

2009 New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge Executive Summary

Grade 8

The New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for grades five through eight (NJ ASK 5-8) was administered for the first time in Spring 2008, and for grades 3 & 4 in Spring 2009 with a new test design. The NJ ASK is designed to give an early indication of the progress students are making in mastering the knowledge and skills described in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The results are to be used by schools and districts to identify strengths and weaknesses in their educational programs. It is anticipated that this process will lead to improved instruction and better alignment with the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The results may also be used, along with other indicators of student progress, to identify those students who may need instructional support in any of the content areas. This support, which could be in the form of individual or programmatic intervention, would be a means to address any identified knowledge or skill gaps.

The NJ ASK scores are reported as scale scores in each of the content areas. The scores range from 100-199 (Partially Proficient), 200-249 (Proficient), and 250-300 (Advanced Proficient). Note that 100 and 300 are a theoretical floor and ceiling, which may not actually be observed. The scores of students who are included in the Partially Proficient level are considered to be below the state minimum of proficiency and those students may be most in need of instructional support.

The NJ ASK 8 was administered between April 28 and May 1, 2009. Of the 105,808 students enrolled, 104,439 students received valid scale scores in Language Arts Literacy, 104,451 students received valid scale scores in Mathematics, and 104,298 students received valid scale scores in Science.

The state summary data files contain the same type of information shown on the Performance by Demographic Group Reports included with the Cycle II reporting. This executive summary includes state level performance results only. The number of students participating, the percent of students in each proficiency level, and the mean scale score are presented for each content area assessed. Results are presented for total students statewide and by educational program and student demographic subgroups: general education, special education (SE), limited English proficient (LEP), gender, ethnicity, and economic status (disadvantaged vs. not disadvantaged). LEP is reported with two subcategories: current LEP and former LEP. Due to rounding, the percentage of proficient students plus the percentage of advanced proficient students shown on the Performance by Demographic Group Reports might differ slightly from the percentage of students at or above proficient shown in the executive summary. The complete state summary data is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/>.

Note that the enrollment is based on the number of students with scannable test documents, which were submitted for all students, including those who did not take the NJ ASK. Also, students coded with multiple ethnic codes and those whose ethnicity was unspecified are counted as Other. The percentages may not total to one hundred due to rounding. Demographic information originates from the data collected on the students' test documents. Following testing, school and district personnel were given an opportunity to review the demographic information they provided and correct any errors prior to reporting.

Highlights of the 2009 Grade 8 Assessment Results

In Language Arts Literacy, 70.9% of all students scored at the Proficient level and 11.1% scored at the Advanced Proficient level. In Mathematics, 41.7% of all students scored at the Proficient level and 29.5% scored at the Advanced Proficient level. In Science, 53.8% of all students scored at the Proficient level and 30.4% scored at the Advanced Proficient level. The mean scale score in Language Arts Literacy was 220.4. The mean scale score in Mathematics was 221.2. The mean scale score in Science was 231.3.

Special Education

- Language Arts Literacy - 46.3% of SE students scored at the Proficient level and 0.9% scored at the Advanced Proficient level.
- Mathematics - 25.2% of SE students scored at the Proficient level and 5.2% scored at the Advanced Proficient level.
- Science - 49.9% of SE students scored at the Proficient level and 8.2% scored at the Advanced Proficient level.
- The mean scale score in Language Arts Literacy for SE students was 197.3. The mean scale score in Mathematics for SE students was 179.0. The mean scale score in Science for SE students was 207.2.

Current Limited English Proficient

- Language Arts Literacy - 32.0% of current LEP students scored at or above Proficient (31.6 Proficient and 0.4 Advanced Proficient).
- Mathematics - 31.1% of current LEP students scored at or above Proficient (23.7 Proficient and 7.5 Advanced Proficient).
- Science - 43.3% of current LEP students scored at or above Proficient (40.8 Proficient and 2.4 Advanced Proficient).
- The mean scale score in Language Arts Literacy for current LEP students was 190.7. The mean scale score in Mathematics for current LEP students was 180.0. The mean scale score in Science for current LEP students was 198.0.

Former Limited English Proficient

- Language Arts Literacy - 61.9% of former LEP students scored at or above Proficient (60.5 Proficient and 1.3 Advanced Proficient).
- Mathematics - 55.9% of former LEP students scored at or above Proficient (40.2 Proficient and 15.7 Advanced Proficient).
- Science - 69.5% of former LEP students scored at or above Proficient (61.5 Proficient and 8.1 Advanced Proficient).

Gender

- Language Arts Literacy - 86.4% of Female students scored at or above Proficient (71.9 Proficient and 14.5 Advanced Proficient) compared to 77.7% of Male students scored at or above Proficient (70.0 Proficient and 7.8 Advanced Proficient).
- Mathematics - 71.6% of Female students scored at or above Proficient (44.2 Proficient and 27.4 Advanced Proficient) compared to 70.9% of Male students scored at or above Proficient (39.3 Proficient and 31.6 Advanced Proficient).
- Science - 84.5% of Female students scored at or above Proficient (57.2 Proficient and 27.3 Advanced Proficient) compared to 83.8% of Male students scored at or above Proficient (50.6 Proficient and 33.3 Advanced Proficient).

Ethnicity

- Language Arts Literacy - the percentage of Partially Proficient students ranged from 38.2% for Black or African American students to 7.1% for Asian students (a gap of 31.1% between lowest and highest achieving groups).
- Mathematics - the percentage of Partially Proficient students ranged from 55.5% for Black or African American students to 9.9% for Asian students (a gap of 45.6% between lowest and highest achieving groups).
- Science - the percentage of Partially Proficient students ranged from 35.4% of Black or African American students to 6.5% for Asian students (a gap of 28.9% between lowest and highest achieving groups).

Economic Status

- Language Arts Literacy - 64.1% of Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. 89.2% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.
- Mathematics - 50.6% of Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. 79.7% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.
- Science - 68.0% of Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient. 90.8% of Non-Economically Disadvantaged students scored at or above Proficient.

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 educational program 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.