

New Jersey Department of Education



September 2014 - February 2015
Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA)
Science Only

Score Interpretation Manual

June 2015

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PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

A. How to Use This Booklet

This Score Interpretation Manual provides a broad range of detailed information about how to interpret and use results of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA). It is organized as a resource for teachers and school administrators who need to understand and discuss the score reports with others, such as parents/guardians, districts, or the media. This manual is divided into the following parts:

Part 1: Introduction and Overview of Assessment Program

This section provides a description of the New Jersey assessment program in general, the design of the APA, the components of an APA portfolio, and a summary of the scoring and reporting process.

Part 2: Information for School Administrators

This manual is primarily addressed to school administrators who are charged with understanding, using, and explaining the series of reports generated to communicate test results.

- A. *Determining the Proficiency Levels* – describes the purpose of standard-setting for determining the proficiency levels.
- B. *Other Portfolio Assessment Information* – addresses the differences between the APA and the general assessment, and accountability.
- C. *Guide to Teachers* – assists teachers in reviewing the APA results.
- D. *Using Assessment Information* – provides information about assisting students who score below the minimum level of proficiency on one or more subjects of the assessment, and suggestions for evaluating school instructional programs for potential curricular improvement.
- E. *Communicating Assessment Information* – provides guidelines for communicating assessment results and publicly releasing assessment information.

Part 3: Sample Reports

This section provides a definition of terms that describes the meaning of the data, and examples of each report using fictional data.

B. Test Security and Confidentiality

Although the APA does not contain secure test items like other state assessments, APA portfolios are confidential pupil records and must be maintained as such. Portfolio contents should only be shared with parents and others in accordance with pupil records regulations.

C. Reporting Process

The APA program provides a variety of reports to help school personnel identify the needs of each student assessed and to support the evaluation of school and district programs. This manual aims to assist in the analysis, interpretation, and use of these different types of reports. The data contained therein can help identify student strengths and weaknesses and assist in instructional planning for students. In addition, this data will help both school and district personnel to identify and address curricular strengths and needs. Information regarding student progress can assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams in selecting appropriate goals and objectives and evaluation criteria for individual students.

Record Change. A Record Change period allows the districts an opportunity to correct inaccurate student demographic information that the district provided for the assessment. Record changes are completed before reporting. Corrections to the student demographic information submitted by the record change deadline are reflected in the final score reports.

It is a district's responsibility, specifically the District Test Coordinator (DTC), to submit accurate student demographic information. A district has three opportunities to ensure data accuracy: Pre-ID file submission, Student Demographic Information Form, and the Record Change period. The data cannot be changed after the Record Change period ends.

Prior to reporting, an online record change roster of the students who took the APA in their districts or at an out-of-district placement are posted to the vendor's website. Figure 1 shows a sample of the record change roster. Figure 2 shows the record change roster contact page. The record change roster contains student demographic information that was provided by the district as part of a pre-ID file or on the Student Demographic Information Form (SDIF) for each student. Districts must review each student record and make any necessary corrections or additions to the data. It is the responsibility of the student's Home School to submit updates to the demographic information.

When there is a sending and receiving relationship, both attending (receiving) and sending schools must communicate with each other and review the information for accuracy. The **sending** school is responsible for making and submitting any changes during record change, as errors (e.g., CDS code of sending school) will impact the sending school accountability reporting. The student's **attending** (receiving) school must provide the sending school with any corrections and revisions several days prior to the record change deadline. Attending (receiving) schools are able to view all student records, but may not make any edits. Updated student demographic information is to be downloaded and saved during the Record Change period for recordkeeping purposes.

If the attending school is located **out-of-state**, then the sending school is responsible for completing and submitting the record changes and for keeping the attending school informed of the correct student demographic information.

Figure 1: Sample Record Change Roster



New Jersey Statewide Assessment System
Alternate Proficiency Assessment
2014-2015

Student Demographic Information Record Change Roster
Grade 4

CCS: 88-2223-019
 County: ZCOUNTY
 District: NDISTRICT
 School: SCHOOLF
 Page: 1

USER ID WHO UPDATED	DATE/TIME OF LAST UPDATE	STUDENT NAME		LOCAL STUDENT ID	SENDING SCHOOL CODE (CDS)		SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDS (CDS)		ETHNIC CODES		DIST OF RES*	GA ³	T-1		HOME ADDRESS
													LAST	FIRST	
					COUNTY	DISTRICT	COUNTY	DISTRICT	W	B	A	F	H	S	
DT0USER1	03/29 11:01	ALAST	STUDENT11	765432			88	2222	010	W					1 04
		Y ALAST	STUDENT11							*					
DT0USER1	03/30 13:10	CLAST	STUDENT22	456789			88	2222	010	H				R Y	3 07
		Y CLAST	STUDENT22												*
DT0USER2	04/02 09:30	ELAST	STUDENT33	98765			88	2222	010	B	H			R	03
		ELAST	STUDENT33											F	
DT0USER1	3/29 11:15	HLAST	STUDENT44	12345		2244 020	88	2222	010	A					F1 08
		HLAST	STUDENT44												3
DT0USER2	03/30 14:00	JLAST	STUDENT55			88 2222 010	88	2222	015	H				F	14 3
		JLAST	STUDENT55				88	2222	010						*
		Y FLAST	STUDENT66	23456		88 2222 010	88	2222	015		Y Y			F	< 02
		TLAST	STUDENT77				88	2222	010	W				Y	02

Sending School is responsible for submitting record changes. Please review this data carefully. Contact the Student's Receiving School to confirm data if needed. All changes must be completed prior to April 10, 2015. Remember to print a copy of this report for your records.

First row for each student reflects latest information.
 Second row for each student, which is shaded gray, reflects previous values for any fields that have changed.
 An "*" in the second line represents no value was provided previously (on the SDIF). If the second row is blank, then no change has occurred.
 *District and School of Residence
 **SDIF indicated student was taking one of the General Assessments (NJ ASK or HSPA)

Run Date: 12/03/2014

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

Figure 2: Sample Record Change Roster (Contact Page)

			New Jersey Statewide Assessment System Alternate Proficiency Assessment 2014-2015 Student Demographic Information Record Change Roster Contacts		CDS: 88-2222-010 County: ZCOUNTY District: NDISTRICT School: SCHOOLF Page: 1	
District CDS Code	Name of District	Name of District Test Coordinator	District Test Coordinator Phone Number			
88-2222	NDISTRICT	DR DT COORD1	999-999-9999 EXT 999			
88-2244	MDISTRICT	DR DT COORD2	999-999-9998 EXT 999			

Run Date: 11/12/2014

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

If changes have been made, the student record will appear twice in the record change roster. The first line shows the updated student record and the second line will show ONLY those fields that have changed and will reflect the original values for that field.

Reporting. The assessment results are reported electronically in early July. APA reports are delivered electronically by the APA vendor, Questar, via controlled secure web access (<https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com/login.aspx>). Using district- and school-specific passwords, districts and schools will download and distribute their own reports. Reports will be available through December 31, 2015 and should be downloaded and saved as soon as they become available. Districts will subsequently receive a set of Individual Student Reports (ISR, 2 per student) and Student Stickers (1 per student) for each school in paper form.

The student's "attending" school is responsible for sending a copy of the Individual Student Report (ISR) to the parent/guardian. The sending school, if applicable, receives one copy of the ISR. The district of residence (home district) also receives a copy of the ISR for review by the director of special education and the case manager.

New Jersey students attending an **out-of-state** facility participate in the NJ APA at the attending site. If a student attends an out-of-state facility, the New Jersey sending school should provide a copy of the ISR to the student's parents and to the out-of-state attending facility.

Districts are required to report test results to their boards of education and to the public within 60 days of receiving test reports. However, any report or report category which contains data for ten or less students may not be publicly reported due to the need to protect student confidentiality.

Portfolio Returns. Scored student portfolios are returned to districts in September. Districts may share with and explain the scored portfolios with parents.

District Student Data. Districts of residence and sending districts will receive student level data files of their students electronically. Files in fixed-width ASCII and Excel formats are created for districts and schools with ten or more students. The data file will be available on Questar's ServicePoint site <https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com/login.aspx>. When necessary, a CD-ROM may be requested. To request the data file, contact Questar Customer Support at (866) 690-4733 or NJAPACustomerSupport@questarai.com.

State Summary. A state summary data file will be completed based on the reporting data and posted on the NJDOE website before the end of the calendar year (www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/). The data file, available in text and Excel formats, contains the same type of test results as in the Performance by Demographics report. Due to the small size of the APA population, the APA reports the state summary at the state level only.

Report Distribution. Table 1 summarizes the available report media. Table 2 lists reports that are available online and the access level for districts and schools. Table 3 provides an overview of report distribution. Table 4 summarizes critical events of report delivery responsibilities and is provided as a suggested guideline.

Table 1: NJAPA Report Media

	Print	Electronic	District CD ^c
Student Stickers	X		
Individual Student Reports	X	X	X
Explanation Sheets	X ^b	X	
All-Subjects Roster		X	X
Student Roster		X	X
Summary of Performance – School ^a		X	X
Summary of Performance – District ^a		X	X
Performance by Demographic Groups - School		X	X
Performance by Demographic Groups - District		X	X
Performance by Demographic Groups - State		X	X
District Student Data File			X

a – Summary of Performance Report is not created for Private Schools.

b – Explanation Sheets are printed and delivered with binder.

c – The district CD is available upon request.

Table 2: NJ APA Report Access

District/School where student resides and attends	School	District
Student Stickers	X	
Individual Student Reports	X	X
Explanation Sheets	X	
All-Subjects Roster	X	X
Student Roster	X	X
Summary of Performance - School ^a	X	X
Summary of Performance - District ^a		X
Performance by Demographic Groups - School	X	X
Performance by Demographic Groups - District		X
Performance by Demographic Groups - State	X	X
District Student Data File		X
District/School where student is sent to another District/School	School	District
Student Stickers	X	
Individual Student Reports	X	X
Explanation Sheets	X	
All-Subjects Roster	X	X
All-Subjects Roster	X	X
Summary of Performance – School ^a	X	X
Summary of Performance – District ^a		X
Performance by Demographic Groups - School	X	X
Performance by Demographic Groups - District		X
Performance by Demographic Groups - State	X	X
District Student Data File		X
District/School where student is received by another District/School	School	District
Student Stickers		
Individual Student Reports	X	X ^b
Explanation Sheets	X	
All-Subjects Roster	X	X

a – Summary of Performance Report is not created for Private Schools.

b – A Receiving District can only access the ISR electronically via ServicePoint.

Note: The County receives all of the same reports as the District does.

Table 3: Report Distribution Overview

<i>Report Distribution Overview</i>
<i>District Reports for Students Educated In and Out of the District</i> (* Receiving Districts, including Private Schools, will receive only the All Subjects Roster) All Subjects Roster Summary of Performance - District Summary of Performance - School Performance by Demographic Groups - District Performance by Demographic Groups - School Performance by Demographic Groups - State
<i>School Reports for Students who Attend a Receiving School (if applicable)</i> <u>Receiving School the Student Attends</u> will receive: Individual Student Reports Explanation Sheets (delivered only when student has non-score codes) All Subjects Roster Student Roster <u>Sending School</u> will receive: Student Stickers Individual Student Reports Explanation Sheets (delivered only when student has non-score codes) All Subjects Roster Student Roster Summary of Performance - School Performance by Demographic Groups - School Performance by Demographic Groups - State
<i>School Reports for Students who Attend a School in their District of Residence (if applicable)</i> <u>Sending School</u> will receive: Student Stickers Individual Student Reports Explanation Sheets (delivered only when student has non-score codes) All Subjects Roster Student Roster Summary of Performance - School Performance by Demographic Groups - School Performance by Demographic Groups - State
Note for ISR: If a student attends an out-of-state facility, the sending school should provide a copy of the ISR to the student's parents and to the out-of state attending facility as feedback.

Table 4: Suggested Report Delivery Responsibilities

Suggested NJ APA Report Delivery Responsibilities		
Districts	Schools	Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive reports online • Receive paper reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Stickers (1 per student) -ISRs (2 per student) -Score Interpretation Manual (2/shipment) • Deliver Stickers and ISRs to schools • Download, save, distribute reports* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ISRs** -All Subjects Rosters -Student Rosters -Summary of Performance - District, School -Performance by Demographics - District, School -Performance by Demographics - State -Score Interpretation Manual -District student data file • Review reports to determine program needs • Prepare public reports • Release information to the public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive reports online • Receive paper reports from district: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student Stickers -ISRs -Score Interpretation Manual • Deliver ISRs to teachers • Download, save, distribute reports* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ISRs** -All Subjects Rosters -Student Rosters -Summary of Performance - School -Performance by Demographics - School -Performance by Demographics - State -Score Interpretation Manual • Review ISRs • Prepare parent letters • Review reports to determine program needs • File ISRs • Attach Stickers to cumulative folders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review ISRs to determine instructional needs • Meet with students • Send home ISRs with accompanying parent letters
<p>County: Access online reports of districts and schools within own county.*</p>		
<p>* NOTE: Please remember to download and save your report files from https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com/login.aspx as soon as they become available. Report files will not be available after December 31, 2015.</p>		
<p>** An Explanation Sheet will accompany the student's ISR when an entry results in an unscorable code.</p>		

D. Overview of Statewide Assessment Program

In May, 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) to describe what all students should know and be able to do at the end of fourth grade, eighth grade, and upon completion of a New Jersey public school education. The Core Curriculum Content Standards delineate New Jersey's expectations for student learning. All New Jersey school districts are required to organize instruction and design curricula so that all students, including students with disabilities, are working toward achieving the content standards. All New Jersey state assessments are now designed to measure achievement of the standards.

The Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) was designed, from its inception in 1997, to measure achievement of the NJ CCCS for fourth graders. In May 2003, the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) for grades three and four, replaced the ESPA. The NJ ASK 3, the third grade assessment, became operational in March 2004. The NJ ASK was expanded in the spring of 2007 to include those students in grades 5, 6, and 7. In the spring of 2008, the NJASK was expanded again, now to include all grades between grade 3 and grade 8. The NJ ASK assessment is aligned with the content standards and should be used for placement and program planning so students can receive the appropriate instruction to enable them to pass the state's graduation test. The High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) is aligned with the content standards and has replaced the HSPT11 as the state's graduation test. In March 2002, the HSPA was administered for the first time to eleventh grade students. According to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, all students with disabilities must participate in state assessments. States must develop alternate assessments for those students who cannot participate in the general state assessments. Most students with disabilities in New Jersey participate in the general assessments: the NJ ASK and HSPA. For those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general statewide assessments, the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) was designed.

The APA is a portfolio assessment which measures progress toward achieving New Jersey's CCCS. It was first administered during the 2001–2002 school year in two content areas: Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics at grades 4, 8, and 11.

During the 2004–2005 school year, the APA was administered at grades 4, 8, and 11 in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science, and Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grade 3.

Starting with the 2006–2007 administration of the APA, Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science were administered in grades 4, 8, and 11, and Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics were assessed in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7. With the implementation of the High School End of Course Biology Exam, Science was also assessed at grades 9 and 10 if the student was enrolled in a Biology class. Starting with the 2011 administration the New Jersey End of Course Biology exam was renamed to the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT).

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment was redesigned and implemented in 2008–2009 to meet the requirements of the US Department of Education. The APA underwent significant changes between the 2007–2008 and the 2008–2009 school years, including changes to the test specifications, assessable content, and scoring dimensions. As a result, new Performance Level Descriptors and a new standard setting were required; longitudinal analyses and comparisons

across or including the 2008–2009 assessment year are not recommended, nor are they likely to be interpretable.

2007–2008 was an interim year of the design change. Based on the USED peer review, the skills assessed were required to be academic in nature and linked to a grade-level cumulative progress indicator (CPI). An interim standard setting was conducted in April 2008. The interim standard setting was to ease the further transition of additional changes for the re-designed APA.

In February 2009, the standard setting process for the revised APA began with the development of specific Performance Level Descriptors (PLD) for each grade and content area for the APA administered in 2008–2009. The standard setting was conducted in June 2009. The New Jersey State Board of Education approved the cut scores (i.e., proficiency levels) in July 2009.

Starting with the 2009 administration, the APA assessed Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, and grade 12 (if the student was not assessed as a grade 11 student). Science is assessed in grades 4 and 8, and in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12, depending on the grade in which a student receives Biology instruction.

The 2015 APA assessed Science only. For the 2014-2015 school year, the alternate assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics transitioned to a new assessment system called Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM). For more information on DLM, please visit <http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/apa/dlm/>. The alternate assessment for Science continues to be assessed in a portfolio format in grades 4 and 8, and in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12, depending on the grade in which a student receives Biology instruction.

For accountability purposes, the APA is both a student assessment and a school/district program assessment. The proficiency level classification allows the APA results to be combined with the results from the general assessment for state and federal reporting. The Office of Title I produces accountability reporting using the assessment data.

E. The Design of the APA

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) is a portfolio-based assessment designed to measure progress toward achieving New Jersey’s state educational standards for those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general assessment: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in grades 3–8 (NJ ASK), the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), and the New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT). The APA is not designed as a measure for graduation.

Federal peer review guidance indicates that a state’s academic achievement standards must be aligned with the State’s academic content standards and capture the full range and depth of knowledge and skills defined in the State’s academic content standards (USED, 2007). For the APA, this was achieved by the development of grade-level specific Performance Level Descriptors and achievement levels that cover the full range of knowledge and skills articulated in the CPI Links.

In order to meet the requirements of the United States Department of Education, the APA was revised to include changes to content that may be assessed and the dimensions on which that content is scored. These revisions in test design were implemented in the 2008–2009 school year.

Alignment

In 2007, as part of the test redesign, the NJ DOE worked with ILSSA and NJ educators to identify appropriate standards and associated CPIs for the APA population. The standards and CPIs identified differed across grades to ensure the broadest coverage of the NJ CCCS.

The CPI Links are skill statements that directly link to the critical essence of CPIs from the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Providing these skill statements removes the need for educators to determine an appropriate instructional link to the CPIs, as the CPI Links have already been vetted using criteria developed in NJ based on the peer-reviewed work of special education researchers and the National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC).

Each link is presented at three different levels of complexity to provide examples of how the essence of grade level content can be taught to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who have varied levels of communication and skills. The three levels of connection to each CPI are: Matched Link, Near Link, and Far Link.

All CPI Links are aligned with grade level CPIs, however they differ in the level of complexity and difficulty that the student is expected to perform. Matched Links have more complexity and difficulty than the Far Links.

The criteria used as guiding principles for test development and alignment process can be found in the 2014–2015 NJ APA Procedures Manual (Chapter One).

The different levels of the CPI Links do not correspond to a particular communication system, learning style, or disability category of a student. Students may be using a Matched Link in one entry and a Far Link in another entry.

Matched Link: Contains skill statements that are approximately the *same complexity* level of the CPI expectation, but the *level of difficulty is lessened*

- For instance, if the CPI complexity level is “understanding” then a Matched Link usually requires the student demonstrate understanding. However, if the CPI expectation is that the student understands similes, metaphors, personification, and alliteration, the Matched Link might only require a few of those concepts, thus modifying the difficulty level.
- The difficulty may also be lessened by providing an adapted text, fewer problems, or other supports.

Near Link: May be the *same or lower complexity* as the CPI expectation, but the *difficulty level has been lessened even more*

- Near Links were developed in two different ways:

- If the complexity level for the CPI is at the “understanding” level, then the Near Link may be “understanding” but the difficulty level has been modified to include fewer concepts and additional supports.

OR

- A Near Link may have been developed by modifying the complexity level so that instead of “understanding” the student is required to demonstrate “remembering.”

Far Link: Contains skill statements that are a *lower complexity* level and *difficulty is lessened even more*.

- For instance, if the CPI expectation is at the “understanding” level, the student is only expected to perform at the “remembering” level.
- Also, the difficulty level has been lessened so that the student is only identifying part of the concept/skill required in the CPI and has additional supports.

Test Design

The basic design of the APA remains the same across grades and content (subject) areas; it is the specific academic content being measured which differs. In each APA subject area four strands from the NJ CCCS are measured. For each strand, a CPI from the CCCS and a CPI link must be identified. To assess student mastery of the CPI link the teacher uses data collected from classroom learning and assessment activities. The student’s ability to complete the tasks in the activities is measured once early in the assessment window providing the first piece of evidence (baseline). The student is then measured late in the assessment window on the same targeted skill to see the extent to which their performance has improved, providing the second piece of evidence.

The entries of the APA portfolio are scored based on three dimensions: complexity, performance, and independence.

Complexity: Evaluates how closely the CPI Link assesses the CCCS CPI. The CPI Links vary by complexity and difficulty in relation (Matched, Near, Far) to the CPI.

Performance: Evaluates the student’s accuracy performing the skills represented in the CPI Links. This dimension measures the extent to which students show progress toward achieving the CPI Link. The student’s performance is documented by evidence of student working on the CPI Link within the specified two data collection periods in a school year (an initial piece of evidence and a final piece of evidence).

Independence: Evaluates the extent to which the student completed test items independently.

Each CPI Link maintains fidelity with the grade level CPI (content centrality) but the complexity and difficulty varies from Matched to Far Link (performance centrality). **Complexity** is the expectation level at which the student should perform the skill (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating). **Difficulty** involves the number of concepts, skills, or ideas on which the student will be working or the type of adaptations and supports in place. Difficulty can be changed by reducing the number of nouns addressed within the CPI, limiting the amount a student has to do, or by using adaptations such as adapted text of limited number of items.

Performance measures how well the student has demonstrated the skill specified in the CPI Link within the collection periods.

A student's level of proficiency is based on the total earned score; combining the scores of the three dimensions. The cut scores established through standard setting are used to determine the performance classification indicated by the student's earned score.

Test Specifications

Test specifications provide specific guidance on how to link to grade level CPIs and address the federal requirement of alignment to the skills tested in the general assessments. Specifying the strands and CPIs allows for more specific examples of grade-level linked skills, narrows the focus of assessment to select CPIs, and increases standardization of the assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

Instruction and assessment must directly link to a grade-level CPI and address its critical essence. Students may not be assessed in functional, behavioral, or access (social, motor, etc.) skills. Functional activities and materials might be used to promote understanding during instruction, but the evidence and activities demonstrating student achievement for assessment must be academically focused and represent the entire grade-level CPI Link.

Each content area requires four entries, each one reflecting the assessment of a different CPI Link. The instructional activity used at the beginning and at the end of the CPI Link instruction is submitted as the assessment evidence. Therefore, each entry requires two pieces of evidence. For CPI Links, an activity must include at least five test items.

Each APA portfolio in each grade requires four entries per content area. Science is assessed at grades 4, 8, and high school.

Table 5 illustrates the required components for each APA portfolio, including the standards, strands, and CPIs that must be assessed by APA.

Table 5: Test Specifications

2014 - 2015 NJ APA Science Test Specifications		Entry		
Standard (NJ CCCS)	Strand	G4	G8	HS
5.5 Characteristics of Life	A: Matter, Energy, and Organization in Living Systems	X		X
	B: Diversity and Biological Evolution		X	X
5.6 Chemistry	A: Structure and Properties of Matter	X		
	B: Chemical Reactions		X	
5.7 Physics	B: Energy Transformations		X	
5.8 Earth Science	B: Atmosphere and Water	X		
5.9 Astronomy and Space Science	A: Earth, Moon, and Sun System	X		
	B: Solar System		X	
5.10 Environmental Studies	A: Natural Systems and Interactions			X
	B: Human Interactions and Impact			X

Science Standards

5.5 Characteristics of Life

- A. Matter, Energy, and Organization in Living Systems
- B. Diversity and Biological Evolution

5.6 Physical Science – Chemistry

- A. Structure and Properties of Matter
- B. Chemical Reactions

5.7 Physical Science – Physics

- B. Energy Transformations

5.8 Earth Science

- B. Atmosphere and Water

5.9 Astronomy and Space Science

- A. Earth, Moon and Sun System
- B. Solar System

5.10 Environmental Studies

- A. Natural Systems and Interactions (APA–High School only)
- B. Human Interactions and Impact (APA–High School only)

Portfolio Components

A portfolio is a collection of paper-based student work samples, student demographic data, and instructional information that relates to a student's progress on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), strands, grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPIs), and skill statements called CPI Links.

A completed portfolio should contain some or all of the following items:

- Table of Contents
- Entry Cover Sheet for each standard, strand, CPI and CPI Link assessed
- Standards-based entries:
 - Science: Four entries
 - Grade 4: One strand each from standards 5.5, 5.6, 5.8, and 5.9
 - Grade 8: One strand each from standards 5.5, 5.6, 5.7, and 5.9
 - High School Biology (Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12): Two different strands (A and B) each from standards 5.5 and 5.10

Science entries are to be submitted when the student is in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12 (students in high school must be assessed in science the year they receive instruction in biology).

Table of Contents. A table of contents helps the teacher organize the portfolio. A table of contents can be adapted to meet the individual needs of each student.

Entry Cover Sheets. An entry cover sheet must be submitted with each entry. The standard addressed in the entry is listed on the cover sheet.

Entries. A collection of evidence that documents a student's knowledge and application of key concepts and skills pertaining to a particular content area; the entry must document student performance of a CPI Link that relates to a specific content Standard, Strand, and a selected grade-level CPI (CPI identified for assessment in the APA). An entry contains two pieces of evidence, one collected during each of the two specified collection periods.

Cumulative Progress Indicators (CPIs). Concepts and skills to be taught within the content standards, specified by grade level.

CPI Link. Skill statements that directly link to the critical essence of specific grade-level CPIs.

Evidence. Representation of a student's performance of a CPI Link. Evidence documents educational instruction and student performance of skills. The evidence presented may include samples of teacher-graded student work, captioned photographs, and a snapshot of completed student work that documents student performance of the skills contained within the CPI Link. Student work obtained from the instructional activities used at the beginning and at the end of the CPI Link instruction is submitted as the assessment evidence.

Collection Period. The time frame within which evidence must be collected and the portfolio completed. There are two collection periods for the school year. One piece of evidence must be

from the first collection period to establish the baseline: the initial prompt or Independence level on the CPI Link and the initial student performance accuracy; a CPI Link is only eligible for assessment if the initial student performance is less than 40% accurate. The last piece of evidence must come from the second collection period to document the student's final level of accuracy and independence on the same CPI Link.

Below is this year's collection schedule:

- First Collection Period September 2, 2014 to November 14, 2014
- Second Collection Period December 8, 2014 to February 13, 2015

Scoring

To score the portfolios, trained expert scorers used a scoring rubric designed to measure student performance on the skill, the level of independence when performing the skill, and the relationship of the skill to the grade-level cumulative progress indicator.

The scoring rubric was determined by reflecting on the purpose of the APA, which is to:

- assess the district and school grade-level instructional program provided to the student,
- assess a student's attainment of knowledge and skills of the CCCS, and
- encourage high but appropriate instructional standards for all students, while providing necessary supports to access the curriculum and foster the highest level of independence possible for the student.

The entries of the APA portfolio are scored based on a rubric that contains three dimensions: Complexity, Performance, and Independence. Scores are reported with a proficiency level. The APA proficiency levels are based on the total score.

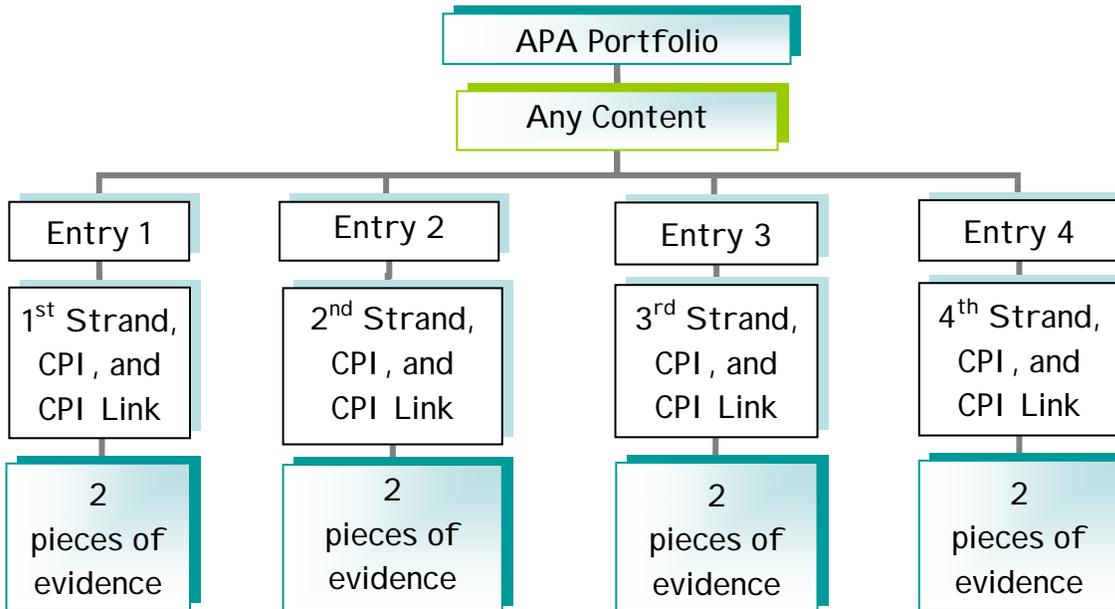
Entries that are inappropriate, missing, or when the student takes the general assessment in the same content area, are reported as unscorable. Please refer to the New Jersey APA 2014–2015 Procedures Manual for guidelines for scorable evidence meeting the Universal Scoring Rules.

Each entry is reviewed independently by at least two readers for each of the three dimensions. An entry score is derived by two equivalent scores, one from each reader. If the scores given by the two readers do not agree, then a third reader scores the dimension(s) until there are two equal scores. The two equal scores are added or averaged, depending on the dimension. As a result of this scoring, there are no half-point scores.

Each scorable entry receives a score of 0–4 for each of the three dimensions. For the dimensions of complexity and independence, the two ratings are averaged with a score range of 0–4 per entry and zero to 16 per dimension across all 4 entries. For the dimension of performance, the two ratings are summed with a score range of 0–8 per entry and 0–32 for the dimension across 4 entries. The total score of a content area is calculated by adding the scores of all three dimensions for each of the four entries and ranges from 0–64.

Figure 3 illustrates the blueprint of the test design with scoring references. Table 6 summarizes the dimension scoring. The scoring rubric which describes the ratings for each dimension can be found in Appendix A. For additional information, please reference the 2014–2015 NJ APA Procedures Manual (Chapter Seven, pages 59–72).

Figure 3. APA Scoring Reference Sheet



- Each entry is scored on 3 dimensions: **Performance, Complexity, and Independence** by a minimum of two scorers
- **Performance** is worth twice as many points as Complexity or Independence
- **Performance** is the largest contributor to total score
- Total Score = Entry 1 + Entry 2 + Entry 3 + Entry 4
- An Entry = $(\text{Performance}_{\text{scorer1}} + \text{Performance}_{\text{scorer2}}) + \text{Complexity}_{\text{average}} + \text{Independence}_{\text{average}}$

Table 6. Dimension Scoring (2009–2015)

Dimension	Score Range per Reader	Calculation of Two Reader Scores	Score Range per Entry	Entries Required per Content Area	Maximum Possible Points By Content Area (Across Entries)
Complexity	0 – 4	average	0 – 4	4	16
Performance	0 – 4	add	0 – 8	4	32
Independence	0 – 4	average	0 – 4	4	16
Maximum Possible Score per Content Area					64

Unscorable Entry Errors (zero scores for all three dimensions)

The term unscorable means that an entry error results in zero scores for all three dimensions (a score point of 0 for Complexity, 0 for Performance, and 0 for Independence), and an unscorable code is assigned that describes the error. An Explanation Sheet (Appendix B) with the unscorable code, description, and a typed explanation of the error (as required) is placed under the plastic sleeve of the front cover of the scored portfolio to indicate that a basic test design requirement was not followed. (A copy of the Explanation Sheet also accompanies the ISR on Service Point.) If any of the following requirements are missing from a piece of entry evidence, the entire entry will be considered unscorable:

1. Student's name
2. Complete dates (month/day/year) within the specified collection periods
3. A piece of evidence must include at least 5 test items that assess the CPI Link.
4. Evidence presented in the appropriate amount and format

An unscorable code may also result when the evidence/rubric presented in the entry does not align to the CPI/Strand/Standard. An Explanation Sheet (Appendix B) is placed under the plastic sleeve of the front cover of a scored portfolio to provide additional information on these types of errors:

1. Evidence must assess the link while connecting to the essence of the standard and strand.
2. The same CPI Link must be assessed in both pieces of evidence.
3. Evidence must not include more than the skills contained within the CPI Link.
4. One or more items indicate that the concept was incorrectly assessed.

Evidence Errors (zero score for one dimension):

A zero score is assigned to an individual dimension, instead of receiving zero score codes for all 3 dimensions in the entry. This allows the other two dimensions to receive score points. An individual dimension receives a zero when the following violations occur:

- Some or all test items are not marked for accuracy (Performance)
- Accuracy score for initial evidence is higher than 39% (Performance)
- No editing marks related to the scoring rubric appear on the student writing response (Performance)
- Some or all test items are not marked for Independence/prompting (Independence)
- The first activity in the entry is clearly more difficult than the second activity (Performance)

An Error Report (Appendix C) is placed under the plastic sleeve of the front cover of a scored portfolio to provide additional information on these types of errors:

Errors (receives score different than may be expected):

Rather than assigning an unscorable code for the entry, the scorers are allowed to recalculate percentages or reassign the appropriate performance score. The recalculation may result in a different final score point (1–4) than may be expected. The following violations are reviewed and the accuracy/independence scores recalculated by the scorers:

- One or more items are marked as physically prompted and correct (P+)
- Items are marked correct/incorrect but no percentage provided
- Items are marked Independent/prompted but no percentage provided
- One or more of the percentage scores provided are inaccurate
- One test item is not correctly graded (marked) for accuracy

For additional information, please reference the 2014–2015 NJ APA Procedures Manual (Chapter Seven, pages 59–72).

PART 2: INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Understanding the portfolio development process includes having knowledge of New Jersey’s Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), the portfolio development procedures and design, the meaning of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) results, and ways in which the results can be used. This section focuses on the meaning of the APA portfolio results and the correct way to interpret the scores.

A. Determining the Proficiency Levels for the APA

The results of the APA provide data related to a student’s achievement of the NJ CCCS. The proficiency classification of the APA portfolio is determined by combining all dimension scores for each content area.

Of the required four entries, only one scorable entry is required to receive 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 one entry. Please refer to the New Jersey APA 2014–2015 Procedures Manual for guidelines for scorable evidence meeting the Universal Scoring Rules.

Complexity / Performance / Independence Dimensions

Each entry, within a content area, receives a score for complexity, performance and independence. The four Complexity scores are combined for a Complexity subtotal, the four Performance scores are combined for a Performance subtotal, and the four Independence scores are combined for an Independence subtotal.

Standard Setting

The main purpose of the standard setting was to use Performance Level Descriptors for each new content area and grade band to establish cut score recommendations for the proficiency levels. New test standards should be set whenever a testing procedure is adopted that is judged to be meaningfully different from previous testing procedures. The federal peer review notes emphasized the need for content-specific, grade-level alignment of APA skills assessed to the critical essence of the student’s grade-level cumulative progress indicator (CPI). The test design changes implemented for the 2008–2009 APA required that a new set of standards be established.

A Standard Setting was held in June 2009. The standard setting committee consisted of eighty-one special education teachers, child study team members, general education teachers, and administrators. The committee members were divided into smaller panels based on content. 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) of their educational facilities, type of educational facility, and regional location. Special care was taken to ensure gender and racial/ethnic representation on the committee.

The cut scores recommended by the standard setting committees were presented to NJDOE senior staff and the Commissioner of Education for review. Modifications were made, but only within the statistical error range of the standard setting panel results. Subsequently, the Commissioner

presented the results of this review to the State Board of Education for approval and adoption. The State Board approved the cut scores in July 2009. The Performance Level Descriptors utilized during the standard setting were developed in February 2009 by committees of educators from New Jersey school districts (Appendix D; Science).

Proficiency Classification

The APA cut scores which determine how the total score for each subject area is classified were set in June 2009. Each grade level and subject area cut scores are determined independently; this mirrors the general assessments. The same number of total score points may yield different proficiency levels based on grade level and content being assessed.

Proficiency level is assigned based on the student's total earned score, a combination of the three dimension scores: complexity, performance, and independence by content area. The three proficiency levels are:

- **Advanced Proficient**
- **Proficient**
- **Partially Proficient**

A proficient level means that the student performance met the state level of proficiency. An advanced proficient level indicates performance exceeded the level of proficiency. Partially proficient is considered to be below the state minimum level of proficiency.

B. Other Portfolio Assessment Information

It is important to recognize that the APA system does not report scale scores. The APA scores are based solely on the information provided in the portfolio submitted; therefore, it may not be possible to compare these scores to other APA students and students taking the general assessment. Scale scores are not appropriate for use for the APA system as there are no issues of equating involved. There are no sets of standardized test items (questions); therefore, there are no item difficulties, nor is there a need to equate test scores from year to year.

The APA scores of students who transfer into the district within New Jersey on or after July 1, 2014, and whose demographic information indicates Time in District and Time in School is less than one year, will not be included in the district's accountability reporting. The Office of Title I produces accountability reporting using this assessment data.

C. Guide to Teachers

Step 1. Review ISR Against Explanation Sheets

When the APA portfolio is returned to the districts, an Explanation Sheet, if applicable, will be included to identify errors in the portfolio construction.

Scored portfolios will be returned to districts in September. Prior to their return, teachers should review the reasons an entry would receive an unscorable code. By comparing score reports against the Explanation Sheet (Appendix B) and to the entries in the copy of the portfolio retained by

teachers, most of the issues should become apparent. Teachers may use the following as a guide to review the results:

- Upon receipt of the student score report, review the portfolio as you read the Score Interpretation Manual and the Individual Student Report (ISR). All three documents are necessary in order to fully interpret the results.
- Reflect on the scoring rubric as you examine the scores for an entry. The language used in the rubric will help you determine why a score point was given.
- If an entry received zero scores, the entry did not meet the scoring rules.
 - Some of the more complex errors will be described on an Explanation Sheet that is provided in the front cover of the portfolio binder.
 - Basic errors such as dates on evidence outside the collection period or too few test items, etc., are easy to identify by examining the test design requirements and the unscorable rules outlined in the scoring section of this manual.

Additionally, listed below are some common mistakes found during current and previous scoring:

- Assessing the skills contained in the CPI Link without connection to the intent or big idea of the content and concepts of CPI, Strand, and/or Standard
- Assessing the skills contained within the CPI Link without correct understanding of the content or concepts of CPI, Strand, and/or Standard
- Assessing more than one CPI Link in an entry
- Assessing different parts of a CPI Link in each piece of evidence
- Assessing only part of the CPI Link
- Failure to mark all test items with accuracy and/or Independence/prompt information
- Failure to give supports on the first activity
- Failure to give prompts, instead marking student response as “Don’t Know” or “No Response”

Step 2. Review Teacher Training Materials

Step 3. Other Interpretation Aid

Score of 1 for Complexity - due to major flaw

An entry that demonstrates work in a CPI Link but has a major flaw will result in a score of one instead of zero in Complexity. A major flaw includes

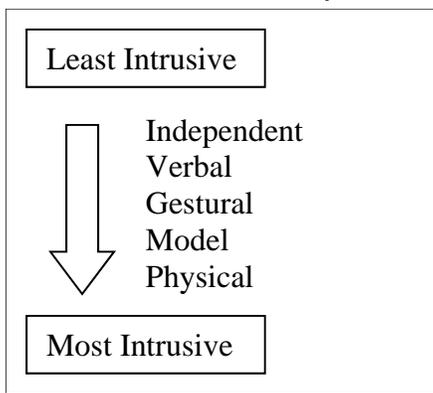
- Assessing only part of the CPI Link
 - This may be found in the student work sample, and both pieces of evidence must be assessing the same part of the link.
 - This may also be found in the writing rubric.
- Assessing the same activity for both pieces of evidence

Score of 1 for Performance— due to intrusive prompt

Prompting can affect the reliability of the performance score if not implemented correctly. A prompt is always more intrusive than an independent response. If a more intrusive prompt is used on the second activity than was used on the first activity, the entry will score a one for Performance dimension. The following reminders may assist teachers to identify reasons for the score:

- It is important to adhere to the prompt level hierarchy
- Any item performed with a physical prompt is scored as an incorrect response because the student was given the answer
- The final piece of evidence may not have a more intrusive prompt than the initial piece of evidence

Unless otherwise noted by the teacher, the prompt hierarchy is



For additional information, please reference the 2014–2015 NJ APA Procedures Manual (Chapter Seven, pages 59–72).

D. Using Assessment Information

Student-Level Evaluation

Individual Student Reports are provided to districts to assist in measuring student performance related to the content standards. Teachers and administrators may review Performance dimension scores and the student’s portfolio to answer the following questions:

- Did the student make sufficient progress in the skills (CPI Links) assessed?
- If not, were the activities and CPI Links selected at the appropriate difficulty level for the student?
- Were the necessary supports and adaptations provided that would allow the student to access the instruction and assessment?
 1. Access to and interaction with materials
 2. Multiple means of representation of the concepts and skills being taught and assessed (receptive communication)
 3. Multiple means of presentation/response for the student to demonstrate understanding (expressive communication)
- Did the activity appropriately instruct and assess the content, concepts, and skills of the link, CPI and Strand, and Standard?

The APA Procedures Manual provides information regarding the dimensions and their relationship to instruction. IEP teams may use the complexity, performance, and independence scores when reviewing a student’s IEP to determine future goals and objectives, modifications and supports.

Program-Level Evaluation

The APA score report information is used for the purpose of district and school monitoring. Student APA results are combined with the results of general state assessment results at the corresponding grade level of the student for accountability purposes only, in accordance with the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004* and the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Student results will be combined at the proficiency level only.

Results of students attending receiving schools are reported back to their sending schools. Performance and participation results are reported to the United States Department of Education.

Individual Student Reports and student rosters provide information regarding how well the student performed within the grade-level content standards. The student performance reflects how well the instructional program addresses best practice in instruction for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities which are represented in the dimensions of the rubric. Schools may review dimension scores across students tested to determine what program components included in the APA rubric are offered to students and where improvement is needed.

E. Communicating Assessment Information

Districts are required by the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.3) to report test results to their boards of education and to the public, including the parents/guardians, within 60 days of receipt of the reports. An analysis must be completed by the district and a summary report made available to the public.

Appropriate confidentiality safeguards must be implemented to protect individual students. Individual student data must never be released to the public. Public reports must not include data on individual students; therefore, actual rosters cannot be made available to the board or public because they list students' names, which violates federal privacy laws and regulations.

This section provides guidelines for informing people and entities that need to know about test results: parents/guardians, the district, the state, and the media.

- Individual and roster reports must not be released to the public because they list students' names and are, therefore, not in the public domain.
- Upon receipt of the student score report, review your copy of the portfolio as you read the score interpretation manual and the student score report. All three documents are necessary in order to fully interpret the results. Reflect on the scoring rubric as you examine the scores for an entry. The language used in the rubric will help you determine why a score point was given.
- The scored portfolio binders are returned to districts in September, after score reporting. When reviewing the results, refer to the Explanation Sheet to help identify the errors.

To the Parent/Guardian

Within 60 days of receipt of the reports, districts must provide the parent/guardian a copy of the individual student score report and interpretation materials. When reviewing the student's assessment result with the parents, districts must provide a copy of the portfolio or the list of the CPI links or skills that his/her child was being assessed on, the score interpretation manual, and the student score report.

- Districts must include a letter to the parent/guardian explaining the purpose of the APA, the information provided on the Individual Student Report (ISR), how to use this information when reviewing the report, and a district contact name and phone number for assistance in the interpretation of scores. Figure 4 shows a sample letter that can be adapted, signed, photocopied, and sent home with each student along with his/her ISR. Additionally, a Parent Information Guide was produced in the Fall of 2014 which addresses common questions about the APA. It is available on Questar's website (<https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com/login.aspx>).
- Parents should receive either a copy of the score interpretation manual, or a copy of the Science Performance Level Descriptors. This is necessary in order for parents to understand the student's performance classification of advanced proficient, proficient, or partially proficient. (See Appendix D for Performance Level Descriptors for Science and Biology)
- Districts must provide information on each CPI Link (skill) that was tested in the APA. This is extremely important, since students in the same grade may be assessed on different skills. Therefore, the parent/guardian must receive guidance from the district on what skills were tested and sufficient information to understand the test results. Districts may communicate the content area skills assessed in the APA in one of three ways:
 - Include in the letter to the parent the list of skills that were assessed for the content area, either in the body of the letter or as an attachment
 - Attach to the letter copies of each entry cover sheet that were submitted in the portfolio, highlighting the CPI Links (skills) assessed
 - Provide a copy of the portfolio in the packet to the parent, highlighting the CPI Links (skills) assessed

Reviewing a copy of the student's portfolio with the parent/guardian prior to the receipt of the student score report helps to ensure that the parent is aware of the skills that are being assessed.

Since students in the same grade may be assessed on different skills, it is extremely important that the parent/guardian receive guidance from the district and sufficient information to understand the test results, including what skills were tested.

Figure 4: Sample Parent/Guardian Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's Individual Student Report for the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) in Science is attached. The APA is a portfolio assessment that consists of a collection of student work which was gathered by your child's teachers during instructional activities. Your child participated in the APA between September 2, 2014, and February 13, 2015. Your child's APA portfolio was then submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education and scored by trained readers during the spring of 2015. The attached report provides your child's APA scores in the content area assessed. The 2014-2015 APA assesses Science only. The alternate assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics transitioned to a new assessment system called Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) under a different contractor.

The report tells you the proficiency levels your child achieved on the skills assessed for Science. A level of "proficient" or "advanced proficient" is considered meeting the state standard for the APA. The boxes below the proficiency levels show the scores for each "dimension" scored for each Science standard assessed by the portfolio. Please refer to the back of the Individual Student Report for further information regarding these boxes.

APA results should not be used as the sole basis for instructional decisions. It is important that districts consider multiple measures on all students before making decisions about the student's instructional placement.

This report is available only to parents, guardians, students, and authorized school officials. If your child attends a school outside of this district, reports are sent to the home school district, your child's neighborhood school, and the school your child attends. All reports are kept confidential. If you have any questions about the report, please contact _____ (district contact name / case manager / teacher / the principal of the school) at _____ (phone number) for assistance.

To the District

Districts are required to make available to the public “the number of pupils tested and the percentage of pupils at or above the established levels of pupil proficiency.” When the number of students is large enough (more than 10 students), the results may be considered sufficiently meaningful to report. The Performance by Demographic Group reports contains information that can be used to prepare a public statement.

The School Summary of Performance in Science contains information that can be used to prepare a public report if the student count is greater than ten.

APA results should not be used as the sole basis for instructional decisions. It is important that districts consider multiple measures on all students before making decisions about the student’s instructional placement.

The APA is not a graduation test. The IEP team determines whether a student must meet state and local graduation requirements. Passing the APA is not a graduation requirement.

To the Media

Release information to the media only after having prepared to answer questions either in person or on the telephone. Be sure to analyze the data beforehand; understand and be able to clearly explain the various types of scores. It is recommended that any comparison among schools/districts be avoided.

PART 3: SAMPLE REPORTS

Assessment results are most useful when they are reported in a way that allows educators to focus on pertinent information. The APA reports are designed to communicate results in ways that provide information to educators and parents for program and individual student planning. Reports are generated based on student demographic information provided by the districts.

The APA reports are produced for public schools and districts only. The Individual Student Report provides data that may be used to help identify student and program strengths and needs. The rosters and school and district performance summaries help identify needs across students at the specified grade level.

Sample reports provided in this manual are made with fictional data for illustrative purposes.

A. Terms and Definitions

Accountability: The APA is both a student progress assessment, and a school/district program assessment. APA test results will be combined with the results from the general assessments for accountability purposes for state and federal reports. The Office of Title I produces accountability reporting using this assessment data.

District Factor Group (DFG): The DFG used by NJDOE is a measure of the socioeconomic status of the population residing in each district based upon the United States Census data. These groups are labeled from A (lowest) to J (highest). See Appendix E for details related to current DFG designations. In the state summary reporting, the state level performance by DFG is aggregated based on the attending school DFG (where student sat and trained, not the sending school).

Ethnicity:

W = White;

B = Black or African American

A = Asian

P = Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

H = Hispanic or Latino

I = American Indian or Alaska Native

Multiple codes are allowed; “O”= Other (no information or multiple codes).

Economically Disadvantaged (ED): An ED student is one who is eligible for either free (F) or reduced-price (R) school lunch. In the All Subject Roster, this is reported with the values F, R, or left blank (not ED). In the Performance by Demographic Group Report, free and reduced-price status defaults to economically disadvantaged status.

Homebound (HB): A homebound student receives home instruction for the duration of the APA portfolio collection period as reported by the student’s school district.

Homeless (H): Homeless is defined as a child or youth who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate residence, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7B-12 and N.J.A.C. 6A:17-2.3. For questions regarding the determination of homeless status, contact the Office of Student Achievement and Accountability at 609-943-4283.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): The IEP determines who participates in the APA. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written plan that is developed by members of the local school district child study team, a teacher who has knowledge of the child, and the parent/guardian. It describes how a child currently performs in school, specifies his/her educational needs, includes goals and objectives the parents and staff believe he/she can achieve during the school year, details his/her special education program, specifies why the child is receiving these special education services, and provides an organized way for school staff and parents to conduct an appropriate educational program for the child. The special education and related services are provided for the child after the parent and the school staff determine his/her needs (N.J.A.C. 6:28:3.6).

Limited English Proficient (LEP): A Limited English Proficient student is a student whose native language is one other than English and has sufficient difficulty speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language and is currently enrolled in a language assistance program in a public school district. A student who exited a language assistance program before July 1, 2011, may not be coded as LEP.

There are six LEP codes for the current administration:

- < = Entered LEP program ON or AFTER 7/1/2014, and is currently enrolled.
- 1 = Entered LEP program BETWEEN 7/1/2013 and 6/30/2014, and is currently enrolled.
- 2 = Entered LEP program BETWEEN 7/1/2012 and 6/30/2013, and is currently enrolled.
- 3 = Entered LEP program BEFORE 7/1/2012, and is currently enrolled.
- F1 = Former LEP student exited a language assistance program BETWEEN July 1, 2013, and the last day of the current APA collection period and is NO longer enrolled in the program.
- F2 = Former LEP student exited a language assistance program BETWEEN July 1, 2012, and June 30, 2013, and is NO longer enrolled in the program.

LEP Exempt (LAL Only): A Limited English Proficient student who is exempted from taking the LAL portion of the assessment. Such students are still required to be assessed in Mathematics and Science. These are students who entered the United States of America as well as a language assistance program on or after July 1, 2013 and are currently enrolled in the LEP program. In the performance by demographics report, such students are counted in the 'Current LEP' under "Not Required" in the LAL section. Score overwrites the exemption; if the portfolio submitted contains scoreable evidence for any of the LAL entries, then the total score is used in place of the LEP exempt. [Not applicable for 2015; 2015 APA assesses Science only.]

Local Student ID: Assigned by the Home district (district of residence). This stands for the school or district-assigned student identification number, if one was provided on the APA Student Demographic Information Form.

Migrant: An eligible migrant student is defined as a student:

- who is, or whose parent, spouse, or guardian is, a migratory agricultural worker, a migratory dairy worker, or a migratory fishing industry worker and
- who, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent, spouse, or guardian, temporary or seasonal employment in agricultural or fishing work, has moved from one school district to another.

No Proficiency Rating: There are times that a student will not receive a proficiency classification in a content area. This occurs only when all entries are deemed unscorable.

Number of Portfolios Processed: In the summary reports, this is the total number of student portfolios processed regardless of content areas (the sum of: took general assessment, not required, void, and valid).

Not Required to Test: Not required to be assessed by APA in a content area. This includes students in grades 9 and 10 (not assessed by the NJ statewide assessment at present) and high school students who did not receive biology instruction the year the assessment takes place, and LEP students exempted from taking the LAL part of the assessment. If a grade 9 or 10 student received high school biology instruction, then this student must take the APA in biology.

If a student is not required to test, the proficiency level and the dimension scores will display an “NR” in the reports.

Proficiency Level: Three proficiency levels are assigned based on the total score for each content area: partially proficient, proficient, or advanced proficient. The total score is a combination of three dimension scores: Complexity, Performance, and Independence for entries within the content area. The scores are based solely on the information provided in each portfolio; therefore, it may not be possible to compare these results among APA students and with students taking the general assessment. Proficiency summaries are calculated including only those students with valid scores. A valid score (total score) of zero is classified as partial proficient. Of the required four entries, only one scorable entry is required to receive a proficiency level.

Percent of Students in each Proficiency Level: In proficiency summaries, this is the percentage of students with valid scores who scored in each proficiency level.

Attending School (Receiving School): This is the school the student currently attends and the one that administers the APA to the student. This may be the student’s school of residence (home school). Or, this may be a receiving school which is a school a student with disabilities attends that is outside of the school of residence. Receiving schools include private schools for the disabled, special services school districts, educational services commissions, jointure commissions, college-operated programs, state facilities, and other public schools.

Sending School: One in which the student is registered because it is his/her home school. A sending school is the neighborhood school the student would attend if the student was not receiving special education services. For the purpose of accountability, APA results of students attending receiving schools are reported back to the sending schools.

Science Assessment: As with the general assessment, students in grades 4 and 8 must also be assessed in science. Students in high school must be assessed in science the year that they receive instruction in biology (e.g., in grade 9, 10, 11, or 12, for APA).

Special Education (SE): The following are special education classification codes:

- 01 Auditorily Impaired
- 02 Autistic
- 03 Cognitively Impaired – Mild
- 04 Cognitively Impaired – Moderate
- 05 Cognitively Impaired – Severe
- 06 Communication Impaired
- 07 Emotionally Disturbed
- 08 Multiply Disabled
- 09 Deaf-Blindness
- 10 Orthopedically Impaired
- 11 Other Health Impaired
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 15 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 16 Visually-Impaired

A code of “99” is assigned during data processing for unknown or multiple grids

Student Demographic Information: There are three opportunities for student demographic information to be submitted and updated:

- Pre-ID: information is submitted online
- Student Demographic Information Form (SDIF): scannable sheet
(see sample, Appendix F)
- Record Change: information is submitted online

Student Identification Number (SID): A unique 10-digit student identification number assigned by the state to students in New Jersey public schools for state assessment reporting. Authorized district personnel obtain SIDs for their students via the NJ SMART. The APA sending school is responsible for obtaining the SID via NJ SMART and promptly sharing the SID with the attending school. The Approved private school or other specialized school placement obtains the SID from the sending school.

Status: The instruction and assessment status for APA students. This indication assists district reviews and identifies the performance of their students. Statuses 2 and 3 actually describe the same student; therefore, status 3 students are not included in the summary of performance reports so that the same student is not counted twice.

- 1** = Student was assessed at the school of residence.
- 2** = Student was sent outside school of residence for instruction and assessment.
- 3** = Student was received from another school for instruction and assessment.

Title I (T-I): A Title One student is a student who lives in an eligible attendance area, meets the criteria for selection to participate in the federal program, and participates in a Title I program as indicated by the district on the student’s APA Student Demographic Information Form (SDIF). If a student receives these services in any of the assessed content areas, the first letter of the content area(s) will be displayed in the reports.

Time in School less than one year (TIS): indicates that the student enrolled in the sending school or school of residence for less than one academic year (i.e., the student first enrolled in the school on or after July 1, 2014).

Time in District less than one year (TID): indicates that the student enrolled in the district of residence for less than one academic year (i.e., the student first enrolled in the district on or after July 1, 2014).

Unscorable: An entry is deemed unscorable if the following occurs: extended medical leave, no evidence, took the general assessment, or security breach. A void code is assigned to such unscorable entries. Instead of scores, the ISR will list a zero score with an unscorable code instead of dimension scores for each entry. The following chart lists all unscorable codes and their reason descriptions.

If all entries within a content area are unscorable, a student will receive a void for the proficiency level. The void code will be displayed in the sub-total of each dimension as well as the total score for the content area.

Unscorable Codes	Subcodes	2015 Reason Descriptions
Entry Errors (EN)	1. EN-A 2. EN-B 3. EN-C 4. EN-D 5. EN-E	Entry is missing from the portfolio. Evidence was submitted for only one collection period (less than two pieces of evidence). Entry contains more than four (4) pieces of evidence. Entry cover sheet is missing from the portfolio and there is insufficient information for scoring. Entry Cover Sheet is incomplete and there is insufficient information for scoring.
Test Specification Errors (TS)	6. TS-A 7. TS-B 8. TS-C	CPI Standard/strand/link was not allowable for student’s assigned grade level. Link referenced does not exist in current test specifications. Same strand/link is used for more than one entry.
Documentation Error (DC)	9. DC-A 10. DC-B 11. DC-C	Student name is missing from one or more pieces of evidence. Date(s) on evidence are missing or incomplete (month/day/year). Date on evidence is outside the Collection Period(s).
Evidence Error (EV)	12. EV-A 13. EV-B 14. EV-C 15. EV-D 16. EV-E 17. EV-F 18. EV-G	Type of evidence is not acceptable (data charts, observations). Photo(s) submitted do not meet evidence requirements. Yes/No and True/False question formatting is not acceptable. The balance of representation has not been met. One or both pieces of evidence do not have at least five test items. Student responses are unclear/unreadable or not evident for a minimum of 5 items. Evidence is not presented in the student’s mode of communication (based on documentation provided by teacher).
Link Assessment Error (LA)	19. LA-A 20. LA-B 21. LA-C 22. LA-D 23. LA-E 24. LA-F	Evidence does not assess the CPI link. Evidence does not connect to the essence of the CPI/Strand/Standard. Evidence assesses two different CPIs or CPI links. The CPI link includes multiple skills, but each piece of evidence assessed a different skill from the link. Evidence assesses more than the CPI link skill(s). One or more items indicate that the concept was incorrectly assessed.

Valid Scores: There is at least one scorable entry in a content area.

Void: This indicates that a student’s assessment result is coded void. One or more content area can be voided. The proficiency level in a content area is voided if all entries of that content area are unscorable. Instead of a proficiency level, one of the following notations is displayed in the reports:

Entry Deemed Unscorable	Void Code	Proficiency Display
Insufficient evidence collected due to extended sick leave	V1/ME	Medical Emergency
No evidence provided in entry	V4	Void 4
Student took general assessment in a content area	V4	Took General Assessment
Security breach occurred	V5	Security Breach

Void 1. Medical Emergency (ME)

When a student is out of school for an extended amount of time and not receiving instruction due to extensive sick leave or hospitalization, the portfolio may be eligible to receive a Void code 1 (medical emergency). The portfolio will be voided due to extended illness during the collection period. The student will receive a Void code 1 for each dimension and a “Medical Emergency” for the proficiency level will be displayed on the reports. Eligibility is based only on the following information:

- If the student is receiving instruction for 10 days or less during a collection period, and
- The student has an extended hospitalization or leave due to illness and is not receiving instruction, and
- An official record documenting the student absences

Void 4. No Evidence

No entry evidence is provided in the portfolio. When entries are unscorable due to missing portfolio components, students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level.

A student transferred to New Jersey from out-of-state after October 31, 2014, is not required to submit portfolio evidence for scoring. These students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level. A Void 4 is also assigned if the student has excessive absences for non-medical reasons but meets the requirements as outlined for a Void 1.

Void 4. Took General Assessment (NJ ASK, HSPA)

A student may not participate in both the APA and the statewide general assessment in the same content area. A student may participate in the APA in one or more content area(s) and the general assessment with accommodations in the other content area(s) or the APA in all content areas assessed. Students who took the general assessment in a content area will receive a Void code 4 and the result of the general assessment will be used for accountability reporting.

Void 5. Security Breach

Breach of test security by a school or district. In this case the student report will reflect a Void code 5 for each dimension of the entry and a “Security Breach” for the proficiency level. If a security breach is detected in one content area, the entire portfolio (all content areas) is treated as a security breach and all results voided.

B. Student-Level Reports

Student Sticker

General Information. The Student Sticker (Figure 5) is produced by student name alphabetically. One sticker for each student within the school is provided. It is a peel-off label designed to be easily attached to the student's permanent record. The Student Sticker is sent in printed format only to the Sending District or the School/District of Residence only. Receiving districts do not receive student stickers.

Identification Information. Grade, student name, date of birth, and gender are reported, along with the names and codes of the county, district, and school of the sending school or school of residence.

Test Results Information. Designation of the proficiency levels are printed next to each subject area. Voids, where applicable, are noted.

Note: The 2015 APA assessed Science only.

Figure 5: Sample Student Sticker

**NEW JERSEY ALTERNATE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
2014-2015**

STUDENT: **BLAST, STUDENT1 B.**
LOCAL STUDENT ID:
SID: **1234567891**
DOB: **03/01/2001** GENDER: **M**

GRADE: **8**

COUNTY: **88 YCOUNTY**
DISTRICT: **4444 RDISTRICT**
SCHOOL: **111 SCHOOLG**

SCIENCE: **Took General Assessment**



**NEW JERSEY ALTERNATE PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT
2014-2015**

STUDENT: **DLAST, STUDENT2 B.**
LOCAL STUDENT ID: **13216542**
SID: **1234567892**
DOB: **06/01/2001** GENDER: **M**

GRADE: **8**

COUNTY: **88 YCOUNTY**
DISTRICT: **4444 RDISTRICT**
SCHOOL: **111 SCHOOLG**

SCIENCE: **Advanced Proficient**



Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only

Individual Student Report (ISR)

General Information. The Individual Student Report (ISR), is a two-sided report showing specific student score information on the front of the ISR. A description of the APA and interpretation of the scores are printed on the back. The ISR shown in sample format as Figures 6, 7 (front), and 8 (back), is produced in alphabetical sequence for students within the school by grade. The school the student attends receives two printed copies of the ISR, whether it is a receiving school (private school for the disabled, special services school district, jointure commission, educational services commission, college-operated program, or state facility) or a school in the district of residence. Both the sending and attending schools will have the ability to download and print student ISRs.

It is the responsibility of the school the student attends to send a copy of the ISR to the child's parent/guardian within 60 days of receipt. The sending school, if applicable, receives one copy of the ISR. The district of residence also receives a copy of the ISR for review by the director of special education and the case manager.

Identification Information. The top of the ISR contains the student demographic information. This includes student name, date of birth, gender, local student ID, SID, Homebound status, LEP status, Special Education status, and Title I status, as well as the county, district, and school codes and names for the school the student attends and the sending school (if applicable).

Test Results Information. The proficiency levels in Science are provided. Score data is provided for each rubric dimension, complexity, performance and independence, to assist in the identification of student strengths and weaknesses.

The lower half of the ISR provides the scores for Complexity, Performance, and Independence for each entry of the student's APA portfolio. In addition, the maximum number of points obtainable per entry, for each dimension, is provided for reference.

Figure 6: Sample Individual Student Report (Grade 4 Front)



**New Jersey Statewide
Alternate Proficiency Assessment
2014–2015
Individual Student Report
Grade 4**

School Student Attends
CDS: 88-4444-333
County: YCOUNTY
District: RDISTRICT
School: SCHOOLT

Student Name: TLAST, STUDENT0 W.

Title 1: S
SE: 02
LEP: <
HB: Y

Date of Birth: 05/12/2005
Gender: Female
Local Student ID: 3216549870
SID: 3456789012

Sending District
CDS: 88-4444-111
County: YCOUNTY
District: RDISTRICT
School: SCHOOLG

Subject	Proficiency Level
Science	Void 4

Science				
	Strand	Complexity	Performance	Independence
Entry 1	5.5.A: Matter, Energy and Organization in Living Systems	V4	V4	V4
Entry 2	5.6.A: Structure and Properties of Matter	V4	V4	V4
Entry 3	5.8.B: Atmosphere and Water	V4	V4	V4
Entry 4	5.9.A: Earth, Moon and Sun System	V4	V4	V4
	Subtotal	V4	V4	V4
	Total	V4		

V4 – No evidence for this subject or took General Assessment.

Run Date 02/10/2015

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only

Figure 7: Sample Individual Student Report (Grade 10 Front)



**New Jersey Statewide
Alternate Proficiency Assessment
2014-2015
Individual Student Report
Grade 10**

School Student Attends
CDS: 88-4444-333
County: YCOUNTY
District: RDISTRICT
School: SCHOOLT

Student Name: WLAST, FIRST11 S.

Title 1: S
SE: 10
LEP:
HB:

Date of Birth: 05/12/1999
Gender: Female
Local Student ID: 7321654987
SID: 7345678901

Sending District
CDS: 88-4444-111
County: YCOUNTY
District: RDISTRICT
School: SCHOOLG

Subject	Proficiency Level
Science	Medical Emergency

Science		Points Student Obtained		
	Strand	Complexity	Performance	Independence
Entry 1	5.5.A: Matter, Energy and Organization in Living Systems	ME	ME	ME
Entry 2	5.5.B: Diversity and Biological Evolution	ME	ME	ME
Entry 3	5.10.A: Natural Systems and Interactions	ME	ME	ME
Entry 4	5.10.B: Human Interaction and Impact	ME	ME	ME
Subtotal		ME	ME	ME
Total		ME		

Run Date 03/27/2015

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only

Figure 8: Sample Individual Student Report (Back)

The **Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA)** is a portfolio-based alternate assessment administered to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the General Assessment. The APA is administered at every grade level at which a general statewide assessment is administered. The portfolio is a collection of student work samples that demonstrates how well students have learned the knowledge and skills covered by the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), based on alternate achievement standards for their grade level in the content area of Science. The assessment measures a student's progress related to the CCCS, strands, grade-level Cumulative Progress Indicators (CPIs), and skill statements (called CPI Links).

The 2014-2015 APA was administered in Science to approximately 3948 students in grades 4 and 8, and in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12, in whichever year the student receives instruction in Biology.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This **Individual Student Report (ISR)** represents the score results for the student. Scores are based solely on the information provided in each individual student portfolio; therefore, it may not be possible to compare the results earned by the student to other APA students or to students taking the general assessment. The ISR report is available only to parents, guardians, students, and authorized school personnel.

Additional information about score interpretation can be found on the New Jersey ServicePoint site at <https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com>, click on *Documentation*, and refer to the Score Interpretation Manual. If you have any questions about the report or how to interpret the results, please contact the student's teacher, principal, or case manager.

The Student **Proficiency Level** (Advanced Proficient, Proficient, Partially Proficient), reported on the reverse side, is assigned based upon the student's total score earned across the four entries in each content area. The scores earned represent student knowledge and skills in each of the identified strands. Student work is scored for the following dimensions:

Complexity: The complexity dimension evaluates how closely the CPI Link assesses the CCCS CPI. The CPI Links vary by complexity and/or difficulty in relation to the CPI (Matched, Near, or Far).

Performance: The performance dimension evaluates the student's accuracy performing the skills represented in the CPI Links. The student's performance is documented by evidence of the student working on the CPI Link within the two collection periods in a school year (September 2, 2014–November 14, 2014, and December 8, 2014–February 13, 2015).

Independence: The independence dimension evaluates the extent to which the student completed the assessment tasks independently.

Portfolio requirements: A portfolio contains four entries per content area. Each entry is based on a specified standard and strand from the CCCS, and selected CPI and CPI Links. Requirements by content are:

- Science: Four entries
 - Grade 4: One strand each from standards 5.5 Characteristics of Life, 5.6 Chemistry, 5.8 Earth Science, and 5.9 Astronomy and Space Science
 - Grade 8: One strand each from standards 5.5 Characteristics of Life, 5.6 Chemistry, 5.7 Physics, and 5.9 Astronomy and Space Science
 - High School (Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12): Two different strands each from standards 5.5 Characteristics of Life and 5.10 Environmental Studies

Explanation of Zero Scores and Unscorable Entries:

An entry may be deemed unscorable or receive a score of "0" for a dimension in the event that certain errors occur in the production of evidence. Should the entry be unscorable across all three scoring dimensions, an Explanation Code will be assigned representative of the specific error that occurred; a "0" score will be used for calculation purposes in all fields containing an Explanation Code. Additional information about specific conditions resulting in unscorable entries is provided in the APA Score Interpretation Manual which can be obtained from the student's teacher or on the NJ ServicePoint website (<https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com>).

An entry may also be deemed unscorable if there is a security breach, no evidence is provided, insufficient evidence is collected due to student on extended medical leave, or the student took the general assessment. Instead of a Proficiency Level, one of the following notations will appear:

- Medical emergency (indicating insufficient evidence due to extended sick leave)
- Void 4 (indicating no evidence for this subject or took General Assessment)
- Void 5 (indicating security breach occurred)

Run Date 04/16/2015

C. School- and District-Level Reports

All Subjects Roster

General Information. The All Subjects Roster (Figure 9) provides a convenient method for reviewing students' complete APA results. An All Subjects Roster is generated for each grade level. Each report displays student names in alphabetical order (last name first) sorted by status. Users of this report can quickly determine how a particular student performed in Science.

Both sending and receiving schools receive an All Subjects Roster for students who participated in the APA.

Receiving schools receive an All Subjects Roster for all of the students who participated in the APA who are educated in that school. District schools receive an All Subjects Roster that includes the APA participant students who attend the school, those who live in the catchment area of the school but attend schools out of district, and those who attend a program within the school but reside in another school district.

School Identification Information. The names and code numbers of the county, district, and school are indicated, along with the test time period and the date the report was printed.

Student Identification Information. Along with each student's name, other student information is provided: Date of Birth, Student SID, Status, Ethnicity, Title I, ED, Migrant, SE, LEP, TIS, TID, and Gender.

Student Score Information. Following a student's identification information, the student's Proficiency Level (partially proficient, proficient, or advanced proficient) is printed. Voids are noted where applicable.

Figure 9: Sample All Subjects Roster



New Jersey Statewide Assessment System
Alternate Proficiency Assessment
2014-2015
All Subject Roster
Grade 8

CDS: 88-4444-111
 County: YCOUNTY
 District: RDISTRICT
 School: SCHOOLG
 Page: 1 OF 1

												PROFICIENCY LEVEL
STUDENT NAME DATE OF BIRTH	SID	Status [#]	Ethnicity	TITLE 1	ED	Migrant	SE	LEP	TIS	TID	Gender	SCIENCE
BLAST, STUDENT1 B. 03/01/1999	1234567891	1	W				06				M	Took General Assessment
DLAST, STUDENT2 B. 06/01/1999	1234567892	1	W	S			02				M	Advanced Proficient
FLAST, STUDENT3 K. 07/01/2000	1234567893	1	H				08				M	Proficient
GLAST, STUDENT4 N. 12/01/1999	1234567894	1	W P				03				M	Partially Proficient
NLAST, STUDENT6 M. 11/01/1999	1234567896	1	W				08				M	Proficient
RLAST, STUDENT7 J. 06/01/1999	1234567897	2	W	S			02				M	Security Breach
MLAST, STUDENT5 A. 10/01/1999	1234567895	3	W	S			08				F	Took General Assessment
SLAST, STUDENT8 M. 07/01/1999	1234567898	3	W		F		08				F	Advanced Proficient

{ 1 = Student was assessed at school of residence.
 2 = Student was sent outside school of residence for instruction and assessment.
 3 = Student was received from another school for instruction and assessment.
 Void 4 = No scorable evidence.

Run Date: 11/12/2014

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

Student Roster

General Information. The Student Roster lists the names of the assessed students alphabetically by last name, in descending order, by proficiency level. A student roster is generated for each grade level assessed and separately by content area assessed.

Receiving schools receive student rosters that include all of the students who participated in the APA who attend that school.

Sending schools or the Schools of Residence receive student rosters that include the students participating in the APA who attend that school, those who live in the school catchment area but attend a school out of district, and those who attend a program within the school but reside in another district. Figure 10 shows an example of the student roster for Science.

School Identification Information. The names and code numbers of the county, district, and school are indicated, along with the test time period and the date the report was printed.

Student Identification Information. Below and across from each student's name is the student identification information: Date of Birth, Student SID, Status, Title I, SE, LEP, and Gender.

Student Score Information. Following a student's identification information, the student's proficiency level is given. As described earlier, the student's proficiency level is derived from the combination of the student's complexity, performance and independence scores. The individual columns provide the complexity, performance and independence scores, as well as the total combined score used to determine the proficiency level. These scores enable the program staff to identify program strengths and weaknesses across students within the content area. Voided portfolio content areas are noted, where applicable.

Figure 10: Sample Student Roster – Science



**New Jersey Statewide Assessment System
Alternate Proficiency Assessment
2014-2015
Student Roster - Science
Grade 8**

CDS: 88-4444-111
County: YCOUNTY
District: RDISTRICT
School: SCHOOLG
Page: 1 OF 1

STUDENT NAME DATE OF BIRTH	SID	Status ^a	Title 1	SE	LEP	Gender	Complexity (16.0) ^b	Performance (32.0) ^b	Independence (16.0) ^b	Total Score (64.0) ^b	Proficiency Level
DLAST, STUDENT2 B. 06/01/1999	1234567892	1	S	02		M	15.0	32.0	15.0	62.0	Advanced Proficient
FLAST, STUDENT3 K. 07/01/2000	1234567893	1		08		M	15.0	32.0	15.0	62.0	Advanced Proficient
GLAST, STUDENT4 N. 12/01/1999	1234567894	1		03		M	11.0	24.0	11.0	46.0	Proficient
NLAST, STUDENT6 M. 11/01/1999	1234567896	1		08		M	9.0	24.0	10.0	43.0	Proficient
SLAST, STUDENT8 M. 07/01/1999	1234567898	3		08		F	12.0	16.0	8.0	36.0	Partially Proficient
BLAST, STUDENT1 B. 03/01/1999	1234567891	1		06		M	V4	V4	V4	V4	Took General Assessment
MLAST, STUDENT5 A. 10/01/1999	1234567895	3	S	08		F	V4	V4	V4	V4	Took General Assessment
RLAST, STUDENT7 J. 06/01/1999	1234567897	2	S	02		M	V5	V5	V5	V5	Security Breach

^a { 1 = Student was assessed at school of residence.
2 = Student was sent outside school of residence for instruction and assessment.
3 = Student was received from another school for instruction and assessment.
^bThe number in parentheses is the total number of possible score points.

ME = Insufficient evidence due to extended illness.
V4 = No scorable evidence.
V5 = Security Breach due to inappropriate portfolio development.

Run Date: 11/12/2014

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

Summary of Performance – School, District

General Information. Two types of summary of performance reports are generated, one at the district level and one at the school level. For each grade, a Summary of District Performance report is generated for each district. Within the district, for each grade level, a Summary of School Performance report is generated for each school. These reports provide summary statistics for each subject assessed. Summary reports are produced for public schools and districts only. Summary reports reflect data for students who are sent out of district, as well as students remaining in district (status 1 and 2).

Summary reports are not available for receiving schools. A sample Summary of District Performance report is shown in Figure 11.

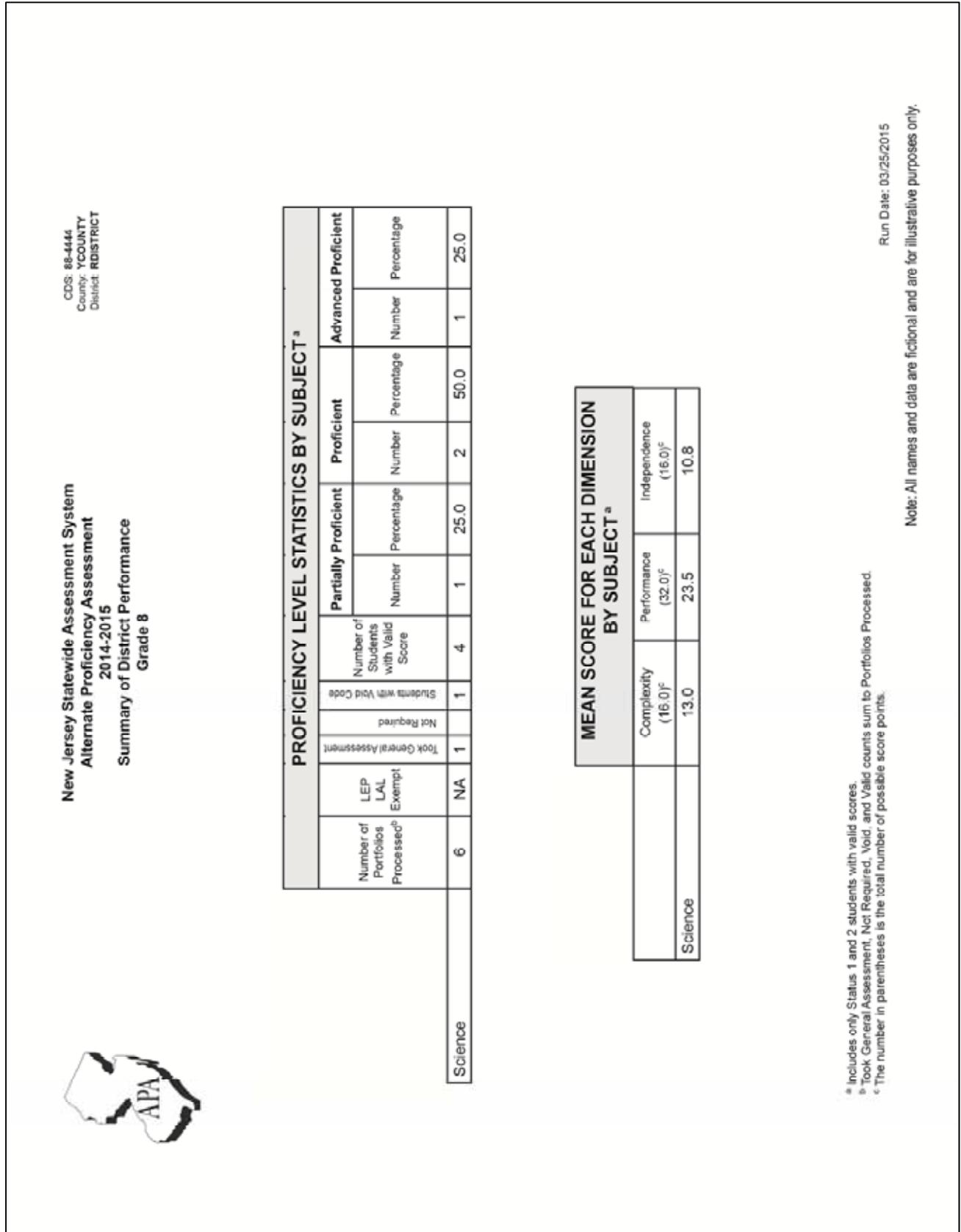
District and School Identification Information. This part of the report includes the names and code numbers of the county and district (and school for school summary).

Proficiency Level Statistics by Subject. This part of the report provides the number and percent of students in each proficiency level for content area assessed at either the district or school level. The following summary is provided for each subgroup shown on the report:

- Number of portfolios processed (sum of GA, NR, Void, and Valid)
- Number of LEP students exempted from taking LAL (a subset of Not Required)
- Number of students that took the general assessment (NJ ASK or HSPA) in the content area
- Number of students not required to submit entries for the content area (also includes LEP students exempted from taking LAL, and high school students who did not take the Biology course)
- Number of students with Void Codes (Security Breach, Medical Emergency, and V4 due to no content evidence in the portfolio)
- Number of students with valid scores
- Number of students in each proficiency level (number is based on students with valid scores)
- Percent of students at each proficiency level (number is based on students with valid scores)

Mean Score for Each Dimension by Subject. School or district means for each dimension are provided by subject (content area), based on students with valid scores.

Figure 11: Sample Summary of Performance – District



Performance by Demographic Groups – School, District, State

General Information. The Performance by Demographic Groups report summarizes overall performance by student demographic subgroups: Total, LEP Status, Gender, Ethnicity, Economic Status (Disadvantaged vs. Not Disadvantaged), and Migrant Status. These group reports provide additional performance information that can be used to make adjustments to curricula that may better serve these students. Both sending and attending districts and schools will receive this report.

The Performance by Demographic Groups reports are produced at school and district levels by grade for reporting. The district-level report presents aggregated data for the district. The school-level report shows school-level data. They are distinguished by report title. If a district has only one school in which the test was administered, the summary data will be identical in both the district report and the school report. State-level data is produced with the state summary reports which will be posted on the New Jersey Department of Education website. At the state level, reports are also produced by District Factor Groups, Charter Schools (DFG-R), Non-Special Needs Districts, and Special Needs Districts and are distinguished by report title.

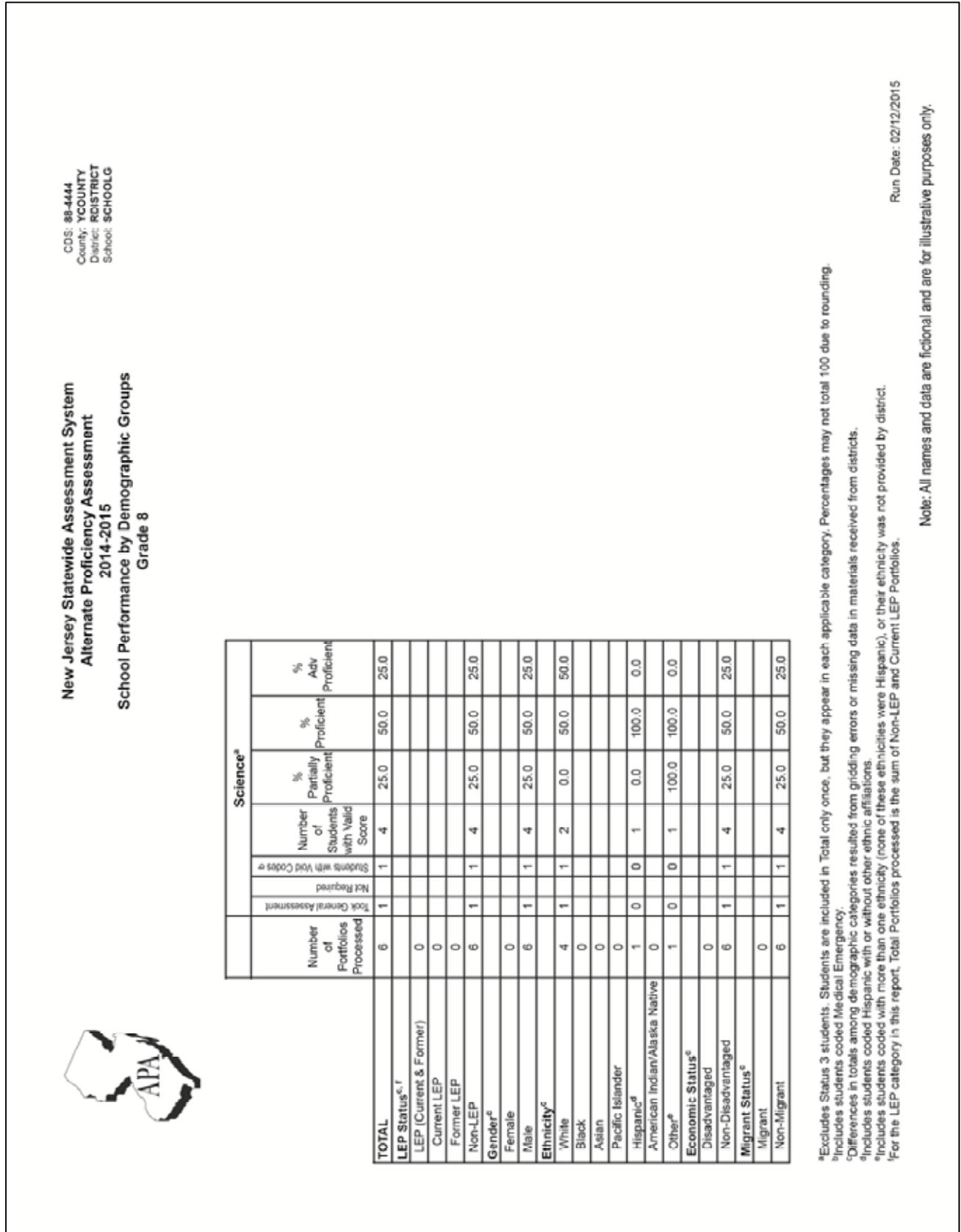
This one-page report includes performance data for each of the content areas (where administered). The percentage of students who fall into each of the three proficiency levels is based on the number of valid scores. This report does not disaggregate the data at the dimension level. Figure 12 shows an example of a School Performance by Demographic Groups.

School and District Identification Information. In the upper-right corner, the names and code numbers of the county, district, and school are indicated.

Proficiency Level Statistics by Subject. Number of students with valid scores and percent in each proficiency level are presented by:

- Number of portfolios processed
- Number of students taking the general assessment
- Number of students not required to submit entries
- Number of students with void codes
- Number of students with valid scores
- Percent of students in each proficiency level

Figure 12: Sample Performance by Demographic Group – School



Appendix A

Alternate Proficiency Assessment Scoring Rubric

Dimension	0	1	2	3	4
Complexity	Evidence provided is unscorable; all dimensions will receive a score of zero	CPI Link was assessed, but there are major flaws in the evidence	CPI Link is a Far Link to the grade-level indicator	CPI Link is a Near Link to the grade-level indicator	CPI Link is a Matched Link to the grade-level indicator
Performance	Evidence is not clear or all items are not marked as correct / incorrect	Accuracy of work is 0–39% based on the last activity OR Second activity includes a more intrusive prompt	Accuracy of work is 40–59% based on the last activity	Accuracy of work is 60–80% based on the last activity	Accuracy of work is 81–100% based on the last activity
Independence	Evidence is not clear or all items are not marked for Independence/ prompt level	Student completed items/tasks independently 0–39% of the time	Student completed items/tasks independently 40–59% of the time	Student completed items/tasks independently 60–80% of the time	Student completed items/tasks independently 81–100% of the time
Rev.: 04.07.11					

Appendix B

Sample Explanation Sheet

An Explanation Sheet is placed under the plastic sleeve of the front cover of the scored portfolio to indicate that a basic test design requirement was not followed.

Portfolio #: 33800042	11/20/14
Student Name: SMITH, JOHN J.	
Attending CDS: 88-4444-333	
Grade: 4	

2015 NJ APA Explanation Sheet

Entry #	Code	Explanation
Science		
Entry 2	LA F	One or more items indicate that that the concept was incorrectly assessed. All answer choices presented to the student in the initial activity were color coded to prompt the student to the correct answer.

2015 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Explanation Report

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

Appendix C

Sample Entry Error Report

2015 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Error Report

Portfolio #: 123456789

Date: 04/27/2015

Student Name: John Smith

Reader #: 1234

CDS: 88-4444-333

Error Report **Performance Score of “0” - More Difficult Initial Activity**

Science

Entry #	Score	Explanation
Science 2	Performance “0”	In the second activity, the student was given a higher level of support by means of definitions and picture cues. This support was not provided for the initial activity thus making the initial activity more difficult.

Note: All names and data are fictional and are for illustrative purposes only.

Appendix D

Performance Level Descriptors

Science

Grade 4 Science

Partially Proficient

Fourth grade students performing at the partially proficient level may require prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrate emerging skills in characteristics of life, chemistry, earth science and astronomy with inconsistent performance.

Partially proficient students will typically use fewer categories to:

- Identify matter, energy and organization in living systems
- Identify physical properties and changes of matter
- Identify components of the water cycle and states of water in the Earth's system
- Identify components and their sequence within the Earth, Moon and Sun system

Partially proficient students will sometimes demonstrate the ability to identify vocabulary, collect and record data and make a few connections to their real-life experiences.

Proficient

Fourth grade students performing at the proficient level may require some prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrating skills in characteristics of life, chemistry, earth science and astronomy with increased performance.

Proficient students will typically be able to:

- Classify and/or sequence matter, energy and organization in living systems
- Classify, compare, and/or describe physical properties and changes of matter
- Sequence and/or order the water cycle, describe states of water in the Earth's system
- Describe, illustrate and/or demonstrate an understanding of the sequence and order within the Earth, Moon and Sun system

Proficient students will frequently demonstrate the ability to comprehend vocabulary, use data to draw conclusions and make connections to the real-world.

Advanced Proficient

Fourth grade students performing at the advanced proficient level will demonstrate the qualities outlined for the proficient student. They may require minimal prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while applying vocabulary, knowledge and skills to explain the characteristics of life, chemistry, earth science and astronomy with a high-level of performance. Advanced proficient students will typically be able to perform skills such as: make predictions, observe, collect data, draw conclusions and make inferences relating to the real-world.

Grade 8 Science

Partially Proficient

Eighth grade students performing at the partially proficient level may require prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrate emerging skills in characteristics of life, chemistry, physics and astronomy with inconsistent performance.

Partially proficient students will typically use fewer categories to:

- Identify organisms based upon the diversity of their characteristics. Identify characteristics best suited for survival in a particular environment.
- Identify physical changes and chemical reactions
- Identify types of energy and types of energy transformations
- Identify objects and/or the physical characteristics of the planets and other objects within the Solar system

Partially proficient students will sometimes demonstrate the ability to identify vocabulary, collect and record data and make a few connections to their real-life experiences.

Proficient

Eighth grade students performing at the proficient level may require some prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrating skills in characteristics of life, chemistry, physics and astronomy with increased performance.

Proficient students will typically be able to:

- Classify organisms based upon the diversity of their characteristics. Describe the biological evolution of organisms.
- Classify, compare, and/or describe examples of physical changes and chemical reactions
- Classify, illustrate and/or describe types of energy and types of energy transformations
- Compare and/or classify the physical characteristics of the planets and other objects within the Solar system

Proficient students will frequently demonstrate the ability to comprehend vocabulary, use data to draw conclusions and make connections to the real-world.

Advanced Proficient

Eighth grade students performing at the advanced proficient level will demonstrate the qualities outlined for the proficient student. They may require minimal prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while applying vocabulary, knowledge and skills to explain the characteristics of life, chemistry, physics and astronomy with a high-level of performance. Advanced proficient students will typically be able to perform skills such as: make predictions, observe, collect and analyze data, draw conclusions and make inferences relating to the real-world.

Performance Level Descriptors High School Biology

Partially Proficient

High School Biology students performing at the partially proficient level may require prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrate emerging skills in characteristics of life and environmental studies with inconsistent performance

Partially proficient students will typically use fewer categories to:

- Identify the components involved in photosynthesis and their role in the energy cycle of life
- Identify the process of evolution by natural selection. Identify the impact of inherited traits and the environment on natural selection.
- Identify the impact of human actions and/or naturally occurring processes on the environment
- Identify the ways human actions impact the ecosystems

Partially proficient students will sometimes demonstrate the ability to identify vocabulary, collect and record data and make a few connections to their real-life experiences.

Proficient

High School Biology students performing at the proficient level may require some prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while recalling knowledge and demonstrating skills in characteristics of life and environmental studies with increased performance.

Proficient students will typically be able to:

- Describe the process of photosynthesis and its role in the energy cycle of life.
- Describe the process of evolution by natural selection. Describe the impact of inherited traits and the environment on natural selection.
- Describe, compare and/or contrast the impact of human actions versus naturally occurring processes on the environment
- Use data to assess the impact of human actions on the ecosystems

Proficient students will frequently demonstrate the ability to comprehend vocabulary, use data to draw conclusions and make connections to the real-world.

Advanced Proficient

High school Biology students performing at the advanced proficient level will demonstrate the qualities outlined for the proficient student. They may require minimal prompting, modifications and/or additional supports while applying vocabulary, knowledge and skills to explain the characteristics of life and topics in environmental studies with a high-level of performance. Advanced proficient students will typically be able to perform skills such as: make predictions, observe, collect and analyze data, support conclusions and make inferences relating to the real-world.

Appendix E

District Factor Groups (DFGs)

The District Factor Group (DFG), created by the New Jersey Department of Education, is an indicator of the socioeconomic status of citizens in each district and has been useful for the comparative reporting of test results from New Jersey's statewide testing programs. The DFG categories are updated every ten years when the Census Bureau releases the latest Decennial Census data. The measure was first developed in 1975, using demographic variables from the 1970 United States Census. Revisions were made in 1984 to take into account new data from the 1980 United States Census; and in 1992 from the 1990 United States Census.

The current DFG designations were updated in 2004, using the following six demographic variables from the 2000 United States Census:

- 1) Percent of adult residents who failed to complete high school
- 2) Percent of adult residents with some college education
- 3) Occupational status of adult household members:
 - 1 = Executive, Administrative, and Managerial
 - 2 = Professional Specialty Occupations
 - 3 = Technicians and Related Support
 - 4 = Precision Construction, Construction, and Repair
 - 5 = Administrative Support, Including Clerical
 - 6 = Sales
 - 7 = Protective Services
 - 8 = Transportation and Material Moving
 - 9 = Machine Operators, Assemblers, and Inspectors
 - 10 = Farming, Forestry, and Fishing
 - 11 = Service Workers
- 4) Unemployment rate:
percent of those in the work force who received some unemployment compensation
- 5) Poverty:
percent of residents below the poverty level
- 6) Income:
median family income

The variables described above were combined using a statistical technique called principal components analysis, which resulted in a single measure of socioeconomic status for each district. Districts were then ranked according to their score on this measure and divided into eight groups based on the score interval in which their scores were located. Eight DFGs have been created based on the 2000 United States Census data. They range from A (lowest socioeconomic districts) to J (highest socioeconomic districts) and are labeled as follows: A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I, J. Updating the DFGs has not changed any district's designation as Special Needs or not Special Needs.

(For additional information on the DFG, visit the department's finance site at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/finance/rda/dfg.shtml>)

<u>DFG</u>		<u>Number of Districts*</u>
A	-	39
B	-	66
CD	-	66
DE	-	83
FG	-	89
GH	-	76
I	-	103
J	-	25

* Includes all New Jersey public school districts (regardless of school configuration or grade levels served)

For purpose of assessment reports aggregation, additional unofficial codes are defined for special groups whose socioeconomic make-up does not reflect their geographic location:

O = DOE approved private schools for the handicapped, state agencies: Department of Children and Families (DCF), Department of Corrections (DOC), Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), special education schools operated by state colleges and universities.

R = Charter schools

S = Special services district, educational services commission, state-run schools for the handicapped (Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf).

V = Vocational school districts

N = None (These districts do not have a student population that is representative of the residents in their geographic area).

Student Demographic Information Form (SDIF)

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21 STUDENT NOT ASSESSED <p>If a student was scheduled by the IEP team to participate in the APA but was not actually assessed, fill in the circle below (mark only one) to explain why the student was not assessed.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 The student transferred to a New Jersey district from out of state after 11/1/2014. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 The student had a medical emergency which prevented the student from participating in the assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 The student was absent (non-medical emergency) which prevented the student from participating in the assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 The student's IEP does not indicate APA as appropriate. Refer to SDIF Directions for requirements. </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <input type="checkbox"/> 5 The student was incorrectly identified as being in a grade for which participation in the APA is required. <input type="checkbox"/> 6 The student withdrew, dropped, or was expelled. <input type="checkbox"/> 7 The student transferred to an out-of-state school before 02/14/2015. <input type="checkbox"/> 8 The student was retained in the same grade for non-academic reasons and was not assessed. <input type="checkbox"/> 9 The student was home-schooled by the parent. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 The student is deceased. </td> </tr> </table>					<input type="checkbox"/> 1 The student transferred to a New Jersey district from out of state after 11/1/2014. <input type="checkbox"/> 2 The student had a medical emergency which prevented the student from participating in the assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> 3 The student was absent (non-medical emergency) which prevented the student from participating in the assessment. <input type="checkbox"/> 4 The student's IEP does not indicate APA as appropriate. Refer to SDIF Directions for requirements.	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 The student was incorrectly identified as being in a grade for which participation in the APA is required. <input type="checkbox"/> 6 The student withdrew, dropped, or was expelled. <input type="checkbox"/> 7 The student transferred to an out-of-state school before 02/14/2015. <input type="checkbox"/> 8 The student was retained in the same grade for non-academic reasons and was not assessed. <input type="checkbox"/> 9 The student was home-schooled by the parent. <input type="checkbox"/> 10 The student is deceased.																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																		
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(Back)

REFERENCES

- *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001*, Pub. L. No. 107–110, § 115, Stat.1425 (2002).
- *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act*, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 (2004).

FOR ASSISTANCE

For Assistance	Contact/Resource
SID (Statewide Student ID), SMID (Staff Member ID, assigned by the state)	PCG, NJ SMART Helpdesk (800) 254-0295 email: njsmart@pcgus.com http://www.state.nj.us/education/njsmart/sid/
Accountability reporting, Title I, economically disadvantaged status, homeless status	Office of Title I (609) 943-4283 http://www.state.nj.us/education/title1/accountability/
NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards	http://www.nj.gov/njded/cccs
APA CPI Links, training, resources, reports	APA vendor site - Questar Assessment, Inc. https://nj-servicepoint.questarai.com/Login.aspx
APA Customer Service and Technical Support	Questar Assessment, Inc. (866) 690-4733 NJAPACustomerSupport@QuestarAI.com
State Summary	http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/
APA score interpretation, data, reporting, State Summary	DOE APA Measurement Specialist, Jo-Lin Liang (609) 633-6884
APA administration, scoring, portfolios, test design	DOE APA Coordinator, Elizabeth Celentano (609) 984-0107
Office of Special Education	(609) 292-2912 http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/
Learning Resource Centers	http://www.nj.gov/education/lrc/
NJ Department of Education (DOE)	(877) 900-6960 http://www.state.nj.us/education
NJ DOE Assessment Main Page	http://www.nj.gov/education/assessment/

New Jersey Department of Education



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