

New Jersey High School Graduation Rate Increases to 86% in 2011-12 School Year, While Turnaround Schools Make Significant Gains Across the State

Department of Education Releases Graduation Rates, NJ ASK, and HSPA Results Months Earlier Than Ever Before to Support District Improvement Efforts

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Trenton, NJ - The Department of Education today released results on the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK), the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) and state-wide graduation rates for the 2011-2012 school year, drastically improving reporting timelines from previous years.

The state's graduation rate increased from 83% in 2011 to 86% in 2012, the second year the state is using the new federal methodology for calculating the graduation rate. On the NJ ASK, the average proficiency rates across all grades and subjects remained steady, while proficiency rates on the HSPA increased in both LAL and math. Meanwhile, School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools undergoing intensive turnarounds with the support of the NJDOE on the whole made significant gains over the past two years.

"Once again, our data shows us that New Jersey student perform quite well overall while continuing to make steady improvement, and we applaud our educators for their work every day with our students," said Commissioner Chris Cerf. "The results for schools undergoing intensive turnarounds this year are particularly very encouraging, showing that while our achievement gaps across the state are persistent and unacceptably high, we can close them with dedicated support and interventions."

The graduation rate is calculated using a new, federally-mandated methodology announced by Governor Christie and Commissioner Cerf in April of this year. This more thorough method provides a more accurate and complete accounting of students who graduate by tracking based on the number of students in a four-year cohort. More information on the methodology change can be found here: http://ni.gov/qovernor/news/news/552012/approved/20120430a.html

Graduation rates

2012 represents the second year for which the New Jersey Department of Education has used the federally mandated graduation rate which allows for a year over year comparison for the first time. Using this methodology, the 2012 4-year statewide graduation rate was 86%, an increase of 3 percentage points over 2011's graduation rate. As the total number of graduates did not increase, the change is likely due in part to better tracking and reporting of student-level data by districts. The achievement gaps between student subgroups have narrowed slightly, though gaps still remain significant.

A summary of graduation rates by student subgroups is as follows:

- 86% of students across the state graduated in 2012, an increase from 83% in 2011.
- 75% of African American students graduated in 2012, an increase from 69% in 2011.
- 77% of Hispanic students graduated in 2012, an increase from 73% in 2011.
- 93% of white students graduated in 2012, an increase from 90% in 2011.
- 95% of Asian students graduated in 2012, an increase from 93% in 2011.
- 75% of economically disadvantaged students graduated in 2012, an increase from 71% in 2011.
- 73% of Limited English Proficient (LEPs) students graduated in 2012, an increase from 68% in 2011.
- 74% of students with disabilities graduated in 2012, an increase from 73% in 2011.

Several of the state's largest school districts – including Newark, Paterson and Trenton - showed marked improvement in their 2012 graduation rates over the previous year's. However, decreases in Camden and Jersey City indicate a continued need to focus resources on our schools with the lowest academic achievement levels. The results of these districts are as follows:

	2012	2011
Camden	49.27	56.89

Jersey City	67.34	69.92
Newark	68.72	61.26
Paterson	66.39	64.03
Trenton	48.44	47.71

In addition, the Department for the first time calculated the 5 year graduation rate for students that began high school in 2007. While the four year graduation rate last year was 83%, the graduation rate for students who continued on for a fifth year jumped to 86%.

"While we are excited to see the graduation rate increase this year, the overall number of graduates did not change, which indicates that the change is largely due to better reporting and tracking of students by districts," said Chief Performance Officer Bari Erlichson. "In essence, this means that 86% is much closer to our true graduation rate than the 83% reported last year."

School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools

While overall numbers on statewide assessments were fairly constant, traditionally low-performing schools undergoing intensive turnaround efforts, on the whole, made significant gains. Beginning in either 2010 or 2011, 19 SIG schools implemented federal turnaround models with the support of a dedicated Network Turnaround Officer from the state. While not every SIG school made gains, the Department is reviewing the differences in interventions to identify the practices to model for other schools. These interventions formed the basis of the interventions now being used by the Regional Achievement Centers in the 250 Priority and Focus Schools across the state.

"Turning around our lowest-performing schools is hard work, and takes real partnership between the school, the district, and the state. These schools show that by making real changes, improvement for our highest-need students is possible," said Commissioner Cerf. "We are now using what we've learned from these schools as a blueprint for our RACS to help Priority and Focus Schools across the state improve student outcomes."

Figures 1 through 4 below illustrate the gains made by the SIG schools in LAL and math.

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Figure 2: Cohort Two SIG Grantees, Language Arts

Figure 1: Cohort One SIG Grantees, Language Arts

Graph2				
Figure 3: Co Graph3	hort One SI	G Grantees,	Math	

Figure 4: Cohort Two SIG Grantees, Math

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NJ ASK and HSPA

On statewide assessments, NJ ASK scores continued to be constant this year, while HSPA scores continued to rise.

Percentage of students proficient or above over the past three years

		2011-2012	2010-11	2009-10
Math	NJ ASK	75.34%	75.50%	80.75%
	HSPA	83.33%	82.26%	72.95%
LAL	NJ ASK	65.89%	66.50%	66.48%
	HSPA	92.70%	90.67%	89.08%

The achievement gap on NJASK remained constant for the fourth consecutive year for both low-income, African American, and Hispanic students, as detailed in the summary below.

A summary of statewide proficiency results on the NJ ASK by subject and subgroup is as follows:

- 65.89% of all grade 3-8 students across the State met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 66.56% in 2011; 75.34% met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from 75.50% in 2011.
- 76.38% of white students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 77.09% in 2011; 84.42% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 84.24% in 2011.
- 44.68% of black students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 44.81 in 2011; 53.45% met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from 53.77% in 2011.
- 49.66% of Hispanic students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 50.26% in 2011; 63.41% met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from 63.86% in 2011.
- 46.17% of economically disadvantaged students in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 46.56% in 2011; 59.62% met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from

59.94% in 2011.

- 23.64% of English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 24.09% in 2011; 41.09% of ELLs met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from 41.36% in 2011.
- 34.62% of Students with Disabilities (SWDs) in grades 3-8 met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, a decrease from 36.03% in 2011; 48.35% of SWDs met or exceeded the standard in math, a decrease from 48.92% in 2011.

A summary of statewide proficiency results on the HSPA by subject and subgroup is as follows:

- 92.70% of all students across the state met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 90.67% last year; 83.33% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 82.26% in 2011.
- 96.02% of white students met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 95.12% in 2011; 90.63% of white students met or exceeded the math proficiency standard, an increase from 89.65% in 2011.
- 85.14% of black students met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 79.61% in 2011; 62.96% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 60.83% in 2011.
- 86.79% of Hispanic students met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 83.05% in 2011; 72.33% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 70.72% in 2011.
- 85.95% of economically disadvantaged students met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 81.29% in 2011; 69.01% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 67.14% in 2011.
- 94.98% of non-economically disadvantaged students met or exceeded the LAL proficiency standard, an increase from 93.59% in 2011; 88.18% met or exceeded the standard in math, an increase from 86.97% in 2011.

A summary of the test results and graduation rates, as well as individual school and district results, are available at the following links:

NJ ASK and HSPA: http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/achievement/2013/

Graduation Rates: http://www.nj.gov/education/data/grate/2012/