from 79.8% of the Hispanic student group to 76.1% of Asian students. For Grade 5, the percentage ranged from 77.9% of the Asian student group to 69.4% of the Black student group. For Grade 6, the percentage ranged from 71.7% of the White student group to 70.7% of Black students. For Grade 7, the percentage ranged from 67.9% of the Asian student group to 54.5% of the Other student group. For Grade 8, the percentage ranged from 56.3% of the Black student group to 16.7% of the Other student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 50.0% of the Hispanic student group to 32.5% of the Asian student group.

### Science:

For Grade 4, the percentage ranged from 83.3% of Asian students to 72.7% of the Black student group. The percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level for Grade 8 ranged from 71.1% of the White students to 58.8% of the Asian student group. As noted above, only 66 students took the Grade 11 Science due to the biology requirement. Values for all but the White and Hispanic groups for Grade 11 Science were suppressed since student counts were 10 or less. The percentage of students who scored at or above Proficient level was 84.2% of Hispanic students and 83.3% of White students.

**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 (33.5%) of economically disadvantaged students took the

APA Grade 4 and the smallest percentage (30.1%) of economically disadvantaged students took the APA Grade 5.

## **Language Arts Literacy:**

Non-economically disadvantaged students generally did better than economically disadvantaged students. The greatest difference was at Grade 6 with 76.3% of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 66.2% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 3, 78.5% of economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient and 77.5% of non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

### **Mathematics:**

For Grades 4, 5, and 6, the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was greater than the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The greatest difference was at Grade 5 with 74.9% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 68.3% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. For Grades 3, 7, 8, and 11, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was greater than the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The greatest difference was at Grade 11 with 46.4% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 42.9% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring 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 4 with 79.5% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient and 70.9% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. However, for Grade 11 the percentages were nearly the same for the two groups. These percentages were 74.2% of the economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient and 74.3% of the non-economically disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

### **LEP Status**

More than 98% of APA students were not current Limited English Proficient (LEP) students. For the following summary of LEP students' performance, LEP is defined as current and former LEP students combined. The greatest numbers of LEP students were in Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in Grades 3 and 11. Most LEP students were current LEP students rather than former LEP students. In Language Arts Literacy, the percentage of Current and Former LEP students scoring at or above Proficient ranged from 71.4% for Grade 3 students, to 46.2% for Grade 4 students, to 42.9% for Grade 11 students. In Mathematics, the percentage of Current and Former LEP students scoring at or above Proficient varied from 80% and above for students in Grades 3, 4, and 5 to 63.6% for Grade 6 students and 31.2% for Grade 11 students.

# **Reporting Rules for State Summary**

In order to safeguard student confidentiality, certain information is suppressed in the state summary files according to the following reporting rules:

- Data are not reported where the number of students with valid scale scores for a particular group is greater than zero but less than 11.
- Data are not reported for groups where over 90% of the students are Partially Proficient.
- Data are not reported where education programs or 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 when it is otherwise possible to identify individual student performance.

Table 1
2008 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Number of Valid Scores and Percent of Students at Each APA Proficiency Level

		LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY				MATHEMATICS				SCIENCE			
YEAR	Total Students Enrolled	Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
Grade 3	1071	1001	22.2	48.8	29.1	994	17.3	52.2	30.5	-	-	-	-
2008													
Grade 4 2008	1141	1075	25.5	48.5	26.0	1039	22.2	46.9	30.9	958	23.3	49.6	27.1
Grade 5 2008	1096	1018	29.2	46.5	24.4	1021	27.0	46.6	26.3	-	-	-	-
Grade 6 2008	1098	1038	27.0	48.5	24.6	1021	28.6	45.2	26.2	-	-	-	-
Grade 7 2008	1136	1036	30.1	42.3	27.6	1014	35.4	38.9	25.7	-	-	-	-
Grade 8 2008	1062	930	38.6	39.7	21.7	946	45.8	34.2	20.0	892	31.5	41.0	27.5
Grade 11 2008	1132	1054	35.5	46.0	18.5	995	56.0	30.4	13.7	66	25.8	56.1	18.2
Grade 12 2008	46	36	55.6	36.1	8.3	36	63.9	30.6	5.6	-	-	-	-
All Grades 2008	7782	7188	29.7	45.8	24.5	7066	33.2	42.1	24.8	1916	27.2	45.8	27.0

Table 2
2008 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups
Language Arts Literacy

	GRADE 3		GRA	DE 4	GRADE 5		GRADE 6		GRADE 7		GRADE 8		GRADE 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient												
STATE TOTAL	1,001	77.8	1,075	74.5	1,018	70.8	1,038	73.0	1,036	69.9	930	61.4	1,054	64.5
Gender														
Female	307	79.2	346	74.0	333	67.9	360	70.8	352	68.2	296	57.4	401	66.8
Male	694	77.2	728	74.7	683	72.5	675	74.4	684	70.8	634	63.2	651	63.3
Migrant Status														
Migrant			*	*	*	*					*	*		
Non-Migrant	1,001	77.8	1,074	74.6	1,017	70.8	1,038	73.0	1,036	69.9	929	61.5	1,054	64.5
Ethnicity														
White	508	78.0	486	74.5	503	73.0	517	74.5	543	68.7	477	60.2	562	66.5
Black	241	73.4	292	71.9	226	69.0	250	71.2	240	70.8	218	67.9	239	63.6
Asian	65	81.5	74	77.0	80	71.2	55	74.5	61	73.8	47	59.6	41	56.1
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	173	82.7	206	76.7	192	67.2	202	72.3	178	70.2	178	60.1	196	61.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Other	*	*	13	76.9	11	63.6	*	*	11	81.8	*	*	12	75.0
Economic Status														
Economically Disadvantaged	317	78.5	360	70.8	306	66.7	334	66.2	320	68.1	302	60.6	320	63.1
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	684	77.5	715	76.4	712	72.6	704	76.3	716	70.7	628	61.8	734	65.1
LEP Status														
LEP (Current & Former)	14	71.4	13	46.2	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	14	42.9
Current LEP	11	81.8	12	50.0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	12	41.7
Former LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					*	*
Not Current LEP	990	77.8	1,063	74.8	1,014	70.8	1,030	73.1	1,032	70.1	926	61.7	1,042	64.8

<sup>\*</sup>Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.

Table 3
2008 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups
Mathematics

	GRADE 3		GRA	DE 4		DE 5	GRA	DE 6	GRA	DE 7	GRA	DE 8	GRAI	DE 11
	Number of Students with Valid	% At or Above												
	Scores	Proficient												
STATE TOTAL	994	82.7	1,039	77.8	1,021	73.0	1,021	71.4	1,014	64.6	946	54.2	995	44.0
Gender														
Female	310	85.5	342	78.7	348	70.7	366	69.9	343	65.6	308	50.6	385	45.2
Male	684	81.4	696	77.3	672	74.3	652	72.2	671	64.1	636	56.0	607	43.5
Migrant Status														
Migrant			*	*	*	*					*	*		
Non-Migrant	994	82.7	1,038	77.8	1,020	72.9	1,021	71.4	1,014	64.6	945	54.3	995	44.0
Ethnicity														
White	503	81.9	473	77.0	503	73.8	505	71.7	535	65.0	481	54.9	519	42.4
Black	239	82.8	285	78.2	229	69.4	242	70.7	236	63.1	215	56.3	231	45.0
Asian	65	80.0	71	76.1	77	77.9	56	71.4	56	67.9	48	54.2	40	32.5
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	171	86.0	193	79.8	197	73.6	204	71.6	174	64.9	186	53.2	188	50.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Other	*	*	13	76.9	*	*	*	*	11	54.5	12	16.7	14	42.9
Economic Status														
Economically Disadvantaged	308	82.8	344	75.3	303	68.3	328	67.1	314	65.3	315	55.2	308	46.4
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	686	82.7	695	79.0	718	74.9	693	73.4	700	64.3	631	53.7	687	42.9
LEP Status														
LEP (Current & Former)	15	80.0	11	81.8	11	81.8	11	63.6	*	*	*	*	16	31.2
Current LEP	11	72.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	14	21.4
Former LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*					*	*
Not Current LEP	983	82.8	1,029	77.7	1,015	73.0	1,012	71.5	1,012	64.6	943	54.4	981	44.3

<sup>\*</sup>Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.

Table 4
2008 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment
Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups
Science

Science												
	GRAI	DE 4	GRAD	DE 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	958	76.7	892	68.5	66	74.2						
Gender												
Female	311	75.9	297	62.0	23	78.3						
Male	646	77.1	595	71.8	43	72.1						
Migrant Status												
Migrant	*	*	*	*								
Non-Migrant	957	76.8	891	68.5	66	74.2						
Ethnicity												
White	429	77.4	453	71.1	36	83.3						
Black	264	72.7	206	70.9	*	*						
Asian	66	83.3	51	58.8	*	*						
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Hispanic	181	78.5	170	62.4	19	84.2						
American Indian/Alaskan Native	*	*	*	*								
Other	14	78.6	*	*	*	*						
Economic Status												
Economically Disadvantaged	313	70.9	286	66.4	31	74.2						
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	645	79.5	606	69.5	35	74.3						
LEP Status												
LEP (Current & Former)	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Current LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*						
Former LEP	*	*			*	*						
Not Current LEP	949	76.7	888	68.8	65	73.8						

<sup>\*</sup>Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less.