



**New Jersey  
Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA)**

**2012  
Technical Report**

**June 2013**

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## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this technical report is to provide information about the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) administered in 2011–2012. This report is intended for use by those who evaluate tests, interpret scores, or use test results for making educational decisions. It consists of the following sections: test design and test development, test administration and training, scoring, reliability and validity, standard setting, and reporting. It includes references to additional reports and documents, and Web sites related to the APA.

The 2012 APA assessed Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 12 (if the student was not assessed as a grade 11 student). Science was assessed in grades 4 and 8, and in grades 9, 10, 11 or 12 depending on the grade in which a student received Biology instruction. A total of 9,807 students were evaluated by the 2012 APA. Of these, 9,161 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 9,052 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 3,560 students had valid Science scores. Table 1.1 presents the overall performance of students on the 2012 APA. The table shows the number of valid scores and the percent of students at each proficiency level for students assessed.

### **1.1 Purpose of the Assessment**

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

- To measure the progress of a small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the regular statewide assessments even with accommodations.
- To ensure that the educational results for all students are included in the statewide accountability system at the individual, school, district, and state levels.

Accountability through assessment provides equity in program and educational opportunities for all students. Alternate assessment ensures an inclusive statewide assessment system and student accountability linked to the common core of learning within the general curriculum in New Jersey.

The New Jersey APA represents a cohesive approach where curriculum, instruction, and assessment work together to build a comprehensive educational program. Curriculum drives instruction and assessment. Assessment and instruction inform the curriculum as well as each other.

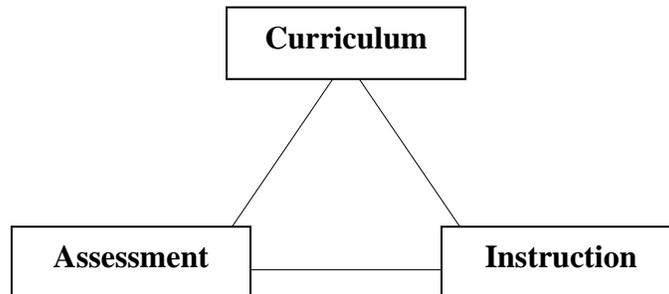
**Table 1.1 2012 APA Number of Valid Scores and Percent of Students at Each Proficiency Level**

Grade	Number of Portfolios Processed	Language Arts Literacy				Mathematics				Science			
		Number of Valid Scores	% Part. Prof.	% Prof.	% Adv. Prof.	Number of Valid Scores	% Part. Prof.	% Prof.	% Adv. Prof.	Number of Valid Scores	% Part. Prof.	% Prof.	% Adv. Prof.
3	1406	1387	29	49.2	21.8	1360	37.1	44.6	18.3	-	-	-	-
4	1422	1387	33.1	58.5	8.4	1352	51.2	30.4	18.4	1299	40.6	58.9	0.5
5	1410	1387	36.6	59.5	3.9	1355	33.4	42.7	23.9	-	-	-	-
6	1351	1317	31.1	56.6	12.4	1290	35.4	44.4	20.2	-	-	-	-
7	1295	1255	40.4	48.1	11.5	1251	34	46.9	19.1	-	-	-	-
8	1224	1185	38.3	53.9	7.8	1175	37	48.2	14.8	1127	37.4	45.6	16.9
9*	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103	33	58.3	8.7
10*	224	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	222	52.3	44.1	3.6
11*	1223	1135	47.1	34.8	18.1	1158	34.6	43.4	21.9	704	44.2	49.4	6.4
12	132	108	60.2	25	14.8	111	53.2	39.6	7.2	105	57.1	37.1	5.7
All Grades	9807	9161	36.4	51.6	11.9	9052	37.8	42.7	19.4	3560	41.3	51.2	7.4

\*In 2011–2012, APA assessed science in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 depending on the grade in which a student received biology instruction.

The triangle in Figure 1.1 highlights the relationship between curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

**Figure 1.1 Linkage**



High-quality assessment practices provide information upon which to base ongoing development of curriculum that is responsive to individual student needs. Aside from the use of a portfolio to capture student learning, this philosophy considers students with significant cognitive disabilities as valued and contributing members of their schools and communities. This performance-based assessment is designed to measure achievement of knowledge and skills that will prepare students for positive post-school outcomes in education, employment, and independent living.

## **1.2 Overview of the Assessment**

### **Background**

The New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment process was developed in response to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA '97)* which required that states develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning no later than July 1, 2000. With the reauthorization of *IDEA '97* as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA '04)*, requirements for alternate assessments remain as follows:

#### **ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS—**

- (i) **IN GENERAL—**The State (or, in the case of a district-wide assessment, the local educational agency) has developed and implemented guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments for those children who cannot participate in regular assessments under subparagraph (A) with accommodations as indicated in their respective individualized education programs.
- (ii) **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS—**The guidelines under clause (i) shall provide for alternate assessments that—
  - (I) are aligned with the State's challenging academic content standards and challenging student academic achievement standards; and
  - (II) if the State has adopted alternate academic achievement standards permitted under the regulations promulgated to carry out section 1111(b)(1) of the

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, measure the achievement of children with disabilities against those standards.

- (iii) CONDUCT OF ALTERNATE ASSESSMENTS—the State conducts the alternate assessments described in this subparagraph. (Sec. 612 (a) (16) (C))

In addition, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students.

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment fulfills these requirements and is based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) in the content areas of language arts literacy, mathematics, and science. In this manner, all students in New Jersey are moving toward the same general standards with whatever modifications or supports they need. Including students with disabilities in the assessment and accountability system is critical to ensure appropriate allocation of resources and learning opportunities for these students. The alternate assessment was designed for a very small percentage of the total school population for whom traditional assessments, even with accommodations, would be inappropriate measures of their progress.

### **Portfolio Assessment**

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) is a portfolio 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 assessments: 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).

A portfolio is a collection of student work samples, student demographic data, and instructional information that relates to a student’s progress on the CCCS, strands, grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPIs), and skill statements called CPI links. Evidence of student performance as demonstrated in the student portfolio was collected twice during instructional activities over the school year. 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.

## Uses of Assessment Results

The APA measures the student's achievement of the CCCS in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. APA results should not be used as the sole basis for instructional decisions.

Each content area assessed receives a proficiency level. The three proficiency levels are:

- **Advanced Proficient** exceeded the level of proficiency
- **Proficient** met the state level of proficiency
- **Partially Proficient** is below the state minimum level of proficiency.

The proficiency level classification allows the APA results to be combined with the results from general assessment for accountability purposes for state and federal reports. For accountability purposes, the APA is both a student assessment and a school/district program assessment.

It is important to recognize that the APA system does not report scale scores. The data provided are the key components when interpreting the portfolio results. The APA scores are based solely on the information provided in the portfolio submitted; therefore, it is inappropriate to compare these scores to other APA students and students taking the general assessments. Scale scores are not appropriate for use for the APA system as there are no issues of equating involved. There are no sets of test items; therefore, there are no item difficulties, nor is there a need to equate test scores from year to year.

For additional information about the APA, the standards on which the APA is based, or information regarding the participation of students with disabilities in the statewide assessment system, see these documents published by the New Jersey Department of Education:

*New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment 2011–2012 Procedures Manual* at: <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa/Documentation.aspx>

*New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards* at: <http://www.nj.gov/njded/cccs>

### 1.3 Organizational Support

***New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE).*** The APA is administered by the Office of Assessments (OS) within the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE). The NJDOE coordinates the development and implementation of New Jersey's statewide assessment program, which is designed to measure student attainment of New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards. The OS works collaboratively within the department and with school districts to collect and report information about student academic achievement in order to inform instruction, increase student learning, and help parents and the public assess the effectiveness of their schools.

The staff of the NJDOE plans, schedules, and directs all APA activities. They are extensively involved in the APA development, training, document review, assessment security and authenticity, and quality-control procedures.

***Pearson.*** The prime contract for developing, administering, and scoring the APA was awarded to Pearson in May 2004. In partnership with Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (ILSSA), Pearson presents extensive administrator training materials, sample activities, forms templates, planning tools, instructional materials, and resources for APA educators at <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa>. Major Pearson activities include:

- Creating and monitoring the schedule for the APA administration, all tasks, subtasks, and activities to be conducted;
- Developing all APA reports, programs, committee communications, training materials, etc., in consultation with NJDOE staff;
- Designing, constructing, proofing, and printing assessment materials, forms, and documents;
- Packaging, distributing, and retrieving all assessment documents;
- Processing and scoring the student portfolios;
- Providing electronic data management and documentation;
- Establishing and implementing required standard setting and psychometric reporting.

***Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment (ILSSA).*** ILSSA assists NJDOE and Pearson with content development, planning, and execution including training and scoring support for the APA. ILSSA is a group of educators dedicated to improving educational opportunities for all students, especially those with significant cognitive disabilities. Since 2001, ILSSA has worked with the NJDOE to implement the APA. During their years of partnership with the NJDOE, ILSSA has provided technical assistance and professional development on a range of topics, from all aspects of implementation of the APA, to research-based practices and access to the general curriculum. Beginning in the summer of 2007, ILSSA worked closely with NJDOE on revisions of the APA through the development of an up-front alignment design, redesign of the scoring rubric, standard setting, and increasing the standardization of the assessment items. They also worked closely with New Jersey educators to provide training and support for teachers with examples of standards-based instruction for better meeting requirements of the revised portfolio assessment.

ILSSA was formed in August 1998 in response to states' and school districts' need to respond to the assessment and other requirements of *IDEA '97* and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

***New Jersey APA Educators.*** Due to the nature of the APA, educators are more extensively involved with the APA administration than the other NJ statewide assessments. For that reason, the NJDOE developed the APA with the very important assistance of several APA educator committees. The committees included representatives of various groups who are knowledgeable about educating students with significant cognitive disabilities and who have an interest in alternate assessment. The committees consisted of panels of special education teachers, child study team members, general education teachers, and administrators. Participants were chosen because of their qualifications as well as their educational expertise. Selection criteria included number of years teaching, student population served, district factor group (DFG), type of educational facility, and regional location. Special care was taken to ensure gender and racial/ethnic representation on the committees. Committee meetings supporting the 2011–2012 APA were as follows:

- APA Curriculum (Created Sample Items) Committee: July 28 – August 1, 2008
- APA Performance Level Descriptors Committee: February 24 – 25, 2009
- APA Standard Setting Committee: June 9 – 12, 2009
- APA Rangefinding Committee: March 19 – 23, 2012

## **PART 2: TEST DESIGN AND TEST DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1 Design History**

The NJ APA 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 expanded to include science in grades 4, 8 and 11 and the assessment of language arts literacy and mathematics in grade 3.

Since the 2006–2007 administration, language arts literacy and mathematics have been assessed in grades 3-8 and 11; and science assessed in grades 4, 8 and 11. With the implementation of the High School End of Course Biology Exam in 2009, however, Science expanded to grades 9 and 10 depending on when a student was enrolled in Biology. In 2010, eligible students who were not assessed in language arts literacy, mathematics, or science in grade 11 were required to assess in grade 12 (including students who did not take a Biology course until grade 12). Starting with the 2011 administration, the High School End of Course Biology Exam has been renamed to the New Jersey Biology Competency Test.

Since 2002–2003 APA student performance results have been combined with the results of the general assessment for state and federal accountability reporting. The APA proficiency levels were designed to parallel the general education assessment. Up through 2007, portfolios were scored based on six dimensions: student progress, connection to standards, social interaction, independence, self-determination, and generalization. For each content area, student performance was classified into one of three proficiency levels based on progress and program:

- Advanced Proficient
- Proficient
- Partially Proficient

A student's progress score for each content area was classified into one of three levels:

- Substantial Progress
- Considerable Progress
- Minimal Progress

A student's program score was also classified into one of three levels.

- Commendable
- Satisfactory
- Needs Improvement

The program score was derived by adding the scores of the remaining five dimensions: connection to standards, social interaction, independence, self-determination, and generalization. A holistic sorting method was used to determine the cut scores for the three program levels.

The student progress level and the program level were combined to derive the three proficiency levels. At the recommendation of the APA Advisory Committee, the performance classification weights the program level more than the student progress level due to the use of state assessment results for school and district accountability. Table 2.1 prescribes how the proficiency was classified.

**Table 2.1 APA Proficiency Classification (2003-2007)**

Proficiency Levels		Student Progress Levels		
		Substantial	Considerable	Minimal
Program Levels	Commendable	Advanced Proficient	Advanced Proficient	Proficient
	Satisfactory	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
	Needs Improvement	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Partially Proficient

A standard setting was conducted in January and February 2003 in order to determine the cut scores for the program level. These cut scores were applied to all grade levels for both mathematics and language arts literacy. When science was added to the APA in the 2004–2005 administration, the same program-level cut scores were applied.

For the 2006–2007 administration, in preparation for the transition to a new test design, the weight of program score determined by the Social Interaction, Independence, and Generalization dimensions was reduced by half. The scoring rubrics were revised to reflect the changes.

The APA underwent significant changes between 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, including changes to the test specifications, assessable content, and scoring dimensions. Prior to the 2007-2008 administration, peer reviewers from the U.S. Department of Education provided the New Jersey Department of Education test design and administration recommendations for the new version of the APA (administered in 2008-2009). These recommendations included the following:

- APA students must be assessed on a subset of skills from the general assessment. The skills must be mapped to the general assessment specifications, and address the breadth and depth of skills tested across grade levels.
- The skills assessed must link to the cumulative progress indicators of the student’s assigned grade level.
- Students in the same grade must be assessed on the same content; teachers choose from a limited selection of standards and strands to assess their students.
- Strengthen the alignment of the APA program design to grade level academic content and progress indicators.

In light of these recommendations, 2007–2008 was an interim year of change prior to full implementation of the new APA test design in 2008-2009. Based on the USDOE peer

review, skills assessed on the APA were required to be academic in nature and linked to a grade-level cumulative progress indicator (CPI). Therefore in 2008, for the purpose of Adequate Yearly Progress reporting, only the dimensions of Student Progress and Connection to Standards were assessed. The dimensions of Social Interaction, Independence, Self-Determination, and Generalization assessed in previous years were not evaluated in 2008. In addition, the connection to standards score replaced the previous program dimension score. 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.

The 2008 APA proficiency level for each content area was based on the total score, calculated as the sum of the Connection to Standards and Student Progress scores. These two score dimensions are described below:

- **Student Progress** – to evaluate student progress toward achieving the targeted skills related to the CCCS
- **Connection to Standards** – to determine the extent to which the portfolio content is linked to the CCCS

Each content area assessed received a proficiency classification – Advanced Proficient, Proficient, or Partially Proficient – which allowed the APA results to be combined with New Jersey’s general assessment results for accountability purposes as required by the United States Department of Education.

In 2008–2009 the fully redesigned APA became operational. As a result, new performance level descriptors and a new standard setting were required. The new design, described in Section 2.2, was scored on the three dimensions: Complexity, Independence and Performance which are combined to determine a total score. A new standard setting was held and the cut scores that resulted were used for reporting in 2009 and onwards. Longitudinal analyses and comparisons across or including the 2008-2009 assessment year are not recommended, nor are they likely to be interpretable.

- The **Complexity** Dimension is used to evaluate the CPI Link assessed and how closely the complexity and difficulty (Matched, Near, Far) links to the CCCS and grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPI).
- The **Independence** Dimension is used to evaluate the extent to which the student completed the assessment items independently.
- The **Performance** Dimension is used to evaluate the student’s accuracy when performing skills represented in the CPI Links.

Table 2.2 shows the number of portfolios with valid scores for each content area by grade level for the APA test administrations from 2003–2004 through 2010–2011.

**Table 2.2 Number of Valid Scores 2003-2004 through 2011-2012 Administrations**

Grade	2003–2004		2004–2005			2005–2006			2006–2007		
	LAL	Math	LAL	Math	Science	LAL	Math	Science	LAL	Math	Science
3	835	840	784	741	---	908	863	---	1005	956	---
4	829	814	773	742	710	882	804	794	997	982	894
5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1037	1016	---
6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	1015	1006	---
7	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	990	975	---
8	728	694	768	755	723	930	852	871	1033	1037	989
9*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
10*	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
11*	647	630	657	645	554	642	609	596	978	953	885
12	---	---	77	78	---	194	185	---	90	88	---
All Grades	3039	2978	3059	2961	1987	3556	3313	2261	7145	7013	2768

Grade	2007–2008			2008–2009			2009–2010			2010-2011		
	LAL	Math	Science									
3	1001	994	---	1190	1164	---	1272	1249	---	1252	1229	---
4	1075	1039	958	1092	1064	1009	1207	1182	1140	1338	1309	1278
5	1018	1021	---	1101	1084	---	1117	1102	---	1250	1219	---
6	1038	1021	---	1093	1079	---	1109	1088	---	1197	1185	---
7	1036	1014	---	1111	1092	---	1126	1116	---	1178	1168	---
8	930	946	892	1079	1085	1011	1132	1127	1069	1113	1110	1054
9*	---	---	---	---	---	55	---	---	130	---	---	95
10*	---	---	---	---	---	109	---	---	210	---	---	170
11*	1054	995	66	1125	1136	503	1182	1196	756	1122	1150	711
12	36	36	---	74	72	---	75	78	83	78	77	129
All Grades	7188	7066	1916	7865	7776	2687	8220	8138	3388	8528	8447	3437

Grade	2011–2012		
	LAL	Math	Science
3	1387	1360	---
4	1387	1352	1299
5	1387	1355	---
6	1317	1290	---
7	1255	1251	---
8	1185	1175	1127
9*	---	---	103
10*	---	---	222
11*	1135	1158	704
12	108	111	105
All Grades	9161	9052	3560

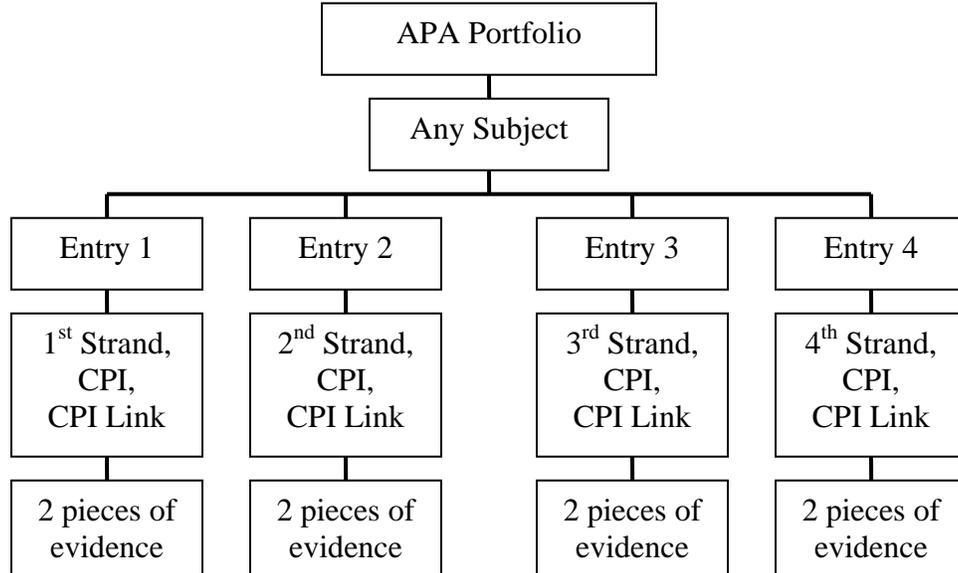
\*In 2009–2012, APA assessed science in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12 depending on the grade in which a student received biology instruction.

## 2.2 Test Design

The design of the APA remains the same across grades and content 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 an associated CPI link must be identified for measurement. The CPI Links and their associated CPIs and Strands are available through the NJ DOE Website ([http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa/CPILinks\\_1112.aspx](http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa/CPILinks_1112.aspx)). 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 1st piece of evidence. 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. A graphic, representing the structure of the APA is presented in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1 APA Structure**



- Each entry is scored on 3 dimensions: **Performance**, **Complexity** and **Independence** by 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 =  $(\text{Performance}_{\text{scorer1}} + \text{Performance}_{\text{scorer2}}) + \text{Complexity}_{\text{average}} + \text{Independence}_{\text{average}}$

Each entry in a student's portfolio is scored on the three dimensions defined previously: complexity, independence, and performance. These dimensions are evaluated using the 2 pieces of evidence submitted for each entry. One piece of representative evidence is collected early in the year as a baseline score; another piece of representative evidence is collected near the end of the year. The difference in student performance exemplified on the two is a measure of the student's performance. Scores are combined across entries to determine the student's proficiency level in a subject. This scoring is described in greater detail in Part 4.

### **2.3 Test Specifications**

The APA has Test Specifications by grade and content area which prescribe the standards and strands that must be assessed. Test specifications were written in order to provide more guidance on how to link to grade-level CPIs, and to address the federal requirement of linkage to the skills tested in the general assessments. Specifying the requirements increases standardization of the assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. 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 APA portfolio in each grade requires four entries per content area of Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics. In Grades 4, 8 and high school the portfolio must also have four entries in Science. The test specifications below identify the standards, strands, and CPIs that must be assessed.

- Four entries based on Language Arts Literacy standards from the CCCS.
  - Two entries based on 2 different strands and CPIs from standard 3.1 (Reading)
  - Two entries based on 2 different strands and CPIs from standard 3.2 (Writing)
- Four entries based on 4 different Mathematics standards from the CCCS with specified strands and CPIs at each grade level.
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 4.1 (Number and Numerical Operations)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 4.2 (Geometry and Measurement)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 4.3 (Patterns and Algebra)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 4.4 (Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Mathematics)
- Four entries based on different Science standards from the CCCS.
  - Grade 4
    - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.5 (Life Science)

- One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.6 (Physical Science – Chemistry)
- One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.8 (Earth Science)
- One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.9 (Astronomy and Space Science)
- Grade 8
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.5 (Life Science)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.6 (Physical Science – Chemistry)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.7 (Physical Science – Physics)
  - One entry based on a specified strand, CPI and CPI Link from Standard 5.9 (Astronomy and Space Science)
- High School
  - Two entries based on 2 different strands, CPIs and CPI Links from standard 5.5 (Life Science)
  - Two entries based on 2 different strands, CPIs and CPI Links from standard 5.10 (Environmental Studies)

## 2.4 Alignment

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 achievement level descriptors and achievement levels that cover the full range of knowledge and skills articulated in the CPI Links. The process for developing the descriptors and setting the achievement levels is fully described in Section 6. This section details the development of the CPI Links and their alignment to the state’s content standards.

Prior to the development of essence statements and CPI Links, a subset of the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards was prioritized for measurement on the APA. In 2007 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 CCCS. Subsequently, the essence associated with each identified CPI from the CCCS was established by a committee of NJ educators, facilitated by ILSSA. A flow chart explaining this process is attached as Appendix A.

The CPI Links are skill statements that directly link to the critical essence of CPIs from the NJ Content Standards. Providing these statements remove 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). The

criteria used as guiding principles for test development and alignment processes are excerpted below from page 24 of the 2011-2012 NJ APA Procedures Manual.

Table 1: *Criteria for Instruction and Assessment that Links to Grade Level Content*

1. The content is academic and includes the major domains/strands of the content area as reflected in state and national standards (e.g., reading, math, science).
2. The content is referenced to the student's assigned grade level.
3. The achievement expectation is linked to the grade level content, but differs in depth or complexity; it is not grade level achievement.
4. There is some differentiation in achievement across grade levels or grade bands.
5. The focus of achievement promotes access to the activities, materials, and settings typical of the grade level but with the accommodations, adaptations, and supports needed for individualization.
6. The focus of achievement maintains fidelity with the content of the original grade level standards (content centrality) and when possible, the specified performance (category of knowledge).
7. Multiple levels of access to the general curriculum are planned so that students with different levels of symbolic communication can demonstrate learning.

Adapted from Browder, D.M., Wakeman, S.Y., Flowers, C.P., Rickelman, R.J., & Pugalee, D. (In press). Creating access to the general curriculum with links to grade level content for students with significant cognitive disabilities: An explication of the concept. *Journal of Special Education*.

As a result of the development of the essences and the CPI Links, educators no longer need to develop appropriate targeted skills and criteria, resulting in increased standardization in the academic content to which APA students are exposed, and in the expectations of performance on that academic content.

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
- Far Link

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 or limited number of items.

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

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.

**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.
- 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.

**Example of a CPI Link**

<p><b>CPI</b> → <b>CPI 3.1.5G13 Recognize figurative language in text (e.g., simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration)</b></p>		
<p>Essence of the CPI: Identify figurative language</p>		
<p><b>Matched Link</b> <i>Complexity is the same</i> <i>Difficulty is lessened</i></p>	<p><b>Near Link</b> <i>Complexity is the same</i> <i>Difficulty is lessened even more</i> OR <i>Complexity is lessened</i> <i>Difficulty is lessened</i></p>	<p><b>Far Link</b> <i>Complexity is lessened</i> <i>Difficulty is lessened even more</i></p>
<p>◆ <b>List the figurative language used in a text</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Find examples of figurative language found in text</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Change a metaphor to a simile</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Personify an object</b></p>	<p>◆ <b>Label a sentence/fragment as a simile, metaphor, personification, or alliteration</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Match examples of figurative language to its type (cute as a button : simile)</b></p>	<p>◆ <b>Identify key words for similes (like, as)</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Identify simile (e.g., match example to term; answer yes/no based on examples)</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Identify personification (e.g., match example to term; answer yes/no based on examples)</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Identify alliteration (e.g., match example to term; answer yes/no based on examples)</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Identify metaphor (e.g., match example to term; answer yes/no based on examples)</b></p>

## **Part 3: TEST ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING**

### **3.1 Participation in the Alternate Proficiency Assessment**

All students with disabilities must participate in the state assessment system. Students with disabilities participate in either the general assessment with accommodations for their grade, or in the APA. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team makes decisions about state assessment participation. Decisions regarding participation in the APA must be documented in the student's IEP. A sample of the IEP form with guidance about how to document decisions is shown at [www.nj.gov/education/specialed/iep\\_form\\_ann.pdf](http://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/iep_form_ann.pdf). The IEP team determines for each content area assessed, whether an individual student will participate in the general assessment or the APA. A student may participate in the APA in a content area only if the IEP team determines that the student has not been instructed in the knowledge and skills tested by the assessment and if the student is unable to correctly complete any of the tasks on the general assessment, even with accommodations and modifications [*N.J.A.C.* 6A: 14-4.10].

Students with disabilities participate in the state assessments during the same grades as their nondisabled peers. Therefore, students with disabilities in grades 3–8, and high school (9, 10, 11 and/or 12), must participate in the statewide assessment system, regardless of educational placement. The student's assigned grade level determines when a student participates in state assessments. This includes students with disabilities attending the following:

- Local district public schools;
- Local district public schools in another part of town;
- Public schools in other towns;
- Receiving schools including county special services school district, public educational service commissions, approved private schools for the disabled, college-operated programs, Marie H. Katzenbach School for the Deaf, jointure commissions, and regional day schools;
- Private schools in accordance with a Naples placement;
- Private schools for the disabled out of state (placed there by a New Jersey district or authorized state agency); and
- State educational facilities.

Students on homebound instruction were also required to participate in state assessments.

Guidelines for grade 12 students are:

- If a senior was new to the state and had not participated in either the APA or the HSPA, the IEP team determined which assessment was appropriate and the student participated in that assessment.

- Students, who were juniors the previous year and should have participated in the APA but did not, must participate in the APA.

Students with disabilities who participate in one or more content areas of the HSPA, regardless of whether or not they were required to pass the HSPA in order to meet graduation requirements, were not eligible to participate in the APA in that (those) content area(s).

The document, “Guidelines to Determine Which Students Should Participate in the New Jersey Statewide Assessment Through the Alternate Proficiency Assessment,” appears in Appendix B. Also included is a chart that provides the individual determinations that must be made to evaluate student eligibility for participation in the APA.

### **Personnel Responsibilities**

Identifying a student who should take the Alternate Proficiency Assessment as the state assessment of record requires the input of many personnel. The district’s director of special education, the child study team members, and other educators may be involved in this decision, although the IEP team makes the final decision about participation in the APA.

The school administrator, director of special education, and the APA coordinator are responsible for ensuring that the APA is correctly developed for the appropriate students during the prescribed data collection period. The dissemination of information to the APA student’s educators, oversight of the APA process, and the review of the portfolio are all administrators’ responsibilities. It is also the direct responsibility of the administrators to ensure that these assessments are submitted on time for scoring, and that the student demographic information coded on both the general assessment test book/answer folder and the APA assessment scan sheet is accurate and complete.

All educators of students who participate in the APA process are responsible for reviewing the *APA Procedures Manual* and following all procedures when collecting educational information that will be submitted in a portfolio. All educators should review the scoring guidelines and plan how to include student work in the portfolio that meets these guidelines. In most cases, the evidence contained in the portfolio is submitted by several teachers, though the student’s lead teacher does the coordination of the development and submission of the APA to the coordinator.

### **3.2 Test Administration Procedures**

For each school and district with any student assessed with the APA, the NJDOE required that an administrator (special education director, principal, director of curriculum, child study team members, etc.) be assigned to the role of test coordinator. These individuals were responsible for ensuring that all APA tasks were completed, including the dissemination of information, the completion of all portfolios, the review of the completed portfolios for accuracy and authenticity, and adherence to all APA

deadlines. Table 3.1 displays the calendar shown on the inside front cover of the *APA Procedures Manual (2011–2012)*.

**Table 3.1 2011-2012 Calendar for APA**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Administrator Training	September 19, 20, 21, 22, 2011
Training for APA Teachers	On-line Training – Dates determined by the district beginning September 1, 2011 <a href="http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa">http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa</a> <i>Select the 'Documentation' tab</i>
First Collection Period	September 1, 2011 – November 11, 2011
Second Collection Period	December 12, 2011 – February 17, 2012
Portfolio Completion Date	February 17, 2012
Administrator Review of Portfolio	February 20 – 24, 2012
Portfolio Collection Materials Sent to Districts/Schools	February 2012
Portfolios Returned to Contractor	March 2012 – Dates to be determined
Student Demographic Record Changes	April 2012 – Dates to be determined
APA Scoring	Spring 2012
Scores Reported to School Districts	June 2012
Portfolios Returned to Districts	September 2012

### 3.3 Pre-Administration Training

For schools with any students participating in the APA, NJDOE required one administrator and at least one teacher to attend a pre-administration training session held at four regional locations across the state in the fall. The mandatory half-day training session for administrators focused on student participation guidelines for the APA, the administrators' roles and responsibilities, and the APA design. For teachers, on-line training modules were created that focused on the APA test design, CPI Links, Universal Scoring Rules, the required portfolio components and scoring rubrics. The training modules also included information on the revisions to the APA. A list of training modules is shown in Table 3.2.

The administrator training for the 2012 assessment was held September 19, 20, 21, and 22, 2011. In addition to the regional training sessions, online training sessions were simulcast via the Internet with an online application called WebEx. The WebEx training sessions enabled districts and schools to facilitate in-district training and reduce the transportation burden of attending the regional training. The WebEx administrator training session were determined by the districts beginning September 1, 2011.

**Table 3.2 Teachers' Training Modules**

- APA Introduction, Student Participation, and APA Revisions
- APA Test Design and CPI Links
- Common Mistakes
- Contents of an Entry and Acceptable Evidence
- Acceptable Evidence
- Universal Scoring Rule
- Scoring Dimensions - Complexity
- Scoring Dimension - Independence
- Scoring Dimension – Performance
- Steps to Developing Entries
- Teacher Instructional Resources
- Sample Entries: LAL, Math, Science
- Proficiency Levels, Score Reports and Administrative Topics

Copies of all APA training materials are available on the Pearson Web site:  
<http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa>.

### 3.4 Test Security Procedures

Due to the nature of the APA, educators are more extensively involved in preparing and handling the assessment materials than for other NJ statewide assessments. The following statements concerning the professional and ethical responsibility of educators administering the APA appeared on page 4 of the *APA Procedures Manual (2011-2012)*.

- **It is the responsibility of all contributors to a student’s portfolio to ensure that any and all data and documentation reflect authentic, accurate, and truthful information.**
- **Any student portfolio that is found to contain inauthentic data and/or documentation may result in professional consequences for staff and financial consequences for the school or district.**

There are several different occurrences that result in a security breach of an APA. As such, it is imperative that all staff involved in the development and submission of an APA adhere to the procedures and guidelines that are defined in this manual.

Evidence submitted in a portfolio must not be fabricated, altered, or duplicated for multiple students. Evidence must be dated with the date of the actual occurrence of the production of this evidence. Materials should not reflect date changes using white out or other methods.

District and school administrators, as well as the student’s educators, are responsible for ensuring that the APA reflect a true picture of the student’s acquired knowledge and skills.

### **3.5 Portfolio Construction**

#### **Developing an APA Portfolio Entry**

An entry is a collection of evidence that documents a student’s knowledge and application of key concepts and skills pertaining to a particular content standard and grade-level CPI. Evidence may include teacher graded student work samples, captioned photographs, and snapshots of completed student work.

The APA test specifications for each grade level and content area delineate four standards and strands that must be assessed. A portfolio entry is produced for each set of standards and strands. In addition, a related cumulative progress indicator (CPI) is selected for assessment from the list in the test specifications. For instance, in 5th grade there are three possible CPIs to choose from in the reading strand *Comprehension Skills and Response to Text*.

In addition to the portfolio entries, a completed portfolio contains:

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

**Entry Cover Sheet** – The entry cover sheet is used to document the entry type (Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science), entry number, standard, strand, CPI, CPI Link type, and the specific CPI Link.

The steps for developing an entry are explained in the APA Procedures Manual. These eight steps are as follows:

Step 1: Select a CPI and one related CPI Link to be assessed.

Step 2: Plan instruction and assessment concerning the CPI.

Step 3: Design activities that will be used to assess the CPI Link.

Step 4: Assess the student to get an initial piece of evidence for APA purposes.

Step 5: Implement instruction.

- Ensure instruction reflects the essence of the strand and standard.
- Ensure instruction is age- and grade-level appropriate.
- Retain a working folder of instructional activities and classroom-based assessments implemented between the activities that generate the initial and final pieces of evidence.

Step 6: Determine when evidence can be collected to document the final instructional assessment of the CPI Link for APA purposes.

Step 7: Based on the student's accuracy score and level of prompt information on the "final" activity, determine if additional instruction and collection of evidence needs to occur for the entry.

Step 8: Review evidence to ensure that all information related to test design requirements are included.

For teachers preparing to administer the APA, extensive instructions appeared in the procedures manual on the teacher training slides, and on the Web site <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa/Documentation.aspx>. The Web site showed 29 sample activities. A number of annotated examples of acceptable evidence and unacceptable evidence were pictured in the procedures manual. Additionally, the instructions listed acceptable and unacceptable work samples.

To begin development of an APA portfolio entry, teachers selected a CPI and one related CPI Link to be assessed. Figure 3.1 summarizes how decisions for choosing CPI Links should and should not be made. CPI Links for each grade level and each content area appear in Appendix F of the APA Procedures Manual.

"Use of Prompting and Scoring Evidence," Chapter 5 in the APA Procedures Manual, describes the types of supports, prompts, and activity formats that are acceptable for

instruction and those that are acceptable for assessment. Pages 40–44 from the APA Procedures Manual, included in Appendix C of this Technical Report, provide teachers with information about task directions, prompts, and instructional supports.

Additionally, Appendix C shows the “Planning Entry Tool” form with instructions from the Procedures Manual. On page 1 of the “Planning Entry Tool,” teachers documented their planned instructional lessons/unit of study needed to teach the skills and concepts of the CPI and the CPI Link. Also on page 1, teachers listed the supports by answering:

1. How will the student *access* instruction?
2. How will the student *interact* with instruction and materials?
3. How will the student *demonstrate knowledge, skills, and concepts* acquired?

After selecting the CPI and related CPI Link, teachers assessed students to obtain the initial pieces of evidence. Figure 3.2 summarizes the important points that teachers had to consider as they prepared to administer and score the initial entry.

**Figure 3.1 Choosing a CPI Link for the APA**

<b>How Do You Choose a CPI Link? Think About a Student</b>	
<p><b>Decisions Are Based On:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student’s grade</li> <li>• What the student already knows</li> <li>• How quickly the student learns new information</li> <li>• High expectations for students</li> <li>• Initial level of prompts (<i>if any</i>) needed for the student to succeed</li> <li>• How well the student performs on the initial activity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Decisions Are Not Based On:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student’s mode of communication</li> <li>• The student’s disability category</li> <li>• Low expectations for students</li> <li>• Supports needed by the student to participate and perform in the curriculum</li> </ul>

### Figure 3.2 Administering and Scoring an Activity for APA

Scoring the activity correctly for assessment purposes is important. The evidence must include scoring information (percent scores) about

- a student's accuracy when performing the skill, and
- the number of items/questions/task elements that the student performed independently.

Teachers must understand the difference between:

- providing *task directions*,
- providing *supports*,
- providing *indirect prompts* (verbal, model, and gestural),
- providing *physical prompts*, and
- providing the answer (*directly prompting the student with the answer to the question*)

To ensure that scoring information on the evidence is accurate.

Scoring an activity for APA requires documentation of how well the student performed the skill.

- Accurate performance

And documentation of how many of the items/questions/task elements were done independently.

- Independence level

Scoring for APA separates these two concepts.

Scoring the activity for accuracy requires a consistent understanding of when to mark an answer right or wrong.

- Certainly, if the student performed the skill independently, the answer is either correct or incorrect.
- But what about when the student receives a prompt? How do you score the item correct or incorrect?

### **Scoring a Piece of Evidence**

When an instructional activity is to be used as evidence in an entry, the teacher must score the activity based on the number of test items (questions, task elements) the student got correct/incorrect, and the number of items that the student completed independently.

Each piece of evidence must include two separate scores: one for accuracy and one for independence.

### **Scoring for Accuracy**

Each item on the assessment evidence should be scored as either correct (+) or incorrect (-). The student should give a response or perform the skill or step for each item of the assessment. If the student requires a specific prompt level to respond, provide an indirect prompt (V, G, M) or, if necessary, a physical prompt. Accuracy is scored based on the student's first attempt to perform the skill. Accuracy scores are documented on the evidence as a percentage score (the number of correct responses divided by the total number of items and multiplied by 100). The total number of test items must always be at least five. If the student required a physical prompt, the item must be scored as incorrect.

### **Scoring for Independence**

Each item on the assessment will receive a second score based on the level of independence at which the student performed the skill. If the student responds independently, the item will be marked with an "I". If the student required a prompt level to respond or perform the skill, then the item must be marked with the level of prompt. The typical hierarchy of prompts goes from least to most intrusive as verbal (V), gestural (G), model (M), and physical (P). The level of prompt a student receives is a teacher's decision, based on the CPI Link selected, the student's prior knowledge, and other instructional information. If the student completes all of the items independently, state that on the evidence. In addition, the percentage of time the student performed the items independently must be calculated and documented for every piece of evidence (calculated by dividing the number of items performed independently by the total number of items multiplied by 100).

Table 3.3 summarizes the correct and incorrect scoring of items for accuracy and independence.

**Table 3.3 Scoring of Items for Accuracy and Independence**

<b>An item is scored as correct + when:</b>	<b>An item is scored incorrect – when:</b>
A student performs item independently and accurately	A student performs item independently but inaccurately
An indirect verbal prompt is provided and the student performs the skill correctly	An indirect verbal prompt is provided and the student performs the skill incorrectly
An indirect gestural prompt is provided and the student performs the skill correctly	An indirect gestural prompt is provided and the student performs the skill incorrectly
An indirect model prompt is provided and the student performs the skill correctly	An indirect model prompt is provided and the student performs the skill incorrectly
	A physical prompt is provided (e.g., the teacher moves the student’s hand, wrist, elbow, etc.) to place the sticker in the correct place on the coordinator grid.

### **Scoring Writing**

One of the requirements for acceptable evidence is that it must include at least five test items, for example, identifying five nouns. Writing tasks may require five discrete components, or may need to be scored using a rubric. The Links will include the word “*rubric*” next to the link when it is necessary to score the task using a rubric. A rubric must include all parts of the CPI Link, and allow calculation of an accuracy and independence score.

When scoring student writing with a rubric, the writing must be scored solely on the skills/concepts within the selected CPI Link. Therefore, it is important that the dimensions of the rubric include only the academic skills included in the CPI Link. Behavioral skills should not be included in the writing rubrics.

Teachers create scoring rubrics specifically to address the academic content required in a CPI Link. These rubrics should follow the guidelines noted above: they should address only academic skills and only those skills/concepts present in the CPI Link.

Appendix D shows examples of appropriate writing rubrics.

## Part 4: SCORING

From March to early June 2012, the Performance Scoring Center (PSC) at Pearson scored the APA portfolios. An APA portfolio included four entries for each assessed content area—Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

Each entry in a portfolio was scored independently by *at least* two readers for each dimension of the scoring rubric. Table 4.1 shows the total number of Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science readings across grade levels.

**Table 4.1 Total Number of Readings for the APA Portfolios**

	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7
<b>Language Arts Literacy</b>					
Complexity	11439	11569	11436	10961	10515
Performance	11480	11616	11462	11040	10561
Independence	11421	11568	11429	10975	10541
<b>Mathematics</b>					
Complexity	11586	11660	11530	11018	10522
Performance	11568	11648	11550	11037	10541
Independence	11507	11584	11500	10988	10507
<b>Science</b>					
Complexity	--	11603	--	--	--
Performance	--	11646	--	--	--
Independence	--	11564	--	--	--

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12
<b>Language Arts Literacy</b>					
Complexity	9980	--	--	9955	1043
Performance	10027	--	--	9976	1044
Independence	10001	--	--	9944	1044
<b>Mathematics</b>					
Complexity	9945	--	--	9899	1048
Performance	9981	--	--	9976	1047
Independence	9947	--	--	9911	1044
<b>Science</b>					
Complexity	9946	968	1832	9886	1043
Performance	10000	973	1846	9904	1047
Independence	9938	967	1837	9881	1045

As part of operational scoring, each entry of a portfolio was reviewed and given a rating of 0 to 4 for Complexity, Performance, and Independence. The scoring rubric shown in Figure 4.1 presents the criteria used to score each APA entry.

Each entry is scored independently by at least two readers for each dimension of the rubric. An entry score is derived from two scores, one from each reader. If the scores given by the two readers are not equal, a third reader scores the “discrepant”

dimension(s). The third reader’s score is then combined with the equivalent or highest adjacent score.

**Figure 4.1 Alternate Proficiency Assessment Scoring Rubric**

<b>Score Point</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Dimension</b>					
<b>Complexity</b>	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.
<b>Performance</b>	Evidence is not clear or all items are not marked as correct/incorrect.	Accuracy of work is 0-39% based on the last activity. <u>Or</u> Second activity includes 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.
<b>Independence</b>	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

Major milestones and meetings for the 2011-2012 APA portfolio scoring included:

- Rangefinding preparation..... February 27 – March 2, 2012
- Rangefinding meeting..... March 19 - 23, 2012
- Scoring preparation ..... March 26 - April 6, 2012
- PSC and ILSSA meet to finalize training process..... April 9, 2012
- Training..... April 10 - 18, 2012
- Scoring begins..... April 19, 2012
- Scoring ends..... June 1, 2012

## 4.1 Scorer Selection

Since 2004, the Pearson Performance Scoring Center (PSC) has scored the NJ APA at their site in Tucson, Arizona. Scorers selected for the APA at the PSC must have at least a bachelor's degree. Preference was given to candidates with the following credentials:

- educational background, teaching experience, and/or certification in special education,
- experience in scoring alternate assessment portfolios, and
- experience in scoring large-scale educational assessments.

In April 2012, the PSC hired 135 scorers. There were 75 females and 60 males. One hundred six (106) scorers were Pearson rehires and 91 of them had previously scored the NJ APA. All scorers had a minimum of a bachelor's degree. The scorer degrees included 13 education majors, 11 English and writing majors, 16 science and mathematics majors, and 30 social and behavioral science majors (e.g., anthropology, sociology, psychology, social work).

All scorers must receive rigorous training prior to scoring and then receive continuous training and monitoring all through scoring. There were 133 scorers present on day one, 4 scorers resigned during the training window, 129 scorers took the qualification test, and 123 scorers met the qualifying criterion. Scorers' characteristics are summarized in Table 4.2.

After completion of scorer training and qualification, 12 table leaders, 3 floating supervisors and 17 feedback supervisors were selected, based on their qualification scores and ability to oversee a team.

**Table 4.2 Summary of the Scorers' Characteristics**

<b>Scorers' Characteristics</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Number of Scorers Hired</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>Experience</b>	
<b>Rehires</b>	<b>106</b>
Previously Scored NJ APA	91
<b>New Hires</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Education: by Bachelor Degree</b>	
Business	21
Education	13
Engineering	4
Fine Arts	10
Humanities	11
Liberal Arts	30
Public Administration	12
Science/Mathematics	16
Social and Behavioral Science	30
General, Other, Unknown	7
<b>Qualification</b>	
<b>Scorers Present for Qualification Test</b>	<b>129</b>
Scorers Met Criterion	123
Scorers Not Meeting Criterion	6

**Security at the Scoring Site**

Providing an environment that promotes the security of test items, student responses, data, and employees is of utmost concern to Pearson. Therefore, throughout the NJ APA operational scoring, Pearson employed the following standard safeguards for security at the Tucson site:

- Site personnel were stationed at the entrance to verify that only employees or authorized visitors were permitted access.
- No materials were allowed outside the facility during the project without the permission of a person or persons designated by the NJDOE.
- Scoring personnel signed a nondisclosure and confidentiality form in which they agreed not to use or divulge any information concerning tests, scoring guides, or individual student responses.
- All staff displayed Pearson identification badges at all times while in the scoring facility.
- All contact with the press was handled through the NJDOE.

## **4.2 Rangefinding**

Rangefinding is a most important component within the scoring procedure. Rangefinding is the process by which a wide range of portfolios are reviewed by a committee of New Jersey Special Education teachers for the purpose of selecting exemplars to use in the training, monitoring, and qualification of scorers and for establishing/revising the scoring guidelines. To the extent possible, these portfolios represent the range of abilities and characteristics in the population tested as well as a range of student work sample types.

Preparation for the 2012 rangefinding began with a meeting in Iowa City from February 22 – March 2, 2011, to identify portfolios for New Jersey teachers and administrators to score during rangefinding. Participants in this meeting were:

- ILSSA content specialists who produce the scoring training materials and share the training responsibility with the PSC scoring directors.
- PSC scoring directors and content specialist with the responsibility for training supervisors and scorers, and overseeing and monitoring scoring.
- Pearson program team members who direct the day-to-day operations for the APA by working with NJDOE staff members and New Jersey educators.

Prior to this meeting, ILSSA and PSC staff reviewed training materials from the rangefinding of the previous assessment year and made necessary revisions. ILSSA and PSC staff members drew upon their experience with the redesign of test specifications and their several years of experience scoring the APA to revise the training materials and create content training. ILSSA began work with the NJDOE in 2001. The PSC first scored the NJ APA in 2004. Staff members at the PSC and ILSSA worked closely with the NJDOE to develop the scoring rubric. Revised materials for rangefinding were reviewed and approved by the NJDOE.

To provide portfolios for rangefinding, the NJDOE sent Pearson a list of districts that could return their APA portfolios early for scoring. Staff members at ILSSA and PSC pre-screened the early-return portfolios to identify those to use for rangefinding. Portfolios were selected to represent the following:

- range of school districts
- different types of schools
- grade level of students (elementary, middle, high school)
- skill level (access skill, modified expectation)
- severity of disability (severe/profound, moderate, mild-moderate)
- possible score levels (low, medium, high)

Eighteen New Jersey teachers and administrators participated in the rangefinding meetings from March 19–23, 2011, at the Mercer County Community College Conference Center in West Windsor, New Jersey. Rangefinding committee members were certified in special education with appropriate grade-level and content-area expertise.

Staff members from NJDOE, ILSSA, and PSC led the meeting. At the beginning, committee members were introduced to their tasks of reviewing and scoring rangefinding portfolios used to train the scorers. The portfolio components, the scoring handbook, the rangefinding matrix, the sample entries, and the content modules were discussed.

Then, the rangefinding committee was divided into groups of teams (tables) to aid the discussion of individual portfolios. For each table, a leader was selected to maintain notes, portfolio discussions, and record consensus scores. Each table also included a staff member from NJDOE, ILSSA, or Pearson to facilitate discussion and answer questions. The table groups scored through two phases described as follows:

- Phase I – Three members of a team independently scored a portfolio. After the portfolios were scored, the table leader guided the reconciliation discussion. If there were differences among the three scores, the group reached agreement through discussion and review of the rubric. The group then noted specific details for their scoring of each portfolio on the rangefinding matrix. The scoring worksheets and the rangefinding matrix were placed in an envelope for each portfolio. Then, each portfolio was transferred to another table for one more score.
- Phase II – When each portfolio was scored the fourth time by another table, staff members from NJDOE/ILSSA/PSC/Pearson compared the GROUP score sheet with the fourth score sheet. This provided a check for consistency across the table groups. If scores were not consistent, a scorer from the original team and the fourth scorer from a different table discussed the scores to determine a consensus.

An additional team was assigned to review previous training sets to ensure scores accurately reflected any scoring rule updates.

The PSC scoring director was responsible for facilitating the flow of the portfolios and maintaining a log detailing the scoring for each portfolio. Security of the rangefinding material was maintained throughout the meeting. While the meetings were in session, a staff member from Pearson, ILSSA, or NJDOE was present in the meeting room. The

rangefinding materials were locked in secure storage when the meetings were not in session.

Immediately after the rangefinding meeting, staff members from NJDOE, ILSSA, and Pearson met to finalize and approve the consensus scores. APA rangefinding portfolio scoring was required to enable staff to update the existing training sets. The goal was to identify a minimum of 16 portfolios to be used as follows:

- 5 for practice
- 3 for qualification
- 2 for additional training and qualification
- 6 for validity (2 per each science grade, if possible)

NJDOE received a copy of the official rangefinding record from Pearson, including the consensus scores and the teachers' comments.

During the week following rangefinding, staff members from NJDOE, ILSSA, and the PSC reviewed decisions at their home sites. The PSC scoring director and content specialist added information on the placement of each portfolio in the training and qualifying sets. To present a wide range of possible scoring scenarios, a variety of entries from different portfolios were chosen for the qualifying portfolios. Through this work, the NJDOE, ILSSA, and PSC staff continued to discuss the selected portfolios with conference calls and e-mails.

All training sets and qualifying portfolios were submitted to NJDOE for approval and required sign off before scorer training began.

### **4.3 Scorer Training**

Training for scoring the APA portfolios was conducted by ILSSA content specialists and Pearson scoring directors with the guidance of the NJDOE APA Coordinator. The scorers were trained to score all content areas (Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science) and all grade levels (grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12).

ILSSA content specialists began the training with an introduction to the content standards and entry points and how these align to one another. Training included discussion of the training entries, the scores for each dimension, and the rationale behind these scores. ILSSA content specialists designed a slide presentation that showed examples and non-examples of each dimension and content area.

Scorers received the *New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Scoring Handbook 2011-2012* and paper copies of all training materials. The scorers were encouraged to take notes throughout training as well as during the entire scoring process. Scorers had their scoring handbooks available to refer to and were instructed to ask questions regarding specific portfolios throughout scoring. Scorers received the Scoring Rules Guide. The Guide listed all scoring rules with instructions on how to score and from

whom to seek approval when questioning a piece of evidence. The Content Guide and Five Items Resource documents for Grades 4, 8, and High School were given to scorers and explained during the training as content training to help them with their Practice and Qualifying sets.

Scorers worked through the scored rangefinding entries, clarified the scoring criteria, and practiced scoring. Scorers were given the opportunity to score the practice sets based on the training in the scoring handbook and the training set. True scores for these practice sets were then reviewed and justified with the group. PSC directors used the Cumulative Training Report by Dimension to assist with the review. Retraining was conducted when indicated by the practice sets.

Qualification sets were then administered. Three qualification rounds (one portfolio per round—36 scores) were administered and scored. A re-qualification round along with additional training was available for those who required another round to meet the criteria. A reader's scores for the three qualification rounds and re-qualification (if necessary) rounds were averaged.

During qualification, PSC scoring directors and content specialist with the NJDOE APA Coordinator reviewed and analyzed several reports including the Daily Qualifying Reports by Portfolio and the Cumulative Qualifying Reports by Dimension.

To qualify, scorers were required to attain a total of 75% exact agreement and 86.1% exact plus adjacent agreement (summative) across all portfolios and dimensions. Also, a minimum of 83.3% of exact and adjacent agreement scores (summative) was required for the Complexity dimension in order to qualify. Potential scorers who did not meet these requirements but were statistically close (would qualify if successful on two more portfolios) were retrained.

If an entry does not meet the test design requirements, a score of zero may be applied to all dimensions or individual dimensions as defined by the scoring rules. Because the zero score rules were very important to APA scoring, all scorers received additional training as necessary on the entries with zero rules.

After qualification, scorers were given additional content training. The Content Guide and Five Items Resource documents for Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 were given to the scorers and trained as those grades came onto the scoring floor during live scoring. Grades 4, 8 and High School were reviewed again as those grades came onto the scoring floor.

The NJDOE APA Coordinator was present for the final qualification round and the beginning of scoring.

#### **4.4 Scoring Procedures**

The purpose of scoring is to measure whether the evidence submitted for each CPI Link demonstrates that 1) the student has attained the conditions required for independent and

accurate performance, and 2) the degree the evidence is aligned to the New Jersey Content Standards. Participants during scoring included the Pearson PSC scoring directors, supervisors, and trained scorers; ILSSA content specialists; and, during the first week of scoring, the NJDOE APA Coordinator.

PSC content specialist, scoring specialist, scoring directors and supervisors ensured that scoring was conducted independently by trained and qualified scorers without discussion between or among scorers. Scoring supervisors monitored scorers under close supervision of the scoring directors. Scorers were required to bring questions about scoring a particular portfolio and rubric interpretation to their supervisor and/or director.

Scorers worked at tables of 8 to 10 people under the supervision of a table leader. Stacks of portfolios to score were labeled:

- To Be First Scored
- First Score Complete
- To Be Second Scored
- Second Score Complete
- To Be Transferred
- To Be Filed

Each scorer began by signing out a portfolio on a batch tracking log. The scorer removed the portfolio from its bag and verified the batch and serial numbers. The scorer reviewed the Scoring Worksheet; circled 1, 2, or 3 indicating which scorer they were; and printed the student's name, grade, and school on the Scoring Worksheet. Then, the scorer used the table of contents to look through the portfolio to be certain the different entries were distinguishable. If the entries were not clearly separated, the scorer attempted to identify the separate entries. If this could be done, the scorer placed an adhesive note between the entries. On the edge of the adhesive note, the scorer wrote the corresponding entry or required component. If the separate entries could not be identified, the scorer took the portfolio to the table leader.

Scorers followed the detailed instructions in the *New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Scoring Handbook 2011-2012* to score the portfolios. Scorers began their work using the "Universal Scoring Rules for Each Entry" shown in Figure 4.2. Critical points included checking that the appropriate standards, strands, and CPIs were assessed for the grade level; verifying that the dates fell within the appropriate collection period; confirming that the first piece of evidence had an accuracy score of 39%, or lower; replicating the percent score for independence; identifying at least five test items; and determining that only the specified CPI Link was assessed.

Instructions for the scoring rubric in the scoring handbook provided several pages of detailed information for each dimension. These instructions extensively expanded the scoring rubric to include a definition of terms, flowcharts, scoring rules/clarifications, and scoring notes. The instructions for the dimension scoring are shown in Appendix E.

The score for each dimension was not to influence a scorer's score for another dimension. Each dimension of the rubric was reviewed and scored separately. Also, each content area was scored independently. No information from one content area was to influence the scoring of another.

Four monitor codes were used for scoring the APA entries. Scoring Directors and Content Specialist assigned codes for off grade, security breach, insufficient evidence due to extended sick leave (illness), or no evidence (not ill). The scoring handbook included the page "Instructions for the Use of Monitor Codes." These instructions and the pages "Security Breaches – Preponderance of Evidence" and "Security Alerts" appear in Appendix F.

Entries that did not meet the test design requirements were assigned a score of zero for all dimensions or individual dimensions depending on the type of error. Additional training was provided to scorers to enable them to better identify issues that would result in a zero score. Scorers were authorized to assign zeroes pertaining to less complex scoring issues. Rather than complete an explanation sheet for those zeroes, scorers inserted a sheet into the binder that listed identifiable errors. This insert outlined the possible reasons an entry or individual dimension might receive a zero and encouraged the teachers to re-examine the entry(ies) or dimensions which received zeroes.

Scorers escalated portfolios with more complex scoring issues that require assistance from other staff members to their supervisors. The supervisors will then escalated the portfolio to the feedback supervisors, scoring directors, content specialist or ILSSA depending on the issue identified. The portfolios were shelved in the appropriate area to await review. The portfolio was reviewed and a teacher explanation checklist was completed and the appropriate scores were assigned to the monitor. The checklists were used as direct feedback to teachers on the issues encountered. Explanation sheets were written for 5,425 portfolios out of 9,809 portfolios.

When scoring was completed, the scorer returned the portfolio and the monitor to the bag. Then, the scorer placed the portfolio on the "First Score Complete" stack. The scorer signed out another portfolio alternating between the "To Be First Scored" stack and the "To Be Second Scored" stack.

## Universal Scoring Rules

**If the Universal Scoring Rules are not met for two pieces of evidence within the entry, the entry will receive zero scores in each of the three dimensions.**

1. Evidence must include the **student's name**.
2. Evidence must include the **complete date**. (month/day/year)  
Date on 1st piece of evidence must fall within the collection period of  
**Sept. 1, 2011 – Nov. 11, 2011**  
Date on 2nd piece of evidence must fall within the collection period of  
**Dec. 12, 2011 – Feb. 17, 2012**
3. Evidence must include **at least 5 items** that assessed the CPI Link.
4. A **writing rubric is included when specified** in a Writing CPI Link
  - If rubric is missing, the entry cannot be scored
  - If rubric has less than 5 dimensions, the entry cannot be scored
5. Evidence must be presented in the **appropriate format**
  - Student response is evident on at least 5 items.
  - Student work samples
  - Series of caption photographs
  - A photograph of student work too large to put in the portfolio
6. Evidence must reflect the student's **mode of communication**.
7. Evidence must **assess the entire link** while connecting to the essence of the CPI, standard, and strand.
8. Both pieces of evidence must assess the **same CPI Link and skills**.
9. The evidence must **not include more than the skills** contained within the CPI Link.

## Universal Scoring Rules and Teacher Feedback Forms

If an entry violates one or more of the universal scoring rules, feedback about the error is sent to the teacher using one of two different forms. Which form is used is determined by the rule that was violated, as well as who assigned the zero score for the error. Some of the errors are determined by scorer(s), and some of the errors may only be finalized by Scoring Director staff.

The two forms used to provide teacher feedback are the Entry Error Sheet and the Explanation Sheet. The Scoring Rules Guide details the entry errors that may be determined by the scorer, and which potential errors must be documented and forwarded to a Floating Supervisor/Scoring Director.

The more complex scoring issues will require assistance from other staff members (i.e. Table Leaders, Floating Supervisors, and/or Scoring Directors) to ensure consistency of scoring more complex errors. When a scorer believes that an entry may contain these issues, a Scorer will provide details about the entry error on a form called the Escalation Sheet. Scorers must describe the suspected errors for any entry and place the completed Escalation Sheet in the binder. The Scoring Rules Guide will help you keep track of the issues that must receive an Escalation Sheet. Be sure to completely score all remaining entries in the portfolio that did not receive an Escalation Sheet.

Some scoring issues that are less complex will be reviewed by the scorer and assigned zero scores when found to be in violation of the USRs. This may be true for one or more of the entries. If a scorer assigns a zero score for any entry, an Entry Error Sheet must be placed into the binder. This form is generic, so regardless of how many entries in a portfolio receive zero scores, only one Entry Error Sheet will be placed in the binder. The Entry Error Sheet includes all the possible errors that a scorer may resolve independently within a portfolio, as well as issues that must be escalated, so even when there are multiple entries that warrant an Entry Error Sheet, one sheet will suffice. The Scoring Rules Guide will help you keep track of the issues a scorer may resolve independently and when an Entry Error Sheet is needed. Read this Guide carefully to ensure you are not assigning zeros when the entry must be reviewed by one of the Scoring Director's team.

If an Escalation Sheet was submitted for a binder that had one or more entries with complex errors, the Scoring Director's team will determine whether to assign zeros, or if the entry/entries should be scored. If it is determined that the entry/entries should be scored, a Table Leader will meet with the scorer to discuss the entry. The scorer will then be asked to assign scores.

Errors that require escalation to a supervisor include:

- Entry contains too much or too little evidence
- incorrect use of photographs
- unclear/unreadable student responses
- questions regarding scribing and mode of communication

- more difficult first piece of evidence
- issues with writing rubric
- duplicate standard
- issues with CPI & links
- items inaccurately scored by the teacher

This list is not all inclusive, and anytime there is a question about scoring a piece of evidence, scorers will escalate all questionable evidence to their table leaders for review. The table leader will review and escalate to the floating supervisor/scoring director when necessary according to the Scoring Rules Guide (separate document).

Note: If a scorer has a question regarding any issue, he/she will see his/her table leader.

## 4.5 Quality Control of Scoring

A floating supervisor or feedback supervisor monitored eight to ten scorers under close supervision of the scoring director. Scorers were required to bring questions about scoring a particular portfolio and rubric interpretation to their scoring supervisor or scoring director in every instance.

- ePS reports – The scoring directors had access to reports that document individual and group performance such as inter-rater reliability, frequency distribution, project completion, and validity. Scoring directors reviewed reports daily to ensure that all items are being scored within acceptable parameters and within the scheduled timeframe.
  - **Rater reliability reports:** scoring director reviews inter-rater reliability reports daily to assess how accurately scorers are assigning scores. There are three reports that address inter-rater reliability specifically and these are available in either daily or cumulative format.
    - Inter-Rater Reliability by Reader: both daily and cumulative Inter-Rater Reliability by Reader reports are available. It provides a view of how reliable the scorers are scoring the project on an on-going basis. This report shows the exact agreement, adjacent and non-adjacent percentages for each scorer. Scoring directors use this report to evaluate individual scorer, team, and room totals and determine if any retraining is needed. If a scorer, team or the room as a whole has an average agreement below the acceptable level predetermined by the NJDOE, it indicates that there is a misconception held by a portion of the scorers that needs to be addressed. The reliability of resolution scores is also provided.
    - Inter-Rater Reliability by Dimension: both daily and cumulative Inter-Rater Reliability by Dimension reports are available. This report is used in the same manner as the Inter-Rater Reliability Report. This report further breaks down reliability and resolution information by subject and dimension. This report allows the scoring directors to see if a particular dimension within a content area is below the acceptable level predetermined by the NJDOE.
    - Inter-Rater Reliability by Grade Summary: both daily and cumulative reports are available. This report is also used in the same manner as the Inter-Rater Reliability Report. It breaks down reliability and resolution information by subject, dimension, and grade. Scoring directors use this report to see if a particular grade is below the acceptable level predetermined by the NJDOE.
  - **Frequency Distribution Summary reports:** Frequency distribution summary reports document the percentage of scores assigned to each score point (0-4)

and condition code (5, 6, A and B) by the group overall. These reports are reviewed by scoring director. This report is produced both on a daily and cumulative basis.

- Backreading – In conjunction with the statistics provided in the ePS reader performance reports, scoring supervisors backread between five and ten percent of the portfolios. Immediate backreading helped identify individual trends and tendencies that were the foundation for individual feedback and retraining indicator. Backreading results were documented and recorded by the supervisor on backreading tally forms.
- Validity – Scorers were required to score student portfolios that had a pre-assigned “true score.” Statistics from the scoring of validity portfolios showed how often scorers agree with the true score and can be an indication of problem scorers or scoring trends. Each scorer was required to attain a percentage agreement with the true scores as established by the NJDOE. Any scorer who fell below this validity requirement was retrained and placed on probation. If a scorer fell below the established percentage on two consecutive validities, they could be released from the project.

Additionally, the NJDOE monitored scoring. Reports available during scoring for the NJDOE review included:

- Cumulative Inter-Rater Reliability by Reader (daily)
- Cumulative Validity Report by Dimension (daily)
- Cumulative Holistic Frequency Distribution (weekly)
- Cumulative Inter-Rater Reliability by Dimension (daily)
- Cumulative Inter-Rater Reliability by Grade and Dimension (daily)

#### **4.6 Task Examination**

During scoring, codes were assigned as follows:

5	Off Grade
6	Security Breach
A	Insufficient evidence due to extended sick leave (illness)
B	No evidence (not ill)

The distribution of assigned codes and scores is shown by grade in Table 4.3. The greatest number of codes assigned to portfolio entries was at Grade 12. About 17.6%, or 555 ratings for each dimension were assigned a code instead of scored. The large percentage of codes in grade 12 is due to the low number of portfolios being submitted at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and based on the fact that Science is optional at this grade level. Directions to scorers for assigning the codes appear in Appendix F.

Two points to note while interpreting Table 4.3:

- Three content areas—Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science—were administered in Grades 4 and 8 so there is a greater number of readings for these grades than in Grades 3, 5, 6, and 7 in which only Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics were administered.
- Similarly, Grade 11 shows a greater number of readings since Science was administered in Grade 11 if students were receiving Biology instruction.

Generally, students did better on the Performance and Independence dimensions than the Complexity dimension. For example, at Grade 8, 50.2% of the entries received a score of 4 on the Performance dimension and 56.5% of the entries received a score of 4 on the Independence dimension. For the Complexity dimension, 39.4% of the Grade 8 entries received a score of 2, 24.3% received a score of 3, and 13.8% received a score of 4.

Table 4.4 provides the percentage of total reads (across dimensions) assigned a condition code for each content area within a grade, and the number and percentage of condition codes associated with each of the four code categories (i.e., 5, 6, A, and B). For example, 412 of the 34340 total reads conducted in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy (approximately 1.2%) resulted in a condition code. Of those 412 reads, 16.7% were due to security breach, 25.0% were due to insufficient evidence related to illness, and 58.3% were due to no evidence being provided. This table shows that, within a grade, the percentage of total reads resulting in a code was typically greater in Mathematics than Language Arts Literacy, and Science was always greater than either Mathematics or Language Arts Literacy. In addition, across grades and content areas almost all of the time codes were associated with the “no evidence provided” (e.g., B) category. This was due to the extremely large number of codes associated with 11<sup>th</sup> grade Science, which were almost all “no evidence provided.”

**Table 4.3 Distribution of Codes and Scores**

	Scores Reads	CODES		0		1		2		3		4	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
		<b>Grade 3</b>											
Complexity	23025	484	2.1%	4098	17.8%	138	0.6%	9049	39.3%	5848	25.4%	3385	14.7%
Performance	23048	484	2.1%	4679	20.3%	1129	4.9%	1060	4.6%	4033	17.5%	11662	50.6%
Independence	22928	481	2.1%	4586	20.0%	1857	8.1%	688	3.0%	2614	11.4%	12702	55.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>69001</b>	<b>1449</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>13317</b>	<b>19.3%</b>	<b>3105</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>10764</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>12489</b>	<b>18.1%</b>	<b>27738</b>	<b>40.2%</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>													
Complexity	34832	1742	5.0%	6514	18.7%	209	0.6%	13062	37.5%	8429	24.2%	4842	13.9%
Performance	34910	1746	5.0%	7470	21.4%	1361	3.9%	1431	4.1%	5690	16.3%	17246	49.4%
Independence	34716	1736	5.0%	7290	21.0%	2222	6.4%	1041	3.0%	3819	11.0%	18608	53.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104458</b>	<b>5223</b>	<b>5.0%</b>	<b>21309</b>	<b>20.4%</b>	<b>3760</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>15564</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>17862</b>	<b>17.1%</b>	<b>55989</b>	<b>53.6%</b>
<b>Grade 5</b>													
Complexity	22966	620	2.7%	4019	17.5%	92	0.4%	10312	44.9%	5259	22.9%	2710	11.8%
Performance	23012	621	2.7%	4648	20.2%	990	4.3%	1082	4.7%	3797	16.5%	11920	51.8%
Independence	22929	619	2.7%	4494	19.6%	1674	7.3%	665	2.9%	2522	11.0%	12955	56.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>68907</b>	<b>1860</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>13161</b>	<b>19.1%</b>	<b>2756</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>12059</b>	<b>17.5%</b>	<b>11576</b>	<b>16.8%</b>	<b>27563</b>	<b>40.0%</b>
<b>Grade 6</b>													
Complexity	21979	703	3.2%	3890	17.7%	66	0.3%	8923	40.6%	4264	19.4%	4110	18.7%
Performance	22077	706	3.2%	4526	20.5%	1126	5.1%	927	4.2%	3863	17.5%	10928	49.5%
Independence	21963	703	3.2%	4415	20.1%	1428	6.5%	747	3.4%	2284	10.4%	12409	56.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>66019</b>	<b>2113</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>12808</b>	<b>19.4%</b>	<b>2641</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>10563</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>10431</b>	<b>15.8%</b>	<b>27464</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
<b>Grade 7</b>													
Complexity	21037	652	3.1%	4081	19.4%	273	1.3%	7321	34.8%	4923	23.4%	4923	18.0%
Performance	21102	654	3.1%	4706	22.3%	781	3.7%	675	3.2%	3271	15.5%	11036	52.3%
Independence	21048	652	3.1%	4525	21.5%	1410	6.7%	631	3.0%	2357	11.2%	11471	54.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>63187</b>	<b>1958</b>	<b>3.1%</b>	<b>13332</b>	<b>21.1%</b>	<b>2464</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>8657</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>10552</b>	<b>16.7%</b>	<b>26286</b>	<b>41.6%</b>
<b>Grade 8</b>													
Complexity	29871	1374	4.6%	5138	17.2%	209	0.7%	11769	39.4%	7259	24.3%	4122	13.8%
Performance	30008	1380	4.6%	5972	19.9%	1290	4.3%	1350	4.5%	4951	16.5%	15064	50.2%
Independence	29886	1375	4.6%	5828	19.5%	1704	5.7%	837	2.8%	3258	10.9%	16886	56.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>89765</b>	<b>4129</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>16966</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>3232</b>	<b>3.6%</b>	<b>14003</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>15440</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>36086</b>	<b>40.2%</b>

**Table 4.3 (Continued)**

	Scores Reads	CODES		0		1		2		3		4	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Grade 9</b>													
Complexity	<b>968</b>	0	0	167	<b>17.3%</b>	22	<b>2.3%</b>	397	<b>41.0%</b>	244	<b>25.2%</b>	138	<b>14.3%</b>
Performance	<b>973</b>	0	0	198	<b>20.4%</b>	20	<b>2.1%</b>	30	<b>3.1%</b>	165	<b>17.0%</b>	561	<b>57.7%</b>
Independence	<b>967</b>	0	0	175	<b>18.1%</b>	32	<b>3.3%</b>	25	<b>2.6%</b>	82	<b>8.5%</b>	653	<b>67.5%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2908</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>15.6%</b>	<b>491</b>	<b>16.9%</b>	<b>1352</b>	<b>46.5%</b>
<b>Grade 10</b>													
Complexity	<b>1832</b>	7	<b>0.4%</b>	4467	<b>25.5%</b>	9	<b>0.5%</b>	586	<b>32.0%</b>	520	<b>28.4%</b>	236	<b>12.9%</b>
Performance	<b>1846</b>	7	<b>0.4%</b>	530	<b>28.7%</b>	46	<b>2.5%</b>	72	<b>3.9%</b>	327	<b>17.7%</b>	866	<b>46.9%</b>
Independence	<b>1837</b>	7	<b>0.4%</b>	507	<b>27.6%</b>	97	<b>5.3%</b>	46	<b>2.5%</b>	101	<b>5.5%</b>	1076	<b>58.6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5515</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>1506</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>2.6%</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>12.8%</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>2178</b>	<b>39.5%</b>
<b>Grade 11</b>													
Complexity	<b>29740</b>	5056	<b>17.0%</b>	5145	<b>17.3%</b>	268	<b>0.9%</b>	8565	<b>28.8%</b>	6545	<b>21.0%</b>	4431	<b>14.9%</b>
Performance	<b>29856</b>	5046	<b>16.9%</b>	5941	<b>19.9%</b>	1105	<b>3.7%</b>	926	<b>3.1%</b>	4090	<b>13.7%</b>	12719	<b>42.6%</b>
Independence	<b>29736</b>	5055	<b>17.0%</b>	5799	<b>19.5%</b>	2052	<b>6.9%</b>	624	<b>2.1%</b>	1903	<b>6.4%</b>	14273	<b>48.0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>89332</b>	<b>15186</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>16884</b>	<b>18.9%</b>	<b>3395</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>10095</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>12238</b>	<b>13.7%</b>	<b>31445</b>	<b>35.2%</b>
<b>Grade 12</b>													
Complexity	<b>3134</b>	552	<b>17.6%</b>	658	<b>21.0%</b>	22	<b>0.7%</b>	1066	<b>34.0%</b>	633	<b>20.2%</b>	201	<b>6.4%</b>
Performance	<b>3138</b>	552	<b>17.6%</b>	728	<b>23.2%</b>	217	<b>6.9%</b>	179	<b>5.7%</b>	590	<b>18.8%</b>	876	<b>27.9%</b>
Independence	<b>3133</b>	555	<b>17.7%</b>	721	<b>23.0%</b>	351	<b>11.2%</b>	50	<b>1.6%</b>	207	<b>6.6%</b>	1250	<b>39.9%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>9405</b>	<b>1655</b>	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>2107</b>	<b>22.4%</b>	<b>593</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>1298</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	<b>1430</b>	<b>15.2%</b>	<b>2323</b>	<b>24.7%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>568497</b>	<b>33595</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>111931</b>	<b>19.8%</b>	<b>22165</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>84162</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>93458</b>	<b>16.5%</b>	<b>238424</b>	<b>42.9%</b>

**Table 4.4 Distribution of Condition Codes by Grade and Content Area**

Grade	Content Area	Total Reads	Reading Resulting in a Condition Code		5 - Off Grade		6 - Security Breach		A - Insufficient Evidence due to Illness		B - No Evidence	
			#	% of Total Reads	#	% Assigned a Code	#	% Assigned a Code	#	% Assigned a Code	#	% Assigned a Code
3	LAL	34340	412	1.2	0	0	69	0.2	103	0.3	240	0.7
	Math	34661	1074	3.1	0	0	69	0.2	104	0.3	901	2.6
4	LAL	34753	765	2.2	0	0	0	0	278	0.8	487	1.4
	Math	34892	1570	4.5	0	0	0	0	279	0.8	1291	3.7
	Sci	34813	2924	8.4	0	0	0	0	279	0.8	2646	7.6
5	LAL	34327	515	1.5	0	0	0	0	172	0.5	343	1.0
	Math	34580	1314	3.8	0	0	0	0	173	0.5	1141	3.3
6	LAL	32976	758	2.3	0	0	33	0.1	99	0.3	627	1.9
	Math	33043	1388	4.2	0	0	0	0	99	0.3	1256	3.8
7	LAL	31617	949	3.0	0	0	189	0.6	63	0.2	759	2.4
	Math	31570	1010	3.2	0	0	189	0.6	63	0.2	758	2.4
8	LAL	30008	840	2.8	0	0	30	0.1	60	0.2	750	2.5
	Math	29873	1046	3.5	0	0	29	0.1	60	0.2	956	3.2
	Sci	29884	2241	7.5	0	0	30	0.1	60	0.2	2152	7.2
9	Sci	2908	2908	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10	Sci	5515	22	0.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	0.4
11	LAL	29875	1673	5.6	0	0	0	0	60	0.2	1613	5.4
	Math	29786	1102	3.7	0	0	0	0	60	0.2	1043	3.5
	Sci	29671	12432	41.9	0	0	0	0	60	0.2	12373	41.7
12	LAL	3131	529	16.9	0	0	0	0	25	0.8	504	16.1
	Math	3139	480	15.3	0	0	0	0	25	0.8	455	14.5
	Sci	3135	649	20.7	0	0	0	0	25	0.8	624	19.9

## **Part 5: RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

### **5.1 Reliability**

Many traditional measures of reliability are not appropriate for portfolio-based alternate assessments because they do not offer opportunities for test-retest, or provide internal standardized items or tasks as a sample of a domain which can be used for all students. These limitations do not prohibit applying the concept of reliability to portfolio-type alternate assessments. Instead of trying to apply traditional statistics, we need instead to look for opportunities to look for sources of consistency in student performance and opportunities in which sources of error external to the students and their abilities may be impacting student scores. For sources of error, we can look to inter-rater reliability and decision accuracy.

#### **Inter-rater Reliability**

Inter-rater reliability investigates the extent to which examinees would obtain the same performance level if the portfolio had been scored by different scorers. Inter-rater reliability is calculated as the percent agreement between raters. The metrics tracked and reported are “exact agreement” and “adjacent agreement.” Exact agreement is when the two independent scorers assign the same score to the same student work. Adjacent agreement is when the two independent scorers assign adjacent scores to the same work.

Table 5.1 shows the percent of portfolio entries scored with exact agreement and adjacent agreement as well as the percent of scores that require resolution. All entries were scored for each of the three dimensions—Complexity, Performance, and Independence. A third scorer must score if the first two scores are not equal.

Table 5.1 shows that scores for Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy entries on the Complexity dimension were in exact agreement for 97.3% of the entries. A third reader was required for scoring 2.7% of the entries. For the Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy entries on the Performance and Independence dimensions, scores were in exact agreement for 96.6% of the entries on the Performance dimension and were in exact agreement for 97.6% of the entries on the Independence dimension. A third reader was required for scoring 3.4% of the entries on the Performance dimension and 2.4% of the entries on the Independence dimension.

The percentage of entries requiring a third reader (not including 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade due to the smaller number of examinees in those grades) for resolution ranged from approximately 2.0 to 3.7 in Language Arts Literacy; 1.7 to 4.1 in Mathematics; and 1.3 to 3.8 in Science. Resolution rates were highest in 8<sup>th</sup> grade for Language Arts Literacy, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade for Mathematics, and 4<sup>th</sup> grade in Science. A high inter-rater reliability coefficient indicates that subjectivity and differences between scorer’s estimates of student work was not a source of significant error in the students’ scores.

**Table 5.1 Consistency between APA Portfolio Scorers**

	GRADE 3			GRADE 4			GRADE 5			GRADE 6		
	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *
<b>Language Arts Literacy</b>												
Complexity	97.3	1.6	2.7	97.3	1.6	2.7	97.7	1.5	2.3	98.0	1.2	2.0
Performance	96.6	1.7	3.4	96.5	1.7	3.5	97.2	1.4	2.8	96.5	1.6	3.5
Independence	97.6	0.9	2.4	97.3	1.2	2.7	97.8	1.1	2.2	97.7	0.9	2.3
<b>Mathematics</b>												
Complexity	95.9	2.6	4.1	96.1	2.3	3.9	97.1	1.6	2.9	96.9	1.5	3.1
Performance	96.2	1.6	3.8	96.3	1.4	3.7	96.7	1.3	3.3	96.6	1.4	3.4
Independence	97.3	1.1	2.7	97.4	0.9	2.6	97.6	0.9	2.4	97.5	1.1	2.5

	GRADE 7			GRADE 8			GRADE 11			GRADE 12		
	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *
<b>Language Arts Literacy</b>												
Complexity	97.7	1.0	2.3	97.3	1.4	2.7	97.4	1.1	2.6	99.4	0.2	0.6
Performance	96.8	1.1	3.2	96.3	1.5	3.7	97.0	1.1	3.0	99.2	0.4	0.8
Independence	97.2	0.8	2.8	96.9	1.2	3.1	97.6	0.8	2.4	99.2	0.8	0.8
<b>Mathematics</b>												
Complexity	97.5	1.4	2.5	97.5	1.2	2.5	98.3	0.8	1.7	98.5	1.2	1.5
Performance	97.1	1.1	2.9	96.8	1.6	3.2	96.7	1.4	3.3	98.7	0.8	1.3
Independence	97.8	0.9	2.2	97.5	1.1	2.5	98.1	0.8	1.9	99.2	0.2	0.8

	GRADE 4			GRADE 8			GRADE 9		
	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *
<b>Science</b>									
Complexity	97.0	1.8	3.0	97.4	1.5	2.6	98.3	1.3	1.7
Performance	96.2	1.8	3.8	96.3	1.9	3.7	97.3	1.0	2.7
Independence	97.7	0.8	2.3	97.6	1.0	2.4	98.5	0.6	1.5
	GRADE 10			GRADE 11			GRADE 12		
	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *	% Exact	% Adjacent	% Res. *
Complexity	96.9	1.0	3.1	98.6	0.8	1.4	99.4	0.4	0.6
Performance	95.3	1.2	4.7	98.2	0.8	1.8	98.7	0.6	1.3
Independence	96.3	1.0	3.7	98.7	0.3	1.3	99.0	0.4	1.0

\*Complexity, Performance and Independence Dimensions – If the first two scores are not equal, then a third reader must score the dimension.

## **Decision Consistency**

Decision consistency is a psychometric term that refers to "the agreement between the classifications based on two non-overlapping, equally difficult forms of the test" (Livingston & Lewis, 1995). In some cases the classification agreement is assessed between a test score and a reliable second source. Regardless the source of the second measure, a high consistency between the two classifications is desirable because they confirm each other's decision. In the APA case, decision consistency study is designed to compare the performance level assigned through APA test scores with performance level given by teachers. Teachers were asked to indicate the performance level they expect students to achieve based on their classroom experience with the students.

A study of Meisels, Bickel, Nicholson, Xue, and Atkin-Burnett (2001) confirmed that teacher rating has a high correlation with standardized battery when the rating is based on a curriculum-embedded performance assessment. The curriculum-embedded performance assessment is similar to APA in that content standards, instruction, and test are designed as one interlocked components of an educational program. The similarity suggested that teacher rating will be a reliable second source.

In 2010-2011, teacher rating was collected through the convergent validity study (see Appendix K). This study shared the same design as the decision consistency; therefore, the results are used here to interpret decision consistency. The study showed that the overall exact agreement rate between teacher rating and performance level assigned by test scores were around 50% for the three subjects. The study provided the following plausible causes of the less than optimal outcomes:

- teachers might not fully understand the PLDs and factors other than grade-level academic skills might be considered by teachers,
- materials submitted might not adhere to the APA rules,
- teachers might not be as comfortable with standard-based teaching and assessment as they are with behavioral-based based teaching and assessment, and
- evidence submitted might not fully capture student performance.

## 5.2 Validity

The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* (AERA, APA, NCME, 1999) states, “Ultimately, the validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the available evidence relevant to the technical quality of a testing system. This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring; accurate score scaling, equating, and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees,” (p. 17).

This section presents efforts to document and gather evidence to support the interpretation of APA performance scores. Efforts focus on documenting content aspects of evidence and gathering consequential aspects of evidence. While this section summarizes evidence supporting claims as to the validity of the APA performance scores, many parts of this technical report provide appropriate evidence for validity. Given the procedural and empirical evidence available and rationale presented below, valid performance standards-based interpretations and uses of the scores are generally supported.

The process implemented by the NJDOE for developing and implementing the APA is an example of the content aspect of validity. The content aspect includes evidence of construct relevance, representativeness, and technical quality. Baker and Linn (2002) suggest that “Two questions are central in the evaluation of content aspects of validity. Is the definition of the content domain to be assessed adequate and appropriate? Does the test provide an adequate representation of the content domain the test is intended to measure?”(p. 6)

The following sections help answer these two very important questions and also address Standard 1.6 of *the Standards for Educational Psychological Testing*.

Standard 1.6 When the validation rests in part on the appropriateness of test content, the procedures followed in specifying and generating test content should be described and justified in reference to the construct the test is intended to measure or the domain it is intended to represent. If the definition of the content sampled incorporates criteria such as importance, frequency, or criticality, these criteria should also be clearly explained and justified.

### **Appropriateness of Content Definition**

In 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS), an ambitious framework for educational reform in the State’s public schools. New Jersey’s standards were created to improve student achievement by clearly defining what all students should know and be able to do at the end of thirteen years of public education. The NJDOE was conscientious in involving content specialists, alternate assessment specialists, policy experts and measurement experts to ensure that the program was designed and implemented appropriately given the population of students being assessed and the federal requirements that the program must meet. New Jersey educators, NJDOE staff, special education directors, and other state

stakeholders were involved in the process throughout and provided feedback and guidance on all stages of APA development. Such stakeholder involvement helps to ensure that the results of the APA assessments are viewed as meaningful and important to teachers and parents.

Since the adoption of those standards, the NJDOE has continuously engaged in discussion with educators, business representatives, and national experts about the impact of the standards on classroom practices. To assist teachers and curriculum specialists in aligning curriculum with the standards, the department provided local school districts with a curriculum framework for each content area. The frameworks provided classroom teachers and curriculum specialists with sample teaching strategies, adaptations, and background information relevant to each of the content areas. In addition, the statewide assessments were aligned to the CCCS. This alignment of standards, instruction, and assessment was unprecedented.

The State Board required that the standards be reviewed and revised every five years. The review process, begun in May 2001, involved teachers, school administrators, students, parents, and representatives from business, higher education, and the community. In addition, several content areas were reviewed by Achieve, Inc., and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In response to this unprecedented review, the 2004 New Jersey CCCS provide the level of specificity and depth of content that will better prepare students for post secondary education and employment. The standards are based on the latest research in each of the content areas and identify the essential core of learning for all students.

The Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science standards were adopted by the State Board of Education in July 2002. In April 2004, the Language Arts Literacy standards were revised to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and readopted by the Board. Five content areas including the visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, world languages, career education and consumer, family, and life skills, and technological literacy were also adopted by the Board in April 2004. To complete the revision process, the social studies standards were adopted in October 2004. The 2004 standards in all nine content areas replace the 1996 standards. Local school districts must align their curriculum and instructional program with the 2004 New Jersey CCCS. As required by regulation, the next five-year revision process began during the 2008–2009 school year for all nine content areas.

Since the adoption of the original 1996 New Jersey CCCS, the State Board approved administrative code that implements all aspects of standards-based reform. N.J.A.C. 6A:8 requires districts to: align all curriculum to the standards; ensure that teachers provide instruction according to the standards; ensure student performance is assessed in each content area; and provide teachers with opportunities for professional development that focuses on the standards.

In January 2008, the NJDOE Office of Academic Standards released Phase One of a standards clarification project. The purpose of this project is to provide materials in each of the nine content areas that convey an understanding of the priorities in the current New Jersey CCCS and how to capture those priorities in designing local curriculum and assessments, as well as in managing local instruction across content areas.

Phase One contained guidance framed as Areas of Focus for state assessment of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science in Grades 5–8. Developed by the Office of Academic Standards working with teams of field-based educators, the Areas of Focus included exemplars of how cumulative progress indicators may be assessed on state assessments.

In January 2008, the CCCS in Mathematics were readopted with the following revisions:

- The new standards are more specific and clearer than the previous standards;
- The new standards are organized into a smaller number of standards that correspond to the content clusters of the statewide assessments;
- The new standards are intended to serve as clear guides to the assessment development committees so that there should be no gaps between the standards and the test specifications; and
- The new standards include expectations at grades 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7, as well as at grades 4, 8, and 11.

In preparing its recommendations, the mathematics panel considered the *Principles and Standards for School Mathematics* published by National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM, 2000); the review of New Jersey’s 1996 standards by Achieve, Inc.; and other states’ standards.

Similarly, the CCCS in Language Arts Literacy were influenced by the national standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association, the Achieve review of the 1996 standards, and research by the National Reading Panel. Standards for the end of Grade 12 were adopted in January 2008.

The CCCS in Science were adopted in 2002 and published in 2004. Revised standards were adopted in June 2009. The projects and publications of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the National Assessment of Educational Progress were considered by the science panel during the development of the standards.

### **Adequacy of Content Representation**

Adequacy of the content representation of the APA is critically important because the test must provide an indication of student progress toward achieving the knowledge and skills identified in the CCCS, and the test must fulfill the requirements under NCLB.

In December 2007, January 2008, and February 2008, the APA Advisory Committee met with a number of special education and content specialists to develop the APA test

specifications. The APA test specifications delineate the standards and strands that must be assessed for each grade level and content area. ILSSA content specialists, NJDOE special education and content specialists, and special and general education teachers selected the Cumulative Progress Indicators (CPIs) available for the APA assessment. Then, skill statements that directly link the critical essence of the CPIs were developed. Documents used during this process included the CCCS, scope and sequence for each content area, and the Areas of Focus from the Standards Clarification Project.

The work of the APA committees was influenced by the “Links for Academic Learning” developed and validated by Flowers, Wakeman, Browder, and Karvonen (2009). Initially, the “Criteria for Instruction and Assessment that Links to Grade Level Content” by Browder, Wakeman, Flowers, Rickelman, Pugalee, Karvonen (2007) and shown in Part 2 of this technical report consisted of eight criteria developed from the recommendations of a panel of alignment experts.

Flowers et al. (2009) described modifications to reflect both current federal policy and needs identified by special educators, measurement experts, and general education experts. The criteria were field tested in three states using varied alternate assessment formats, revised following review by measurement and special education experts and 20 state directors of alternate assessments, and field tested a second time with three additional states.

The revised eight criteria are shown in Table 5.2. Three of the earlier eight criteria are numbered 1, 2, and 3 in Table 5.2. During the work of the APA test development committees and the additional APA committees that followed, the eight criteria and these Standards were addressed:

Standard 3.11 Test developers should document the extent to which the content domain of a test represents the defined domain and test specifications.

Standard 10.1 In testing individuals with disabilities, test developers, test administrators, and test users should take steps to ensure that the test score inferences accurately reflect the intended construct rather than any disabilities and their associated characteristics extraneous to the intent of the measurement.

Evidence to support the APA alignment is given in this technical report in the test development and design sections of Part 2, the portfolio construction section of Part 3, the scoring rubric and procedures sections of Part 4, and the proficiency level descriptor and standard setting sections of Part 6 and the Appendices. APA committee groups included curriculum, rangefinding, performance level descriptor, and standard setting committees.

Inherent in the portfolio design of the APA is instruction. Parts 2 and 3 describe the teachers’ scoring and instruction that occurs between the initial and final collection for

the portfolios. Sample activities developed by teachers are available on the APA website. Score reporting for instructional purposes is explained in Part 7.

**Table 5.2 Links for Academic Learning (LAL) Alignment Criteria**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The content is academic and includes the major domains/strands of the content area as reflected in state and national standards (e.g., reading, math, science).</li><li>2. The content is referenced to the student’s assigned grade level (based on chronological age).</li><li>3. The focus of achievement maintains fidelity with the content of the original grade level standards (content centrality) and when possible, the specified performance.</li><li>4. The content differs from grade level in range, balance, and DOK, but matches high expectations set for students with significant cognitive disabilities.</li><li>5. There is some differentiation in content across grade levels or grade bands.</li><li>6. The expected achievement for students is for the students to show learning of grade referenced academic content.</li><li>7. The potential barriers to demonstrating what students know and can do are minimized in the assessment.</li><li>8. The instructional program promotes learning in the general curriculum.</li></ol>
Flowers, C., Wakeman, S.Y., Browder, D.M., & Karvonen, M. (2009). Links for academic learning (LAL): A conceptual model for investigating alignment of alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. <i>Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice</i> . 28(1), 25–37.

With information from teachers and scorers from the 2008–2009 APA administration, the following modifications will be made for future administrations:

- Some CPI Links will be revised and a few will be added.
- CPI Links related to assessment of spelling words will be deleted since these did not link to the other assessment specifications.
- Teachers must mark every item/question with an “T” when an item is performed independently, even if 100% of the test items were completed in this manner.
- When a teacher assesses a writing skill that requires a rubric for scoring, the student’s writing sample must have editing/scoring notations that correspond with the rubric scores.

### **Convergent Validity**

Convergent validity is one of the methods that examine the relationship of test scores with external variables (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). A special study of APA convergent validity was conducted in 2011. This study examined the correlation between proficiency levels assigned by two sources of information; teachers and test scores. As can be seen the design of convergent validity study is the same as the design of decision consistency study. Therefore, the outcomes of this study can be used in decision consistency as well as convergent validity study. Information has been provided in the

"Decision Consistency" section is not repeated here. Instead, a brief summary of the study outcome is provided below. Details of the convergent validity study can be found at Appendix K.

The study shown that the exact agreement rate (the APA teacher's expectations were the same as the examinee's proficiency level) was approximately 50%. Various explanations were suggested to interpret the exact agreement outcome. Additionally, several possible next steps for the APA to increase the level of exact agreement such as, including more detailed PLDs, increased training, and potential standardization of certain aspects of the APA, were proposed.

### **Consequential Validity**

Additional important validity evidence comes from the intended and unintended consequences of test use (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999). The concept of consequential validity was introduced by Messick in 1989. Messick (1995) defined consequential validity as "evidence and rationales for evaluating the intended and unintended consequences of score interpretation and use in both the short- and long-term". There are two sources of consequential validity evidence provided in this section; an analysis of performances of different sub-groups as suggested in the AERA, APA, and NCME *Standards* (1999) and a survey study based on Messick's definition.

The consequences of test use can be investigated by looking at distributions of scores across sub-groups in the tested population. We have calculated the number and percent of students from various sub groups who achieve each of the three proficiency levels, separately by grade and subject. The subgroups addressed are disability category and public versus private school attendance.

For the disability category analysis frequencies were computed to investigate the number of students from each disability category categorized into each of the three proficiency levels. These frequencies were looked at separately for each subject with all grades combined as well as within each subject at each grade.

In the body of the report only the combined grades frequencies of disability category by proficiency level are presented. Table 5.3 presents the frequency tables for Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. The tables for each grade separately are included in Appendix J.

The frequencies provide an indication of whether there are differences with respect to disability category and/or proficiency level. The frequency tables provide an indication that in almost all grades there is some relationship between the indicated disability category and the proficiency level into which a student is categorized. However, the relationship seems weak and is not consistent enough across grades to indicate bias. Additionally, while all students with significant cognitive disabilities are likely able to make progress on academic content, and all deserve the opportunity to be exposed to academic content, there is also likely some relationship between the types and

significance of students' disabilities and their ability to reach proficiency as defined for accountability purposes under the No Child Left Behind regulations.

The relationship between proficiency level private and public school attendance was also investigated by subject; sample sizes were too small to interpret when looked at by grade. The combined, across-grade frequencies for each performance level are provided by school type in Table 5.4. Similar to the results of proficiency level by disability categories analyses, there is a relationship between students' placements in public or private school and their proficiency level. However, it is difficult to interpret these numbers or to conclude bias due to the nature of private school placements of students with significant cognitive disabilities in New Jersey.

**Table 5.3 2012 APA Combined Grade Proficiency Level Frequencies by Disability Category**

Combined Grade Table of Disability												
Disability Category	LAL				Math				Science			
	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	5	15	6	26	6	13	5	24	2	7	--	9
<b>Autistic</b>	338	1694	1168	3200	587	1389	1203	3179	71	665	448	1184
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	137	574	496	1207	236	479	483	1198	37	230	223	490
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	92	281	142	515	152	205	133	490	16	86	64	166
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	6	25	8	39	13	11	10	34	--	6	3	9
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	322	1695	1234	3251	497	1416	1327	3240	102	701	616	1419
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	3	1	5	9	5	5	1	11	--	--	2	2
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	74	189	111	374	109	145	114	368	12	63	42	117
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	98	195	107	400	129	162	87	378	22	39	44	105
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	11	31	19	61	11	25	23	59	3	15	15	33
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	3	8	2	13	4	2	4	10	--	2	1	3
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	4	22	42	68	8	17	38	63	1	10	14	25

**Table 5.4 Combined Grade Proficiency Level Frequencies by School Type**

	LAL				Math				Science			
	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total	Adv. Prof.	Prof.	Part. Prof.	Total
<b>Public School</b>	1092	4729	3332	9153	1757	3867	3420	9044	266	1823	1465	3554
<b>Private School</b>	1	1	8	10	--	2	8	10	--	1	7	8
<b>Total</b>	1093	4730	3340	9163	1757	3869	3428	9054	266	1824	1472	3562

A consequential validity special study was conducted in the end of 2011. The focus of this consequential validity study surrounding the implementation of the APA. Surveys were given to parents, teachers, and administrators. In addition, focus group interviews were conducted to collect information from a subset of administrators. The parent and teacher surveys were administered online. For the administrators, both the survey and the focus groups occurred during mandatory administrator training sessions to maximize the number of potential participants (participation was voluntary). Details of the study, such as survey questions, focus group questions, sample sizes, and findings can be found at Appendix L. Below is the conclusion of the consequential validity study.

The survey and focus group results provided information concerning the effect the introduction of the APA has had on the education process in New Jersey from three different groups of stakeholders. Regarding the first group, responding administrators, they are marginally positive about the APA. From the administrators view, the APA has been successful in more closely integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment for APA students. Additionally, the APA has some positive unintended consequences (more collaboration within and across schools, more interaction between APA students and the general education population, and an increase in parental involvement in special education programs) and some negative consequences (increased teacher concerns about lost instruction time and increased special education teacher turnover). Lastly, two suggestions for improving the APA emerged from the administrator focus groups. First, improved perceptions in the consistency of scoring would help teachers and administrators overall understanding of the APA process. Second, some sort of standardization of tasks, which are pre-approved for use in the APA portfolio, could potentially improve the APA process.

In terms of the second group, responding parents, they are generally neutral to negative about the APA. Roughly 70-80% of responding parents are neutral to negative concerning their views about the APA. Only 20-30% of responding parents believe either that the APA has benefited their child or that the APA is a good measure of their child's educational strengths or challenges. It does not appear overall that there is strong support from those parents responding for the APA in its current form. The third group, responding teachers, has generally neutral to negative feelings about the APA. Roughly 65% of the responding teachers are neutral to very negative about the APA, with 30%

negative to very negative. 20% of responding teachers have both negative and positive opinions of the APA, depending on the issue. The last group is roughly 15% of responding teachers that have neutral to very positive opinions of the APA. Teacher respondents generally have a negative view of the APA and are neither pleased with nor supportive of this instrument. When asked about allocation of time for functional skills and content standards, responding teachers indicated that insufficient time is spent on functional skills. They also expressed that even before the implementation of the APA, not enough time was spent on functional skills, but that since the implementation of the APA even less time is spent on functional skills. Additionally, they feel that even before the implementation of the APA too much time was spent on content standards, and that since the implementation of the APA even more time has been spent on content standards.

In conclusion, of those responding, the teachers and parents have fairly negative views of the APA. The responding administrators have more balanced views of the APA. It is possible this is due to the levels of training and information concerning the APA that is provided to the three groups of stakeholders and the amount of direct contact with the APA that each group has. The administrators are provided with quite a bit of training and information and have substantial participation with the APA. Teachers have quite a bit of participation, but less training and information concerning the APA. Parents have minimal training and information and not much contact with the APA process.

### **Other Validity Studies**

NJDOE conducted two extra validity studies that related to test scores in 2011. The first study of these additional reports deals with scoring patterns (see Appendix M). It looked at the examinee scores for APA to determine the relative importance of the three scoring dimensions, complexity, performance, and independence. It found that almost all APA teachers were choosing appropriate levels of complexity and independence for their students to maximize their students' performance and proficiency levels. Additionally, it showed that an examinee's overall performance on the NJ APA is primarily based on an examinee's performance subtotals and not on the complexity or independence subtotals.

The second study of these additional reports deals with Pearson's Performance Scoring Center (PSC) (see Appendix N). It analyzed explanation sheets provided by scoring staff members at PSC, which were created when an examinee received a zero score for any scoring dimension. Through this analysis, the most common errors associated with the APA were identified. It recommended focusing training resources on those areas, primarily content alignment, to reduce the incidence of zero scores in the administration of the APA.

## **Part 6: STANDARD SETTING**

### **6.1 Overview of the Process**

New performance level descriptors should be created and new standards should be set whenever a testing procedure is adopted that is judged to be meaningfully different than previous testing procedures or whenever the assessed content meaningfully changes due to new test specifications or new content standards. The APA underwent significant changes between 2007–2008 and 2008–2009 school years, including changes to the test specifications, assessable content, and scoring dimensions. As a result both new performance level descriptors (PLDs) and a new standard setting were required.

PLDs are a required component of all assessments under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (Federal Register, Volume 67, Number 129, 34CFR, Part 200, August, 2002). PLDs are descriptions of what students should know and be able to do academically to achieve a given performance level given the range of skills assessed. The PLDs outline expectations for student performance at each performance level given the assessed components of the curriculum. In February 2009, the standard setting process began with the development of specific PLDs for each grade and content area for the APA administered in 2008–2009.

A standard setting was conducted June 9-12, 2009, to describe and delineate the thresholds of performance that are indicative of APA Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient performances for Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11, and for Science in grades 4, 8, and high school. Results of these studies were used to formulate recommendations to the Commissioner of Education and the New Jersey State Board of Education for the adoption of the cut scores (i.e., proficiency levels). In late June and early July, the standard setting panelists recommendations were reviewed by senior staff in the Office of State Assessments and the Office of Special Education Programs, the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Student Services, the Deputy Commissioner, and the Commissioner. The review led to some modifications to the panels' recommended cut scores, chiefly affecting the advanced proficient cut points. These cut scores were presented to the State Board of Education on July 15, 2009, and approved unanimously by resolution.

Both the PLD development meeting and the standard setting meeting were conducted by the staff from the NJDOE, Pearson, and ILSSA. Appendix G of this document provides a listing of the final PLDs, and an overview of the standard setting process is provided in the following section. A comprehensive report describing the PLD development process and participants is provided in Appendix G of the 2008-2009 APA Technical Report. Similarly, an abbreviated version of the standard setting technical report, which summarizes the participant background information, outlines applied methodology, and presents some resulting tables are provided in Appendix H of the 2008-2009 APA Technical Report. This report is located at the following link:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/assessment/apa/APA09TechReport.pdf>

The full standard setting report, available from the NJDOE, provides complete descriptions of the standard setting planning, presentation documents and scripts, demographic information of the panelists, panelists' ratings from one round to the next, and their responses on the evaluation forms. The final cut scores approval by the State Board of Education is also presented.

Educators with extensive knowledge and experience in special education served as panelists for both the PLDs and the standard setting meetings. The expert judgments of panelists are most important for developing the PLDs and determining the standard setting cut scores. Nominations were solicited from school districts for teachers and administrators representing excellence in the teaching profession in terms of knowledge and experience in special education. Qualifications considered for the selection of panelists included:

- Current Position Description
- Years Teaching Special Education in New Jersey
- Years Teaching Regular Students in New Jersey
- APA Experience
- Type of Program
- Grade Level/Age of Current Students
- Type of Certification
- Highest Degree

## **6.2 Procedures**

### **Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)**

In February 2009, 24 PLD panelists met for the purpose of writing the performance level descriptors (PLDs) for Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient performance. The PLDs are statements of what a student should know and be able to do at each performance level given the content standards assessed.

Dr. Kelly Burling served as primary meeting facilitator and she facilitated the Language Arts Literacy group. Dr. Jason Meyers facilitated the Mathematics group and Dr. Paul Nichols facilitated the Science group. Additional expertise in each subject was contributed by a content specialist in mathematics and science from the NJDOE as well as specialists from the Office of Special Education.

Tables 1-5 in the report present the panelists' gender and ethnicity, the geographic location of their districts, and the panelists' instructional experience by grade ranges. Panelists attended from 18 different districts in New Jersey and several private school settings. The panelists' years of experience ranged from 1 to 33 years with a median of 7.5 years. Seventeen of the 24 participants worked in special education. Their positions included social workers, teachers in self-contained classrooms, curriculum directors for students with disabilities, assessment coordinators, academic teachers, and administrators.

Panelists received training to ensure a common understanding of the APA, the target population, and the scoring dimensions. Extensive training and discussion was provided about the purpose and development of PLDs including activities designed to familiarize the participants with elements of successful PLDs. Panelists were given copies of PLDs from the New Jersey Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (NJ ASK) Grade 4 Mathematics. Pearson facilitators led discussions of these questions:

1. What language in the NJ ASK PLDs distinguishes each level from the others?
2. How are the definitions of student performance different from one another?
3. How is language used to convey meaning?
4. Would that language be useful to describe student performance on the APA?

The process was then repeated with the NJ ASK Grade 8 Mathematics PLDs. The following discussions included:

1. What language is the same or similar?
2. Is the content (knowledge and skills) different from grade 4? How?
3. Do the PLDs reflect qualitative differences in student expectations from one level to the next and one grade to the next?
4. Do they show progression with respect to specific skills students should know and be able to do and not just list the same skills at different levels with the only defining factor being the degree of consistency with which the skills is displayed?
5. Are there times when the degree of consistency is an appropriate defining difference?

Notes taken by the facilitators during this discussion were given to all panelists as a resource for the PLD development within their subject area groups.

The PLD analysis activities also established a basic format for the content area groups to use. Panelists identified the format used in the NJ ASK Grade 8 Mathematics as one they would like to follow for creating the APA PLDs. This format included an introductory statement followed with a bulleted list of knowledge and skills from the New Jersey CCCS.

Additional training was provided about the purpose and development of CPI Links. The CPI Links were developed to provide the test specification structure for the APA. Panelists were given (1) a copy of the NJ APA Procedures Manual with tabs marking CPI Links and scoring rubrics (2) a worksheet designed to help the participants review the CPI Links and identify language, knowledge, and skills to be used in the PLDs; and (3) a list of PLD evaluation criteria.

The subject area groups were initially tasked with reviewing the CPI Links for the lowest assessed grade in their subject and beginning to draft statements and sentences that would comprise draft statements for that grade. Panelists continued working through the grades

within their content area. Detailed descriptions of the procedures and discussions for developing the PLDS are included with the PLDs in Appendix G.

### **Standard Setting Process**

Following the assessment administration and the creation of the PLDs, the standard setting panelists met in June 2009 to recommend cut scores. Approximately two-thirds of the operationally scored portfolios were available for standard setting examples. In addition, distributions of scores from the operational 2008–2009 administration were available to serve as impact data. The use of impact data provided panelists an additional frame of reference for their decision making.

Panelists were asked to recommend cut scores distinguishing between:

- Partially Proficient and Proficient
- Proficient and Advanced Proficient

Panelists recommended cut scores for Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3–8 and 11 and for Science in grades 4, 8 and high school.

The panelists for standard-setting consisted of eighty-one committee members including special education teachers, child study team members, general education teachers, and administrators. Committee members worked in seven panels based on content and grade. Pearson research scientists served as facilitators for the groups:

- Mathematics grades 3, 4, and 5
- Mathematics grades 6, 7, and 8
- Mathematics and Science grade 11
- Language Arts Literacy grades 3, 4, and 5
- Language Arts Literacy grades 6, 7, and 8
- Language Arts Literacy grade 11
- Science grades 4 and 8

The demographic background by grade and content panel is presented for current grade taught, position type, and current subject type in Table 6.1. Additional tables for grade and content panel are included in Appendix H of the 2008-2009 APA Technical Report for gender, school location, ethnicity, and region.

Similar to the PLD development meeting, the standard setting meeting began with an introduction and extensive training leading to standard setting. Dr. Paul Nichols from Pearson served as the primary meeting facilitator. Dr. Debbie Traub from ILSSA presented the history of the APA and explained how the APA portfolios were constructed and scored. Dr. Nichols described the Body of Work standard setting method.

Dr. Traub recounted the regulatory history behind the APA and the purpose of the IDEA and NCLB. She defined the population of students that participate in the APA. She defined an alternate assessment and alternate achievement standards. Federal regulations

requiring all students to be exposed to grade-level content were explained. Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities must be provided with challenging academic content that is clearly linked to grade level standards. The content is determined by the student’s grade level that is based on assigned grade, not on functional level. Across all grades, students must be assessed on the full breadth and depth of the curriculum.

**Table 6.1 Demographic Background of Standard Setting Panelists**

		<b>Current Grade Taught</b>					
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade Band</b>	<b>K-2</b>	<b>3-5</b>	<b>6-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>Missing</b>
LAL	3-5	1	5	0	0	6	1
LAL	6-8	0	0	5	0	3	3
LAL	11	0	0	0	6	5	2
Mathematics	3-5	1	5	1	0	6	0
Mathematics	6-8	0	0	5	3	3	1
Mathematics & Science	11	0	0	0	8	3	1
Science	4 & 8	0	2	3	1	4	2
		<b>Position Type</b>					
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade Band</b>	<b>Special Ed.</b>	<b>Admin.</b>	<b>Curr. Spec.</b>	<b>Reg. Ed.</b>	<b>Other</b>	<b>Missing</b>
LAL	3-5	10	2	1	0	0	0
LAL	6-8	4	2	2	0	2	3
LAL	11	3	2	2	0	2	3
Mathematics	3-5	9	2	1	0	1	0
Mathematics	6-8	9	0	1	2	0	0
Mathematics & Science	11	7	2	1	0	0	2
Science	4 & 8	8	0	0	2	0	2
		<b>Current Subject Taught</b>					
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Grade Band</b>	<b>Math</b>	<b>Sci.</b>	<b>Lang. Arts</b>	<b>Multiple</b>	<b>Missing</b>	<b>Not Applicable*</b>
LAL	3-5	0	0	0	10	1	2
LAL	6-8	0	0	0	3	3	5
LAL	11	0	0	1	6	4	2
Mathematics	3-5	1	0	1	7	1	3
Mathematics	6-8	2	1	0	6	2	1
Mathematics & Science	11	4	1	1	3	2	1
Science	4 & 8	0	2	0	8	2	0

\*Not Applicable: The panelist was not currently in the classroom, e.g., administration.

This introduction was followed with a review of the portfolio process. The portfolio design, scoring of the three dimensions – performance, complexity, and independence, links to the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) and grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPI) were described. The review included examples of portfolio entries and evidence. An extensive explanation of the role of the CPI links was provided.

A reasoned judgment step was a warm-up task for the subsequent Body of Work procedure. This warm-up task had two goals:

1. Help panelists become familiar with the three scored dimensions, and
2. Encourage panelists to think about how the scored dimensions can be combined into total scores.

Prior to the reasoned judgment task, panelists were introduced to the scoring rubrics for each score dimension and the descriptions of the dimensions. Panelists became familiar with the three scored dimensions (Performance, Independence, and Complexity) and the ways the dimensions can be combined into total scores. Then, panelists were asked to recommend what combinations of scores would be categorized as Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient. Panelists were asked to consider a sample of score combinations. Panelists were presented the graph shown in Figure 6.1.

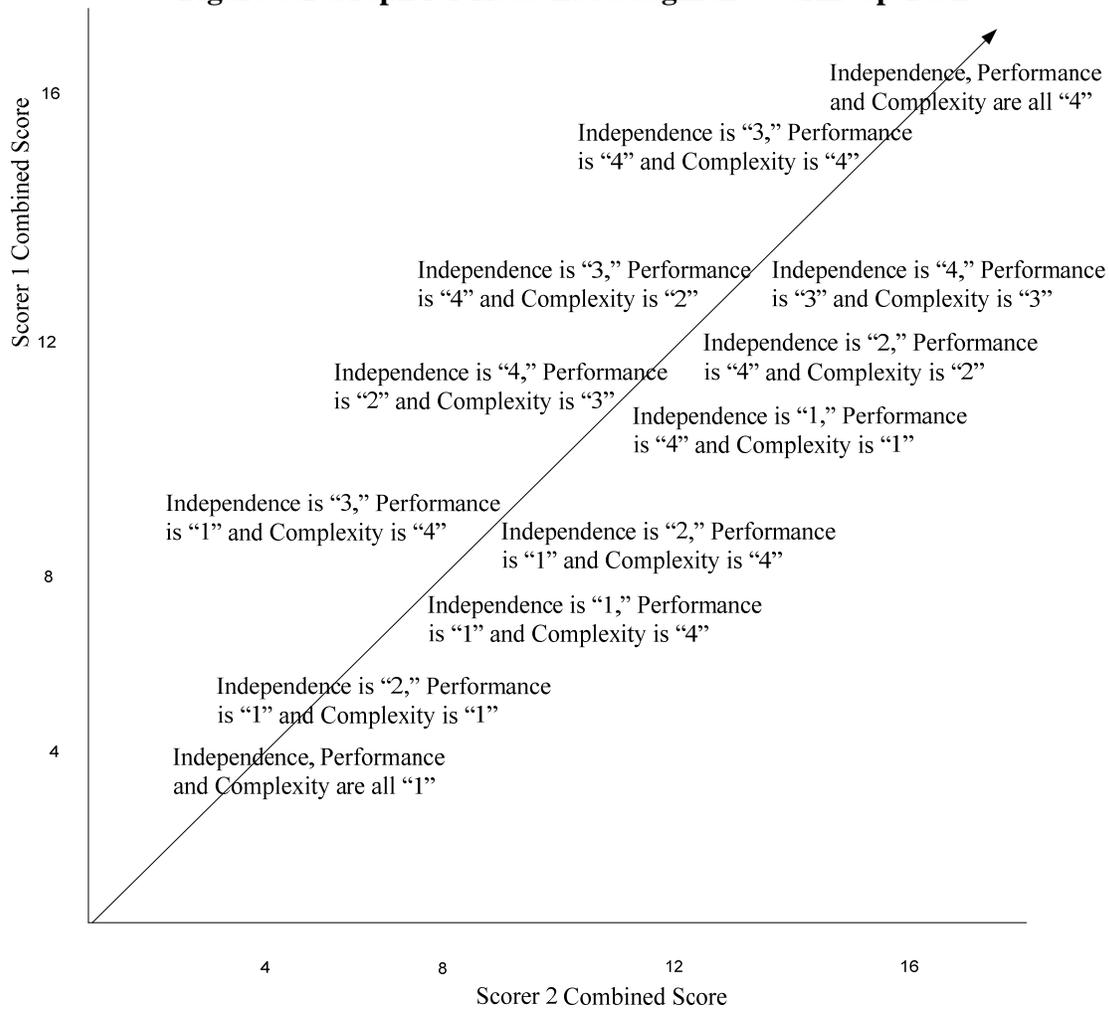
Panelists examined the figure showing the different score combinations. Panelists were reminded that each score was rated 0-4, but that entries which receive a 0 for either performance or complexity receive a 0 for the entire entry. Panelists were given a ratings sheet listing a progression of score combinations from Independence 0, Performance 1, and Complexity 1 to Independence 4, Performance 4, and Complexity 4. Panelists wrote Partially Proficient, Proficient, or Advanced Proficient next to each score combination on the ratings sheet.

The Body of Work method is intended for use with evidence of student learning displayed in a format other than a multiple-choice assessment. For NJ APA, the portfolio submitted comprises a “body of work.”

The Body of Work method uses portfolios in a number of different ways. For a student, a portfolio comprises a complete “body of work.” A student’s portfolio is double scored to increase accuracy. Students whose body of work is of uneven quality were excluded. Only students whose scores were consistent were included. By including only students whose work is consistent, panelists were presented with an easier to understand example of a “Proficient” student or an “Advanced Proficient” student.

Panelists set standards in three steps: training, range-finding, and pinpointing. Refer to the Procedures section of the Standard Setting report for the grade sequence used by each panel, the steps followed by each facilitator as they worked through the standard setting rounds, and the presentation of impact data. The next section in the report, Panelists, shows that 11 to 13 people served on each of the panels.

**Figure 6.1 Graph for Reasoned Judgment Warm-Up Task**



### 6.3 Summary of Results

The results summary in the Standard Setting report is organized into five sections: cut score, evaluations, decision factors, reliability, and vertical articulation.

In the Standard Setting report, Table 24 shows the summary of recommended cut scores and impact data for Language Arts Literacy. Table 25 presents the summary recommended APA cut scores and impact data for mathematics and science.

Cut scores computed following rangefinding round 1, rangefinding round 2, and the pinpointing rounds for LAL, mathematics, and science are shown in Table 6.2. Note that values are multiplied by 10.

**Table 6.2 Cut Scores After Rangefinding and Pinpointing Rounds**

Grade	Subject	Rangefinding Round 1		Rangefinding Round 2		Pinpointing Rounds	
		Cut 1	Cut 2	Cut 1	Cut 2	Cut 1	Cut 2
3	LAL	356	506	356	518	368	518
4	LAL	423	525	409	531	403	542
5	LAL	419	534	410	538	426	546
6	LAL	377	511	366	517	379	520
7	LAL	391	529	386	529	397	532
8	LAL	283	527	398	529	404	531
11	LAL	433	527	424	537	415	529
3	Mathematics	370	499	356	509	374	510
4	Mathematics	422	533	414	534	426	532
5	Mathematics	380	520	377	517	373	502
6	Mathematics	381	502	371	514	384	517
7	Mathematics	401	526	400	532	405	522
8	Mathematics	393	515	389	520	389	520
11	Mathematics	287	528	416	531	416	531
4	Science	295	538	301	547	453	561
8	Science	422	551	429	564	429	564
11	Science	412	516	404	528	422	537

\*Note that values are multiplied by 10.

New Jersey’s normal standard setting process for all assessment programs includes two additional steps: (1) a senior staff level review of standard setting panel recommendations to assure articulation with state education policy and priorities – this review may result in modifications to the panelists recommendations; (2) the presentation of the final cut scores to the State Board for formal adoption by resolution.

The APA panelists recommendations were reviewed over several days by directors, managers, and associated staff from both the Office of State Assessments and the Office of Special Education Programs, and then by the Assistant Commissioner responsible for Special Education, the Deputy Commissioner, and the Commissioner. These consultations led to some modifications to the panels’ recommended cut scores, chiefly affecting the advanced proficient cut points. The final set of APA cut scores approved by the State Board is shown in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3 Approved 2009 Cut Scores**

		2009 APA Impact Percentages (2008 in Parentheses) <i>All Rounded. May Not =100%</i>				
		Raw Scores 0-64				
Grade	Subject	Proficient Cut Score	Advanced Proficient Cut Score	%		Advanced Proficient
				Partially Proficient	% Proficient	
3	LAL	36.8	56.2	27 (22)	47 (49)	25 (29)
4	LAL	40.3	60.0	33 (26)	58 (49)	8 (26)
5	LAL	41.6	60.5	37 (29)	55 (47)	8 (24)
6	LAL	37.9	58.1	32 (27)	57 (49)	11 (25)
7	LAL	39.7	58.2	35 (30)	51 (42)	14 (28)
8	LAL	40.4	59.3	35 (39)	52 (40)	12 (22)
11	LAL	41.5	56.2	33 (36)	36 (46)	30 (19)
3	Mathematics	37.4	57.5	35 (17)	42 (52)	23 (31)
4	Mathematics	41.6	56.6	40 (22)	33 (47)	27 (31)
5	Mathematics	37.3	55.0	34 (27)	39 (47)	27 (26)
6	Mathematics	38.4	57.3	40 (29)	46 (45)	15 (26)
7	Mathematics	40.5	58.3	36 (35)	49 (39)	15 (26)
8	Mathematics	38.9	58.9	32 (46)	51 (34)	17 (20)
11	Mathematics	41.6	57.9	40 (56)	36 (30)	24 (14)
4	Science	43.0	62.1	46 (23)	52 (50)	3 (27)
8	Science	42.9	58.3	35 (32)	46 (41)	19 (28)
11	Science	42.2	60.6	40 (26)	51 (56)	10 (18)

\*Cut scores approved by the New Jersey State Board of Education on July 15, 2009.

## PART 7: REPORTING

The scored portfolios are returned to the schools from Pearson after reporting. The portfolios are confidential pupil records. School and district staff must maintain the confidentiality of the portfolio contents. The portfolio contents are to be shared with parents and others in accordance with pupil records regulations.

The NJ APA provides a variety of reports to the school districts. Score reports are designed to display student identification and score information that can help identify student strengths and weaknesses and recognize weaknesses in instructional programs of the curriculum content standards. Information regarding student progress can assist Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams in selecting appropriate goals and objectives and evaluation criteria for individual students.

Both attending and sending districts receive score reports. Table 7.1 lists the distribution of the specific APA reports. On the APA rosters the instruction and assessment status for APA students is indicated to assist districts review and identify the performance of their students:

- Status 1 = students are assessed at the school of residence;
- Status 2 = students are sent outside school of residence for instruction and assessment; and
- Status 3 = students are received from another school for instruction and assessment.

Status 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.

Districts are required to report test results to their boards of education and to the public within 30 days of receiving test results. However, any report which contains data for less than eleven students may not be publicly reported due to the need to protect student confidentiality.

For teachers and administrators who need to discuss score reports with others, the NJDOE publishes the *Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) Score Interpretation Manual* available at <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa/Documentation.aspx>. The manual provides a broad range of information to assist in the analysis, interpretation, and use of the different APA reports.

In late fall after reporting is complete, a state summary is produced and posted to the NJDOE Web site at [www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/achievement/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/njded/schools/achievement/index.html). The state summary is a data file, available in text and Excel formats, containing the same type of results as in the performance by demographics report at the state level.

**Table 7.1 Distribution of the APA Reports**

***District Reports for Students Educated In and Out of the District***

(\* Receiving Districts, including Private Schools, will receive only the All Subjects Roster)

\* All Subjects Roster (1)

Summary of Performance - District (1)

Summary of Performance - School (1)

Performance by Demographic Groups - District (1)

Performance by Demographic Groups - School (1)

***School Reports for Students who Attend a Receiving School (if applicable)***

Receiving School the Student Attends will receive:

Individual Student Reports (2)

All Subjects Roster (1)

Student Roster: Language Arts Literacy (1)

Student Roster: Mathematics (1)

Student Roster: Science (1) Not applicable to grades 3, 5, 6 and 7

Sending School will receive:

Student Stickers (1)

Individual Student Reports (1)

All Subjects Roster (1)

Student Roster: Language Arts Literacy (1)

Student Roster: Mathematics (1)

Student Roster: Science (1) Not applicable to grades 3, 5, 6 and 7

Summary of Performance - School (1)

Performance by Demographic Groups - School (1)

***School Reports for Students who Attend a School in their District of Residence***

School Student Attends will receive:

Student Stickers (1)

Individual Student Reports (2)

All Subjects Roster (1)

Student Roster: Language Arts Literacy (1)

Student Roster: Mathematics (1)

Student Roster: Science (1) Not applicable to grades 3, 5, 6 and 7

Summary of Performance - School (1)

Performance by Demographic Groups - School (1)

*Note for ISR: If a student attends an out-of-state facility, the sending school should provide a copy of the ISR to the out-of-state attending facility as feedback.*

## **7.1 Interpreting Reports**

### **Student Demographic Information**

APA teachers included a scan sheet with student demographic information in the inside front cover pocket of the binder for each APA portfolio. The scan sheet information was used to prepare score reports and attach APA scores to the proper schools and districts. Also, the information was used to produce federal reports, including the Adequate Yearly Progress report.

Beginning with the 2006–2007 APA, New Jersey schools had the opportunity to provide student demographic information on a “student pre-ID” file. If a pre-ID file was provided, each student’s demographic information was preprinted on the front side of the scan sheet. If any information was found to be missing or incorrect, it could be provided/corrected by the districts gridding the appropriate section on the demographic scan sheet.

After the portfolios were submitted and demographic information scanned, Student Information Record Change Rosters were sent to the districts displaying each student’s demographic information collected on the scan sheets. A record change period allows the districts an opportunity to review and correct inaccurate student demographic information that the district provided for the assessment. Record changes are completed before reporting. Corrections to the student information are reflected in the reports. For the APA, the attending school is responsible for making all student data changes. All receiving (attending) schools receive Student Information Record Change Rosters. The attending school is also responsible for making all student data changes requested by a student’s home school (sending school). The sending school also receives a copy of the Student Information Record Change Roster. If the sending school identifies any errors, they must contact the receiving school promptly, allowing time to have the corrections applied. If the attending school is located out-of-state, then the sending school is responsible for completing and submitting the record changes and to keep the attending school informed of the accurate student demographic information.

Terms and definitions used across the APA reports are listed in Appendix H.

### **Score Information**

Scores are reported by content area. A full description of the scoring rubric used for rating the APA dimensions is presented in Part 4 of this technical report. Proficiency level is assigned based on the student’s total earned score; a combination of the Complexity, Performance, and Independence scores for entries within the content area. The scores are based solely on the information provided in the portfolio; therefore, it is inappropriate to compare these results to other APA students and students taking the general assessments.

Each content area assessed receives a proficiency level. Table 7.2 summarizes the dimension scores.

**Table 7.2 2012 APA Dimension Scoring**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Score Range per Reader</b>	<b>Calculation of Two Reader Scores</b>	<b>Score Range per entry</b>	<b>Entries Required Per Subject</b>	<b>Maximum Possible Points By Subject (Across Entries)</b>
Complexity	0–4	average	0–4	4	16
Performance	0–4	add	0–8	4	32
Independence	0–4	average	0–4	4	16
<b>Maximum Possible Score per Subject</b>					<b>64</b>

Of the required four entries, only one scorable entry is required to assign a proficiency level. If the “subject portfolio” contains only one scorable entry, the total score and proficiency level are reported based on the dimension scores of that entry.

Some scoring related improvements were made in 2010-2011 based on feedback from the field. The rules on assigning zero scores for all 3 dimensions were relaxed so that some violations will result in zero score for only individual dimension instead of all three dimensions of the entry. In addition, some violations were scored. Zero score scoring rules that were revised are indicated by an asterisk (\*):

**Unscorable Entry Errors (zeros for all 3 dimensions):**

Unscorable means that an entry results in zero scores for all three dimensions (a score point of 0 for Complexity, 0 for Performance, and 0 for Independence). An Entry Error Sheet is placed inside the front of the scored portfolio to indicate that a basic test design requirement was not followed. This applies when entry evidence does not include any of the following requirements:

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. A writing rubric with each piece of evidence in the entry, when specified in a Writing CPI Link
  - Writing rubric must have at least 5 elements that assessed the Link
5. Evidence presented in the appropriate amount and format

A score of zero for all three dimensions may also result when the evidence/rubric presented in the entry does not align to the CPI/Strand/Standard. An Explanation Sheet is placed inside 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. (This is true for both the student work and a writing rubric.)

**Evidence Errors (zero score for one dimension):**

A zero score is assigned to an individual dimension, instead of receiving zeros 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 occurred:

- \*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)

**Errors (receives score different than may be expected):**

Rather than assigning zero scores for all 3 dimensions, 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 or more test items are not correctly graded (marked) for accuracy
- A different CPI Link within the same standard, strand, and CPI was assessed than was documented on the Entry Cover Sheet

An entry error sheet or error explanation sheet are provided with the returned portfolios to assist teachers understand the general errors and more complex errors that they made while preparing student portfolios.

**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 (U).

**Unscorable:**

An entry is deemed unscorable if the following occurs: extended medical leave, off-grade testing, no evidence, took the general assessment, or security breach. A 'Void' is assigned to such unscorable entries. Instead of scores, the ISR will list an unscorable 'U' code instead of dimension scores for each entry that is voided,

indicating the reason that the entry is deemed unscorable. The score for each dimension will be based on any remaining scorable entries within a content area.

If all entries within a content area are unscorable, a student will receive a void for the proficiency level. The unscorable ‘U’ code will be displayed in place of entry score for each dimension, and the sub-total of each dimension and total score for the content area is translated to the appropriate ‘Void’ code.

**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:

<b>Entry Deemed Unscorable (U)</b>	<b>Void Code</b>	<b>U Code</b>	<b>Proficiency Display</b>
Insufficient evidence collected due to extended sick leave	V1/ME	U <sup>A</sup>	Medical Emergency
No evidence provided in entry	V4	U <sup>B</sup>	Void 4
Student took general assessment in a content area	V4	U <sup>H</sup>	Took General Assessment
Security breach occurred	V5	U <sup>Y</sup>	Security Breach

**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 1 (medical emergency). The portfolio will be voided due to extended illness during the collection period. The student will receive an unscorable code of “U” for each dimension and a “Medical Emergency” for the proficiency level will be displayed on the reports. Eligibility is based only on the following:

- 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 the portfolio components, students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level.

A student transferred to New Jersey from out-of-state after October 27, 2011, is not required to submit portfolio evidence for scoring. These students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level.

### Security Breach:

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

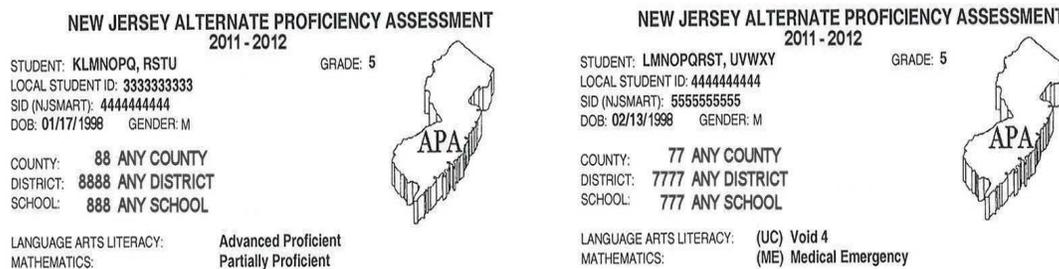
### Took General Assessment (NJASK, HSPA)

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 some content area(s) and the general assessment with accommodations in the other content area(s) or the APA in all content areas assessed. If the student took the general assessment in a content area, the result of the general assessment will be used for accountability reporting.

### Student Sticker and Individual Student Report (ISR)

The Student Sticker (Figure 7.1) displays the student’s identification information and proficiency levels. This is a peel-off label designed to be easily attached to the student’s permanent record. The Student Sticker is sent to the Sending District or the School/District of Residence only. Receiving Districts do not receive Student Stickers.

Figure 7.1 Sample Student Stickers



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 an interpretation of the scores are printed on the back. The school the student attends receives two 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.

It is the responsibility of the school the student attends to send a copy of the ISR to the child’s parent/guardian. 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.

Figure 7.2 presents the front of a student's sample report with demographic information and APA results. The proficiency levels in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science are shown in the top section. The scores for the Complexity, Performance, and Independence dimensions for every entry of the student's APA portfolio are provided on the lower half of the ISR. In addition, the maximum number of points obtainable per entry, for each dimension, is displayed in the parentheses below the dimension name for reference. The score data included for each rubric dimension assist in the identification of students' strengths and weaknesses.

Figure 7.3 shows the back of the ISR printed for all students. Information provided assists parents and educators with score interpretation.



## Figure 7.3 Sample Individual Student Report (Back)

### New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) was administered in this school year to approximately 9800 students in grades three through eleven. Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics were administered to students at grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 11. Science was administered at grades 4, 8, 9, 10, and 11. The APA is the alternate assessment for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and is administered at every grade level at which a general statewide assessment is administered. The APA measures the student's achievement of the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. APA results should not be used as the sole basis for instructional decisions. The APA is a portfolio assessment that uses student work samples to measure a student's progress related to the CCCS, strands, grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPI's), and skill statements called CPI Links. For additional score interpretation information, go to <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa>, click on Documentation, and refer to the Score Interpretation section.

#### HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This **Individual Student Report** (ISR) on the reverse side represents the score results of the current APA. The report is available only to parents, guardians, students, and authorized school personnel. If you have any questions about the report or how to interpret the score, you should contact the student's teacher, principal, or case manager. The list of skills on which the student was tested will be provided by the district. This may be in the form of an attachment to the ISR, or you may receive a copy of the portfolio which contains the list of skills tested.

The **Proficiency level** is based on the student's total score; a combination of the **Complexity**, **Performance**, and **Independence** scores for entries within the content area. Three proficiency levels are assigned based on the total score for each content area: partially proficient, proficient, or advanced proficient. The scores are based solely on the information provided in each student's portfolio; therefore, it may not be possible to compare these results to other APA students and students taking the general assessment.

**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 (Matched, Near, or Far) to the CPI.

**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 1, 2011–November 11, 2011, and December 12, 2011–February 17, 2012).

**Independence:** Independence evaluates the extent to which the student completed test items (questions/task elements) 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:

- Language Arts Literacy: Four entries
  - Two different strands each from standards 3.1 and 3.2
- Mathematics: Four entries
  - One strand each from standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4
- 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 (Grade 9, 10, or 11): Two different strands each from standards 5.5 and 5.10

The lower half of the ISR provides the scores for Complexity, Performance, and Independence for each entry of the student's APA portfolio. The number in parentheses below the dimension name is the maximum number of points obtainable per entry for each dimension.

**Zero Scores for Dimension:** A score of zero for a dimension indicates an error in the production of the evidence. Refer to the APA training materials on the Pearson, APA contractor, web site <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa> for more information.

An entry is deemed unscorable (U) 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 extended medical leave)
- Void 4 (indicating no evidence)
- Void 5 (indicating security breach)
- Took General Assessment

### **All Subjects Roster**

The All Subjects Roster as shown in Figure 7.4 provides a convenient method for reviewing students' complete APA results. Users of this report can quickly determine how a particular student performed in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science (when applicable).

Receiving schools receive an All Subjects Rosters listing all APA students 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 area served by the school but attend a school out of district, and those who attend a program within the school but reside in another school district.

### **Student Roster**

Student Rosters are produced for each grade level assessed and separately for content area – Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science (if applicable). Students' names are listed in descending order by proficiency level. Figure 7.5 shows an example of the Student Roster – Language Arts Literacy for Grade 11. The Student Roster lists the student subscores (dimension scores) followed by total score and proficiency level of a content area. Students with portfolios which were voided are listed alphabetically at the end of each content area roster. This score information enables the program staff to identify strengths and weaknesses across students within the content area.

Sending schools or the Schools of Residence receive Student Rosters that include the students' names of those participating in the APA who attend that school, those who live in area served by the school but attend a school out of district, and those who attend a program within the school but reside in another school district.

### **Summary of School Performance and Summary of District Performance**

Two types of summary performance reports are generated: one at the district level and one at the school level. For each grade, a Summary of District Performance is produced and distributed to each district. Within the district, for each grade level, a Summary of School Performance is generated. These reports provide summary statistics for each content area assessed. Summary reports are produced for public schools and districts only. Summary reports include data for students who were sent out of district, as well as students remaining in the district. Summary reports are not available for receiving districts. The summary performance reports are for the purpose of accountability.

Figure 7.4 Sample All Subjects Roster



New Jersey Statewide Assessment System  
 Alternate Proficiency Assessment  
 2011-2012  
 All Subject Roster  
 Grade 8

CDS: 88-8888-888  
 County: ANY COUNTY  
 District: A DISTRICT  
 School: SCHOOL B  
 Page: 1 of 1

STUDENT NAME DATE OF BIRTH	SID	Status <sup>a</sup>	Ethnicity	TITLE I	ED	Migrant	SE	LEP	TIS	TID	Gender	PROFICIENCY LEVEL		
												LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY	MATHEMATICS	SCIENCE
BLAST, STUDENT 1 06/06/1997	1234567890	1	W	LM			04	1	Y	Y	M	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
CLAST, STUDENT2 05/25/1997	1234567899	1	H		Y	Y	03				M	Proficient	Proficient	Proficient
DLAST, STUDENT3 06/19/1998	1234567888	2	B	L	Y		11	3			M	Medical Emergency	Medical Emergency	Medical Emergency
ELAST, STUDENT4 11/28/1997	1234567662	3	A	LM			08	4	Y		F	Proficient	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
GLAST, STUDENT 6 04/08/1998	1234567552	3	H		Y		04				M	Partially Proficient	Partially Proficient	Partially Proficient
MLAST, STUDENT7 05/15/1998	1234567432	1	B	L	Y		14				M	Security Breach	Security Breach	Security Breach
OLAST, STUDENT8 12/31/1997	1234567255	1	I				07	3	Y	Y	M	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Advanced Proficient
RLAST, STUDENT9 10/14/1997	1234567379	2	W	LM	Y		14	2			F	Proficient	Advanced Proficient	Proficient

<sup>a</sup> { 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.

ME = Insufficient evidence due to extended illness.  
 V4 = No scorable evidence; see unscorable code(s) on ISR for explanation.  
 V5 = Security Breach due to inappropriate portfolio development.

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

Figure 7.5 Sample Student Roster



New Jersey Statewide Assessment System  
 Alternate Proficiency Assessment  
 2011-2012  
 Student Roster - Language Arts Literacy  
 Grade 8

CDS: 88-8888-888  
 County: ANY COUNTY  
 District: A DISTRICT  
 School: SCHOOL B  
 Page: 1 of 1

STUDENT NAME DATE OF BIRTH	SID	Status <sup>a</sup>	Title I	SE	LEP	Gender	Complexity (16.0) <sup>b</sup>	Performance (32.0) <sup>b</sup>	Independence (16.0) <sup>b</sup>	Total Score (64.0) <sup>b</sup>	Proficiency Level
BLAST, STUDENT 1 06/06/1997	1234567890	1	LM	04	1	M	14.0	32.0	16.0	62.0	Advanced Proficient
OLAST, STUDENT8 12/31/1997	1234567255	1		07	3	M	14.0	32.0	16.0	62.0	Advanced Proficient
CLAST, STUDENT2 05/25/1997	1234567899	1		03		M	11.0	24.0	12.0	47.0	Proficient
ELAST, STUDENT4 11/28/1997	1234567662	3	LM	08	4	F	10.0	24.0	12.0	46.0	Proficient
RLAST, STUDENT9 10/14/1997	1234567379	2	LM	14	2	F	10.0	24.0	12.0	46.0	Proficient
GLAST, STUDENT 6 04/08/1998	1234567552	3		04		M	2.0	8.0	4.0	14.0	Partially Proficient
MLAST, STUDENT7 05/15/1998	1234567432	1	L	14		M	V5	V5	V5	V5	Security Breach
DLAST, STUDENT3 06/19/1998	1234567888	2	L	11	3	M	ME	ME	ME	ME	Medical Emergency

<sup>a</sup> { 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.

ME = Insufficient evidence due to extended illness.  
 V4 = No scorable evidence; see unscorable code(s) on ISR for explanation.  
 V5 = Security Breach due to inappropriate portfolio development.

<sup>b</sup> The number in parentheses is the total number of possible score points.

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

A sample of the Summary of District Performance is shown in Figure 7.6. For each school and district, the summary performance reports display these statistics for each content area assessed.

- Number of portfolios processed
- Number of LEP students exempt from taking LAL
- Number of students that took the General Assessment (NJASK or HSPA) in the content area
- Number of students not required to submit entries for the content area
- Number of students with Void Codes. This included those students with Security Breach, Off Grade testing, Medical Emergency, and V4 due to a missing content 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 scores for each dimension by content area (Mean scores are based on students with valid scores.)

### **Performance by Demographic Groups**

The Performance by Demographic Groups report summarizes student performance by total and by student demographic subgroups: Total, LEP Status, Gender, Ethnicity, Economic Status (Disadvantaged vs. Not Disadvantaged), and Migrant Status. These group reports provide additional achievement information that can be used to make adjustments to curricula that may better serve these student subgroups.

Reports are produced by districts and schools that completed the appropriate demographic coding when the APA was administered or during the record change process. These reports are generated for public schools and districts only.

The Performance by Demographic Groups reports are produced at state, district, and school levels by grade. The district level report presents aggregated data for the district. The school level report shows school level data. At the state level, reports are also produced by District Factor Groups, Charter Schools (DFG-R), Non-Special Needs Districts, and Special Needs Districts. They are distinguished by report title.

This one-page report includes performance data for each of the three content areas: Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science (when applicable). 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 7.7 shows a report example of a District Performance by Demographic Groups.

**Figure 7.6 Sample Summary of District Performance**



**New Jersey Statewide Assessment System  
 Alternate Proficiency Assessment  
 2011-2012  
 Summary of District Performance  
 Grade 4**

CDS: **88-8888**  
 County: **ANY COUNTY**  
 District: **A DISTRICT**

<b>PROFICIENCY LEVEL STATISTICS BY SUBJECT</b>												
	Number of Portfolios Processed <sup>c</sup>	LEP LAL Exempt	Took General Assessment	Not Required <sup>d</sup>	Students with Void Code	Number of Students with Valid Scores	Partially Proficient		Proficient		Advanced Proficient	
							Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Language Arts Literacy</b>	11	0	0	1	2	8	3	37.5	3	37.5	2	25.0
<b>Mathematics</b>	11	NA	1	0	2	8	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0
<b>Science</b>	11	NA	2	0	2	7	2	28.6	2	28.6	3	42.8

<b>MEAN SCORE FOR EACH DIMENSION BY SUBJECT</b>			
	Complexity (16.0) <sup>b</sup>	Performance (32.0) <sup>b</sup>	Independence (16.0) <sup>b</sup>
<b>Language Arts Literacy<sup>a</sup></b>	10.2	24.0	12.0
<b>Mathematics<sup>a</sup></b>	7.8	23.8	10.2
<b>Science<sup>a</sup></b>	7.6	21.3	10.9

<sup>a</sup> Includes only Status 1 and 2 students with valid scores.  
<sup>b</sup> The number in parentheses is the total number of possible score points.  
<sup>c</sup> Took General Assessment, Not Required, Void, and Valid counts sum to Portfolios Processed.  
<sup>d</sup> Includes students coded as LEP LAL Exempt.

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

Figure 7.7 Sample District Performance by Demographic Groups



**New Jersey Statewide Assessment System  
Alternate Proficiency Assessment  
2011-2012  
District Performance by Demographic Groups  
Grade 11**

CDS: **88-8888**  
County: **ANY COUNTY**  
District: **A DISTRICT**

	Number of Portfolios Processed	Language Arts Literacy <sup>a</sup>							Mathematics <sup>a</sup>							Science <sup>a</sup>						
		Took General Assessment	Not Required <sup>f</sup>	Students with Void Codes <sup>b</sup>	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Adv Proficient	Took General Assessment	Not Required	Students with Void Codes <sup>b</sup>	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Adv Proficient	Took General Assessment	Not Required	Students with Void Codes <sup>b</sup>	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Adv Proficient
<b>TOTAL</b>	14	1	1	2	10	30.0	50.0	20.0	2	0	3	9	88.9	11.1	0.0	2	2	1	9	55.6	44.4	0.0
<b>LEP Status<sup>c</sup></b>																						
LEP (Current & Former)	3	0	1	0	2	0.0	100.0	0.0	1	0	1	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	0.0	100.0	0.0
Current LEP	3	0	1	0	2	0.0	100.0	0.0	1	0	1	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	0.0	100.0	0.0
Former LEP	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Non-LEP	11	1	0	2	8	37.5	37.5	25.0	1	0	2	8	87.5	12.5	0.0	2	2	1	7	71.4	28.6	0.0
<b>Gender<sup>c</sup></b>																						
Female	5	1	0	0	4	25.0	50.0	25.0	1	0	0	4	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	1	5	60.0	40.0	0.0
Male	9	0	1	2	6	33.3	50.0	16.7	1	0	3	5	80.0	20.0	0.0	2	2	0	4	50.0	50.0	0.0
<b>Ethnicity<sup>c</sup></b>																						
White	4	1	0	1	2	0.0	50.0	50.0	0	0	1	3	66.7	33.3	0.0	1	1	0	2	50.0	50.0	0.0
Black	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	100.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	1	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Asian	2	0	1	0	1	0.0	100.0	0.0	0	0	1	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	1	1	NA	100.0	NA
Pacific Islander	2	0	0	0	2	50.0	50.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	2	100.0	NA	NA
Hispanic <sup>d</sup>	4	0	0	1	3	0.0	66.7	33.3	2	0	1	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	1	0	3	66.7	33.3	0.0
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0	0	0	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	NA	100.0	NA
Other <sup>e</sup>	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
<b>Economic Status<sup>c</sup></b>																						
Disadvantaged	13	1	1	2	9	33.3	44.4	22.2	2	0	3	8	100.0	0.0	0.0	1	2	1	9	55.6	44.4	0.0
Non-Disadvantaged	1	0	0	0	1	0.0	100.0	0.0	0	0	0	1	0.0	100.0	0.0	1	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
<b>Migrant Status<sup>c</sup></b>																						
Migrant	0	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA	0	0	0	0	NA	NA	NA
Non-Migrant	11	1	1	2	10	30.0	50.0	20.0	2	0	3	9	88.9	11.1	0.0	2	2	1	9	55.6	44.4	0.0

<sup>a</sup> Excludes Status 3 students. Students are included in Total only once, but they appear in each applicable category. Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.  
<sup>b</sup> Includes students coded Medical Emergency.  
<sup>c</sup> Differences in totals among demographic categories resulted from gridding errors or missing data in materials received from districts.  
<sup>d</sup> Includes students coded Hispanic with or without other ethnic affiliations.  
<sup>e</sup> Includes students coded with more than one ethnicity or their ethnicity was not provided by district.  
<sup>f</sup> Includes students coded as LEP LAL Exempt.

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

Data displayed show the number of students with valid scores, the number of students with invalid scores, and the percentage of students that fall into each of the three proficiency levels.

### **District Data Disks**

Districts and receiving schools with ten or more students may request a CD-ROM data disk containing the student raw data file of their students.

### **State Summary**

After reporting, a State Summary data file and state level Performance by Demographic Groups reports are produced and posted on the NJDOE website. The summary data file, available in text and Excel formats, contains the same type of test results based on the reporting data and summarized with an executive summary.

<http://www.nj.gov/education/schools/achievement/>. The Executive Summary is included in Appendix I.

### **7.2 Parent Letter**

To help explain to parents and guardians both the purpose of the APA and the information provided on the Individual Student Report (ISR), a sample form letter is included (Figure 7.8) that can be adapted, signed, photocopied, and sent home with each student along with his/her ISR.

### Figure 7.8 Sample Parent/Guardian Letter

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's Individual Student Report for the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) 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 1, 2011, and February 17, 2012. Your child's APA portfolio was then submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education and scored by trained readers during the spring of 2012. The attached report provides your child's APA scores in the content areas of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

The top part of the report tells you the proficiency levels your child achieved on the skills assessed in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and 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 content 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.

### **7.3 Quality Control of Reporting**

Quality control procedures at Pearson begin with the use of the Software Engineering Institute's (SEI) Capability Maturity Model (CMM) for software development process management and control. Key process areas of CMM are requirements management, software project planning, software project tracking and oversight, software quality assurance, and software configuration management. Pearson examples of CMM documents include a customer requirements allocation document, a project schedule, functional specifications, a software development project plan, unit test plans, and verification and validation plans. Pearson is certified by an external auditor for CMM Level 4, the second highest level of certification.

After software requirements have been identified, the Pearson software development team prepares project schedules, project plans, functional specifications, and design documents. Pearson begins by creating detailed test plans at both the unit and systems level. A unit test plan is a list of code-unit test cases that are executed and recorded by the software developer. The purpose of the code-unit test process is to ensure that software is developed, maintained, documented, and verified to meet the project requirements for coding and unit testing. As such, the process provides the mechanisms that are necessary to implement the software requirements and design as well as provides code-units quality assurance prior to system test.

After all modules (units) are tested within a system, the CMM process requires a system test. The system test ensures that all the units work together and that outputs from one module match up to the proper inputs for the next module in the system. It also uses expected results to ensure that all requirements have been met. It is important that the system test be performed by a group that is independent of the software development team. This process allows independent verification and interpretation of the requirements. Once the independent testing group has completed the test and given its approval, the system is moved into production mode. It is ready for processing the quality-checking scanned documents and files submitted by a quality-checking team.

#### **Scanning and Scoring**

Before actual documents are machine-scanned, a comprehensive check of the scanning and scoring system is performed. The software development tester creates test decks of gridded scanned documents with specific test criteria. The test decks are designed and gridded to cover all response ranges, ID ranges, blanks, and Multiple grids as well as any other responses used by the APA. A file containing the scanned responses is then compared to the expected test results for each document to ensure the scanner is operating correctly. The test decks are processed through the programs for scanning and editing scanned, and packetizing and printing scoring monitors. The second check involves processing and quality-checking the first actual scanned documents received.

As described in the rangefinding section of Part 4, the NJDOE Office of State Assessments asked districts to return their portfolios early following testing so actual portfolios could be used for rangefinding. Some early return portfolios and additional portfolios received during the scheduled return served a quality-control purpose beginning with hand checking and following with periodical checking throughout scoring.

For both the rangefinding and quality-control purposes, portfolios were selected to represent the following:

- range of school districts
- different types of schools
- grade level of students (elementary, middle, high school)
- skill level (access skill, modified expectation)
- severity of disability (severe/profound, moderate, mild-moderate)
- possible score levels (low, medium, high)

### **Quality Control of Score Reporting**

NJDOE Office of State Assessments conducted a quality control of score reporting in June 2012. The NJDOE hand scored a sample of portfolios from a variety of students across grades and content areas.

Pearson printed all applicable reports for 8-10 districts that met requirements specified by the Office of State Assessments for quality control. Requirements for the selected districts included:

- All grades in at least 2 districts
- Each grade represented at least 4 times across the districts
- 3 urban districts, at least 1 private school
- 4-6 public districts (non-specialized districts)
- 4 private districts such as the Department of Children and Families (DCF) districts
- No more than 50 students in a district (multiple schools)
- Sending/receiving relationship and Status: some related districts through sending/receiving relationship (e.g., at least, Status 2 and Status 3), minimum of 3 sets. A minimum of 2 districts should be “independent” (e.g., with Status 1 only)

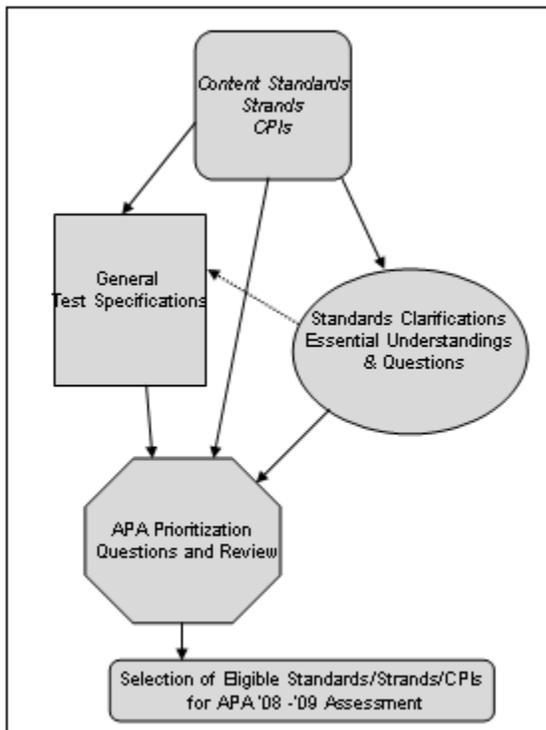
Additionally, the quality-control requirements included these student demographics:

- Migrant: 3-4 students
- SE: As many different codes as possible (including N-unknown or multiple).
- T-I: 3-4 cases each subject (e.g., Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, Science), and multiple-coded cases (e.g., Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics)
- Economically Disadvantaged: 3-4 students
- LEP: 3-4 cases of each code (<, 1, 2, 3, F1, F2, and Y).

- LEP Exempt LAL: 3 cases
- Home: 3-4 homebound students
- Homeless: 3-4 homeless students
- Ethnicity: 3-4 cases (of all codes, including multiple-codes)
- TIS/TID: 3 cases at minimum of TIS only, TID only, and both TIS and TID.
- Void: At least 3 cases per code (V1, V3, V4, V5); some must have dimension scores for one entry
- Report Footnote: Every case of each footnote (including “U” unscorable codes)
- General Assessment: Several cases of students whose scan sheet indicated they took the general assessment, by subject and by combination of subjects
- 4<sup>th</sup> Rater: Several cases requiring a fourth reader, with resolution information provided.

For the NJDOE quality-control, Pearson provided the demographic scan sheets, scoring monitors, record changes printout, school names with CDS codes, and a summary sheet for each student. The summary sheets displayed the variable demographics and codes for each student as data was transferred from the scan sheets to the Individual Student Reports (ISRs).

## **APPENDIX A: Development of the CPI Links**



Content Standards  
Strands  
CPIs

- Source document for instruction and assessment
- Describes what all students should know and be able to do, including students with disabilities
- A scope and sequence document is available to assist in planning for instruction

January 14, 2008      APA Redesign Flow  
Charland Process      2

APA Prioritization  
Questions and Review

- The process of defining the eligible standards/strands/CPIs for APA assessment requires
  - A review of the intersection of the standards from the test specs and standards clarifications and
  - A prioritization of the remaining available standards based on the APA student population and a series of questions.
    - *The questions should help to define what is most important to assess. This process should not exclude strands based on the belief of what may not need to be or is not currently taught.*

January 14, 2008      APA Redesign Flow  
Charland Process      5

Educators will consider these questions and statements:

1. APA students must receive standards-based instruction that is linked to grade-level and must be held to high expectations.
2. Which of the strands and CPIs are essential for students to master?
3. Which of the strands and CPIs are very desirable for students to master?
4. Which of the strands and CPIs are desirable for students to master?
5. Which strands and CPIs support learning of higher level skills?
6. Which strands and CPIs promote instruction of foundational skills that will prepare students for future learning?

January 14, 2008      APA Redesign Flow  
Charland Process      6

Selection of Eligible Standards/Strands/CPs  
for APA '08 -'09 Assessment

- The ILSSA group has produced a first draft of the eligible standards, strands, and CPs eligible for APA assessment.
- The Advisory committee will review the draft considering the prioritization questions, content standards, scope and sequence, and other reference documents. Committee will revise draft if necessary and document their justification of revisions.
- DOE content experts will review the committee's product and revise if necessary.
- A committee of educators will review the final draft before publication.

January 14, 2008

APA Redesign Flow  
Charland Process

7

## **APPENDIX B: APA Participation Guidelines**

The New Jersey APA was developed for two purposes:

- To measure the progress of a **small percentage of students with disabilities** who cannot participate in the regular statewide assessments even with accommodations.
- To ensure that the educational results for all students are included in the statewide accountability system at the individual, school, district, and state levels.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) team makes decisions about state assessment participation. The IEP must determine **for each content area assessed**, whether an individual will participate in the general assessment or the APA. The New Jersey special education rules and regulations specify that:

**Students with disabilities shall participate in the Alternate Proficiency in each content area where the nature of the student’s disability is so severe that the student is not receiving instruction in any of the knowledge and skills measured by the general statewide assessment and the student cannot complete any of the types of questions on the assessment in the content area(s) even with accommodations and modifications (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.10(a)2).**

The United States Department of Education (USDOE) non-regulatory guidance regarding achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities provides further clarification regarding student eligibility for participation in the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The guidance states that:

**“only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may be assessed based on alternate achievement standards....the Department intended the term “students with the most significant cognitive disabilities” to include that small number of students who are (1) within one or more of the existing categories of disability under the IDEA (e.g., autism, multiple disabilities, traumatic brain injury, etc.); and (2) whose cognitive impairments may prevent them from attaining grade-level achievement standards, even with the very best instruction.”**

The USDOE non-regulatory guidance for alternate assessments can be viewed online at **<http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/altguidance.doc>**.

The following statements are meant to assist in clarifying the meaning of the questions contained in the guidelines participation chart. Please consider these statements when answering the questions in order to correctly make the individual determinations to determine student eligibility for participation in the APA.

1. Is the nature of the student’s cognitive disability severe? In order to answer YES to this question all of the following must be true:

- The student’s general level of cognitive functioning is significantly below the grade level expectations for his or her same aged peers and the student requires substantial modifications to the grade level curriculum.
  - The student requires more intensive direct instruction, than his or her peers, to acquire knowledge and skills in the grade level curriculum.
  - The student requires more extensive systems of support in order to participate in the grade level curriculum
2. Is the student’s cognitive disability so severe that the student is not receiving instruction in any of the knowledge and skills measured by the general statewide assessment?
- While all students are to be instructed in the CCCS for their grade level, students with more significant cognitive disabilities typically receive instruction in the knowledge and skills at a less complex level than that measured by the general statewide assessment.
  - Upon reviewing the sample test forms, if the student is NOT receiving ANY instruction at the same skill level, then the answer to this question is YES.
3. Is the student’s cognitive disability so severe that the student cannot complete any of the types of questions on the general statewide assessment in the content area, even with accommodations and modifications?
- Upon reviewing the sample test forms and questions for each content area of the general assessment, along with the state approved testing accommodations and modifications, if it is determined that the student is NOT able to complete any types of questions even with accommodations and supports, then the answer to this question is YES.
4. Is the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) aligned with grade level NJCCCS through modified expectations?
- The student is receiving grade level instruction at a significantly modified and less complex level than their grade level peers.
  - The student may need more extensive systems of support, as identified in the IEP, in order to access the curriculum.

**Guidelines to Determine Which Students Should Participate in the  
New Jersey Statewide Assessment  
Through the Alternate Proficiency Assessment  
2011 – 2012**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

General assessment given at the student's grade level:

NJ ASK3\_\_\_\_\_ NJ ASK4\_\_\_\_\_ NJ ASK5\_\_\_\_\_ NJ ASK6\_\_\_\_\_

NJ ASK7\_\_\_\_\_ NJ ASK8\_\_\_\_\_ HSPA\_\_\_\_\_ NJBCT\_\_\_\_\_

Content Area Question	Language Arts Literacy		Mathematics		Science*	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Is the nature of the student's cognitive disability severe?						
2. Is the student's cognitive disability so severe that the student is not receiving instruction in any of the knowledge and skills measured by the general statewide assessment?						
3. Is the student's cognitive disability so severe that the student cannot complete any of the types of questions on the assessment in the content area, even with accommodations and modifications?						
4. Is the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) aligned to grade level New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards through modified expectations?						

\*Grades 4 & 8, and Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 – the year the student receives Biology instruction.

If the IEP team has answered yes to all of the questions above, the student should participate in Statewide Assessment through the Alternate Proficiency Assessment.

***My signature confirms the accuracy of the information noted above.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Director or Designee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**A SIGNED COPY OF THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PORTFOLIO**

## **APPENDIX C: Use of Prompting and the Planning Entry Tool**

## **Distinguishing between Instructional Supports and the Use of Prompts**

When providing instruction or scoring student work, it is necessary to understand the differences between providing task directions, prompts, and supports so that you can accurately score student work for the APA. Provided below are clarifying statements to ensure a common understanding of these terms as they relate to the assessment of the CPI Links. Scoring an assessment activity correctly depends on the differentiation of providing directions, supports and prompts.

### **Task Directions**

A **task direction** is the information provided to the student at the beginning of an activity or test. This information tells the student how to complete the activity, offers expectations about the activity, provides background information needed for the activity, or simply asks the question. The following is an example of a task direction:

“You are going to answer some questions about the forces in motion lab activity we just finished. I want you to look at these three pictures. Which one of these pictures represents an unbalanced force?”

Or

“You are going to fill out an application online. Some questions are going to ask you to choose your information from a drop-down box. Click on the arrow to see your choices and highlight your answer.”

It is important to understand that the task directions above simply provide the student with the information needed to complete the activity and may pose questions that the student must respond to in order to demonstrate his/her understanding of a skill or concept. However, it is not a prompt that leads the student to the correct performance. For more information on task directions and other supports, please review Modules IV, V, and VI of the 2011-2012 fall teacher training.

Task directions must be given to the student for both the first and second activity. It is not a fair assessment to give a student a task with no instruction on what is expected, without reading the directions to the student (if appropriate), or without any necessary supports.

### **Use of Supports**

**Supports** are the instructional and assistive tools that students use to increase independent performance and facilitate their access to grade-level educational materials and activities. The most important thing to remember is that supports garner independence and facilitate access; they do not lead the student to the correct answer the way a prompt does.

- Supports can range from “no-tech” to “high-tech” and can be used to
- (a) aid the student in maintaining appropriate body position
  - (b) facilitate the student’s communication
  - (c) assist the student in accessing the computer or other technological devices
  - (d) improve the student’s ability to express and receive information

Readers and scribes are examples of “**no-tech**” supports that assist students with receiving information and expressing what they know. There are several examples of “**low-tech**” supports, such as pictures, symbols or objects to represent words or ideas, pointers (or other devices) to push a keyboard button or activate simple machines, pencil grips, etc. The “**high-tech**” supports are usually those that first come to mind, such as Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC) devices, switches, adaptive software and computer peripherals. Some examples of these “high-tech” devices are computer programs that have speech recognition and word prediction or software programs that read whatever is on the computer screen aloud, AAC (or voice output) devices and adaptive devices like a computer touch screen or adaptive keyboard that facilitates access. The most important thing to remember is that supports garner independence and facilitate access; they do not lead the student to the correct answer the way a prompt does.

Appropriate supports are essential for students to be able to access information, interact with instructional materials, and communicate and demonstrate learning. Positive behavior supports, motor and positioning supports are important in maintaining focus and engagement in the learning process.

If students are not responding to task items, are leaving items blank, reply don’t know, or cannot elicit a response on his/her own, check that supports are in place.

## **Use of Prompts**

**Prompts** are the instructional details that teachers provide to students in order to lead or guide the student to the correct response during instructional activities or tests. While the purpose of prompting is to guide the student to the correct answer, the degree of intrusiveness varies depending on the type of prompt given. The typical hierarchy of prompts goes from least to most intrusive in order as verbal (V), gestural (G), model (M), and physical (P). If a student requires a prompt level to respond to items or perform skills, then it is important to determine which prompt level most often gets the student to learn a concept and perform the skill accurately. Teachers must use their knowledge of how the student learns to make decisions about when and what type of prompting is needed.

To accurately document student performance of skills, a distinction must be made between **direct prompts** and **indirect prompts**. An indirect prompt guides/leads the student but does not give the student the answer. The level of prompt provided to the

student must be documented on the evidence and will affect the scoring of the activity. Verbal, gestural or model prompts that directly give the student the correct answer (called direct prompts) are considered a most intrusive prompt in the prompt hierarchy. Direct verbal, gestural and model prompts are useful for instruction but cannot be used for assessment. Only indirect prompts can be used for assessment.

#### **An indirect verbal prompt can**

- Provide the student with a clue to try to spark the student's recollection of the activity or lesson so that he/she can respond to the question (e.g., "Remember, the main character did lots of funny things. Point to the main character.")

In the least-to-most prompt hierarchy, the gestural prompt is the next, more intrusive prompt, followed by a model prompt. These prompts are represented by some type of teacher demonstration or gesture that guides the student to the answer.

#### **An indirect gestural prompt can**

- Provide the student with a clue as to the general location of an answer (e.g., when looking up a word in the dictionary, the teacher may tap the corner of the page the word can be found on but not exactly where the word is on the page)

#### **An indirect model prompt can**

- Provide the student with a clue through teacher demonstration of the skill that the student should demonstrate (e.g., demonstrate how to regroup in an addition problem, giving the student a different addition problem involving regrouping)
- Provide the student with a clue through acting out a scenario (e.g., when presenting a choice of three pictures and asking the student which picture represents an unbalanced force, the teacher may make a sweeping or moving motion to represent an "unbalanced force")

#### **Physical Prompts**

A **physical prompt** is any prompt that requires the teacher to touch the student in order to give the student the answer (e.g., physically moving the student's hand, touching the student's wrist). Physical prompts are the most intrusive type of prompt that is permissible to use during assessment.

**If a student must be given any type of physical prompt in order to perform the skill, the teacher may do so, but *the item must be marked as incorrect (-) and physical prompt provided (P)*.** Therefore, items completed with physical prompts must be marked as (-P).

#### **Prompt Types Given on the Initial Activity**

Prompting is not required, however, because the student cannot be allowed to leave assessment items blank or simply respond, "I don't know" or "no answer," prompting should be used on the initial activity if the student cannot elicit responses on his/her own. Furthermore, the student's responses should be on topic, even if incorrect. Evidence showing student responses that are off topic but that were completed 100% independently

indicate the student did not understand the expectations for the activity, which is not acceptable since prompting could be used to help the student provide a meaningful response, even if incorrect.

### Prompt Types Given on the Final Activity

**Evidence of the final activity cannot have a more intrusive prompt level than was given on the first piece of evidence/initial activity.** Providing a more intrusive prompt on the final piece of evidence unfairly boosts the student’s performance level by providing more instructional assistance than was given on the first piece of evidence. **If the final piece of evidence contains a more intrusive prompt than the first piece of evidence, the entry will score a one for Performance.**

### Example of a more intrusive prompt:

The screenshot shows a student's work on a language activity. On the left, a worksheet titled 'Marti' with the date '10-12-11' is shown. The student's name is 'Marti' and the date is '10-12-11'. The worksheet has a score of '20% Accurate' and '100% Independent'. The directions are 'Paste two sentence fragments to make one sentence'. There are five numbered items, each with two sentence fragments to be combined. The right side of the image shows the student's completed work with prompts and corrections. The prompts are 'I' followed by the combined sentence. The corrections are '+ I' or '+ V'.

Item	Fragment 1	Fragment 2	Student's Prompt	Correction
1.	The brown bear	slept in a cave.	I The dog barks at Allie.	+ I
2.	The green frog	Mary's sister	I Mr. Puchinsky is the fire captain.	+ I
3.	has an orange sail.	The wooden sailboat	I Allie's father has an important job.	+ V
4.	ate a fly.	My favorite necklace	I The little dog plays with the children at the playground.	+ I
5.	wore a pretty dress.	has pretty gemstones.	I He is friendly and helpful.	+ I

The first piece of evidence is completed 100% independently, while the second piece of evidence includes verbal prompts.

### A word about direct prompts...

Direct prompts are only used during instruction (errorless learning) and give the student the correct answer. **Teachers may use direct prompting during the instruction that takes place between the initial and final data collection for the APA, but direct verbal, gestural and model prompts are not allowed for assessment.**

**A direct verbal prompt** provides the student with the specific answer to a question or item (e.g., “Remember, the main character was Pippi. Point to the picture of the main character.”).

**A direct gestural prompt** points out the specific answer to the student (e.g., when presenting a choice of three pictures and asking the student which picture represents an unbalanced force, the teacher points to or taps the correct picture).

**A direct model prompt** models the exact problem and answer the student must perform (e.g., when sorting producers and consumers, the teacher says, “Remember, corn is a producer,” and picks up the picture of corn and places it in the producer column of a chart then returns the picture back with the choices and says, “Which one is a producer?”).

*Teacher’s Own Prompt Level Hierarchy*

If a student requires a different prompt hierarchy than the one outlined in the training and the Procedures Manual, a key outlining the prompt hierarchy used must be noted in the entry.

<b>Type of Support, Prompt or Activity Format</b>	<b>Acceptable for Instruction</b>	<b>Acceptable for Assessment</b>
Physical prompting	Yes—with a goal of fading it out	Yes—however, item must be marked as incorrect (-P)
Color coding that allows the student to just match colors with no understanding of the concept/skill	Yes—with a goal of fading it out	No—matching colors is not found in the CPI Links
Less than five items	Yes	No—there must always be at least five items included in an assessment activity
Verbal, model, or gestural prompts	Yes—both direct and indirect; the goal is to fade all prompts	Only <i>indirect</i> prompts are allowed for assessment
Independent work	Yes	Yes
Reading, repeating or rephrasing task directions	Yes—these are supports	Yes
Scaffolding and differentiated instruction	Yes	Yes
Communication systems and devices	Yes	Yes
Modified texts (e.g., PEC symbols added, shortened text, the student follows along with objects, pictures or words while the teacher reads)	Yes	Yes
Ask questions that are not a part of the chosen Link	Yes	No
Providing access for the student (through scribes, sign language, Braille, objects, textures, etc.)	Yes	Yes
Work with general education specialists/classrooms	Yes	Yes

For more information on Supports and Assistive Technology, please refer to the document **Links, Information, and Resources on Assistive Technology and Universal Design for Learning** found at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/specialed/tech/>.

### **Planning Tool**

The following tool may be used to assist in developing standards-based activities that will be conducted to instruct the student on the skills and concepts of the chosen CPI and CPI Link and collect data for the APA portfolio.

- Page one of the tool is to be used for planning instructional lessons/unit of study needed to teach the student the skills and concepts of the CPI and CPI link.
- Page two of the tool is to be used for planning two assessment activities: one which will occur prior to the instructional lessons/unit; and one which will occur at the end of the instructional lessons/unit. Page two includes a column to plan what type of evidence will be collected from the activities to include as evidence in the portfolio.
  - Page two can be used as a reference when completing the entry cover sheet and writing a description of the initial activity and the final activity.



**New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Entry Planning Tool**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Entry (circle one):**    LAL 1 2 3 4    MATH 1 2 3 4    Science 1 2 3 4

CPI Link: \_\_\_\_\_

Standards-based Activities (Assessment)	Supports	Evidence for assessment
Initial Activity for Assessment		
Final Activity for Assessment		

## **APPENDIX D: Writing Prompt Rubrics**

**Scoring Writing**

One of the requirements for acceptable evidence is that it must include at least five items, such as identifying five nouns. Writing tasks may require five discrete components or may need to be scored using a rubric. The Links will include the word “*rubric*” next to the Link when it is necessary to score the task using a rubric. A rubric must include all parts of the CPI Link and allow calculation of Accuracy and Independence scores.

<b>CPI 3.2.12D6</b> Compile and synthesize information for everyday and workplace purposes, such as job applications, résumé, business letters, and college applications		
Essence of the CPI: Write for workplace and everyday reasons		
<b>Matched Link</b>	<b>Near Link</b>	<b>Far Link</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Complete a cover letter and résumé and use a rubric to judge your work – rubric must be included in this evidence</li> <li>◆ Write business letters using appropriate format and language rubric</li> <li>◆ Complete college applications – must include the essay rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Write a cover letter rubric</li> <li>◆ Write a résumé —must include job history, skills, and personal information rubric*</li> <li>◆ Complete a job application that includes address, work, education history, and references</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Produce sentences for an appropriate audience based on word and subject choice</li> <li>◆ List information needed to complete an application – must gather information in addition to personal data</li> </ul>

When scoring student writing with a rubric, the writing must be scored on the skills/concepts within the chosen CPI Link. Therefore, it is important that the dimensions of the rubric include only the academic skills included in the CPI Link. Behavioral skills should not be included in the writing rubrics.

**When Scoring Student Writing for the Portfolio:**

<p><b>Do:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score only academic skills</li> <li>• Score all skills/concepts within one CPI Link</li> <li>• Include five dimensions</li> <li>• Score each dimension of the writing rubric for Independence and Accuracy</li> <li>• Include percent Accuracy and Independence scores</li> <li>• Adhere to the Universal Scoring Rules</li> </ul>	<p><b>Do Not:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Score behavioral skills</li> <li>• Score skills/concepts that are not a part of the CPI Link</li> </ul>
---	--

Teachers can create writing rubrics specifically to address the academic content required in a CPI Link. These rubrics must follow the guidelines outlined above - address only academic skills and only those skills/concepts present in the CPI Link. A rubric must contain at least five dimensions connected to the CPI Link. A dimension is the academic skill/concept that is being assessed for that particular Link. The student work sample must include markings and/or comments that connect to the score points received in the rubric.

## Examples of Appropriate Writing Rubric

*Here is an example of an acceptable commercial rubric.*

CPI: 3.2.12D6

Matched Link “Write business letters using appropriate format and language” *rubric*

Cover Letter Rubric	Possible Points	Total Points	Prompted Or Independent
Overall Format <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Block Style (10 points)</li> <li>New Times Roman, 12 point font (10 points)</li> </ul>	20		
Heading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Your complete address (5 points)</li> <li>Phone number/email address (2 points)</li> <li>Complete date (2 points)</li> <li>Correct spacing and indentations (5 points)</li> </ul>	14		
Inside Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate prefix/title and name (2 points)</li> <li>Title (2 points)</li> <li>Organization (2 points)</li> <li>Organization’s address (6 points)</li> <li>Correct spacing and indentations (5 points)</li> </ul>	17		
Greeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate salutation choice (2 points)</li> <li>Appropriate prefix/title and name (2 points)</li> <li>Correct spacing and indentations (2 points)</li> </ul>	6		
Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses Standard English (no contractions, slang, etc.) (10 points)</li> <li>Clearly outlines purpose and qualifications in the letter (12 points)</li> <li>Uses clear, concise sentences (10 points)</li> <li>Correct spacing and indentations (5 points)</li> </ul>	37		
Closing and Signature <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate closing choice (2 points)</li> <li>Correct spacing and indentations (4 points)</li> </ul>	6		
Total Possible Points	100	% Accurate	% Independent

**Reason:** This rubric is academic, is connected to the CPI Link, has at least five dimensions, and provides a percent score for Accuracy and a percent score for Independence.

*Here is an example of an acceptable teacher-made rubric.*

CPI: 3.2.12D6

Matched Link: “Write business letters using appropriate format and language” *rubric*

	<b>Independent or Prompted</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Heading</b>		Missing	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>and</i> poor word choices	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>or</i> poor word choices	Complete, appropriate word choices, formatted correctly	
<b>Greeting</b>		Missing	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>and</i> poor word choices	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>or</i> poor word choices	Complete, appropriate word choices, formatted correctly	
<b>Body Identifies Purpose</b>		Missing	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>and</i> poor word choices	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>or</i> poor word choices	Complete, appropriate word choices, formatted correctly	
<b>Body Identifies Qualifications</b>		Missing	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>and</i> poor word choices	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>or</i> poor word choices	Complete, appropriate word choices, formatted correctly	
<b>Salutations</b>		Missing	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>and</i> poor word choices	Incomplete, incorrectly formatted <i>or</i> poor word choices	Complete, appropriate word choices, formatted correctly	
	% Independent					% Accurate

**Reason:** This rubric is academic, is connected to the CPI Link, has at least five dimensions, and provides a percent score for Accuracy and a percent score for Independence. Percent scores are calculated by adding up the total points earned by the student, dividing by the total possible points, then multiplying by 100. (In this example, there are 20 possible total points.)

## Non-Examples of Appropriate Writing Rubrics

CPI: 3.2.12D6

Matched Link: “Write business letters using appropriate format and language” *rubric*

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sitting/ Attending	Student does not sit or leaves the table	Remains seated, needed 4 or more prompts to pay attention	Remains seated, needed 3 prompts to pay attention	Remains seated, needed 2 prompts to pay attention	Remains seated, needed 1 prompt to pay attention	Remains seated, independently paid attention
Participation	Task needed physical prompting	Task needed 5 or more gestural or model prompts	Task needed less than 5 gestural or model prompts	Task needed more than 3 verbal prompts	Task needed 1-2 verbal prompts	Task completed independently
Academic Content Learned	No understanding of the content (0% correct)	Minimal understanding of the content (1-15% correct)	Basic understanding of the content (16-30% correct)	Some understanding of the content (40-59% correct)	Some understanding of the content (60-80% correct)	Complete understanding of the content (81-100% correct)

**Reason:** This rubric assesses non-academic skills/behaviors, does not specifically assess the CPI Link, does not contain five dimensions, and does not provide a percent score for Accuracy or a percent score for Independence.

NOTE: Each dimension of this rubric is worth up to 5 points. Do not confuse the levels or points of the rubric with the dimensions of the rubric. In this example, there are just three dimensions of the rubric. Therefore, it does not meet the requirement of a minimum of five dimensions.

### Creating Rubrics

It is important to remember that regardless of whether a commercial rubric or teacher-made rubric is used to score writing, the rubric **MUST**

- include all elements of the CPI Link
- use only the elements of the CPI Link to determine a score
- record accuracy information and give a percent score for Accuracy
- record prompt levels needed and give a percent score for Independence
- include at least five dimensions

**APPENDIX E: PSC Scorers' Directions for Scoring Dimensions**

## **Complexity**

**Complexity** evaluates the CPI link assessed based on how closely the complexity and difficulty (Matched, Near, Far) links to the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) and grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPI).

<b>Score Point</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Complexity</b>	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

### Definition of Terms

**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; it 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 or limited number of items, etc.

**CPI Links** provide students with a range of skills/concepts that are aligned to the CCCS and CPIs. *CPI Links* are organized by whether they are a Matched, Near, or Far link to the grade level CPI. For instance, for CPI 4.4.7B4 (see below), the Matched Link has more complexity and difficulty than the Far Link. The Matched Link requires the student to apply probability concepts to answer questions in a real world situation, while most of the Far Links only require students to identify a single concept at a time.

**CPI 4.4.7B4** Play and analyze probability-based games, and discuss the concepts of fairness and expected value

Essence of the CPI: Understand what probability has to do with describing “fairness” and expected outcomes in games

Matched Link	Near Link	Far Link
<p>◆ <b>Play a probability-based game and use probability to answer questions about fairness</b></p>	<p>◆ <b>Demonstrate understanding of the connection between random and fairness*</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Demonstrate understanding of the connection between independent outcomes and fairness</b></p>	<p>◆ <b>Define and identify independent outcomes in probability</b></p> <p>◆ <b>Identify situations that would cause bias results or random results*</b></p>

**You must review all of the Links for the CPI to ensure the correct Complexity score is given.**

When scoring an entry, scorers will evaluate which CPI Link was performed by the student and assign a score accordingly. If a CPI Link is written on the Entry Cover Sheet but the evidence matches a different CPI Link within the same CPI, use the evidence to determine the Complexity score, after reviewing this with a table leader. Hence, a student **whose work** demonstrates a Matched Link will score a 4 in Complexity. A student **whose work** demonstrates a Near Link will score a 3 in Complexity. A student **whose work** demonstrates a Far Link will score a 2 in Complexity regardless of the Link noted on the Entry Cover Sheet.

An entry which demonstrates work in a CPI Link but has **major flaws** will score a 1 in Complexity. **A major flaw includes**

- **Assessing only part of the CPI Link (e.g. link specifies compare and contrast, but the evidence only assesses compare)**
- **Using the same activity for both pieces of evidence**

These are the only two errors that would cause Complexity to receive a score point of 1. Score Performance and Independence as you normally would as this error does not affect the other dimensions.

An **activity** is the context and/or application within which the student demonstrates the skills encompassed in the CPI Link. An activity must demonstrate the student working on one specific CPI Link but differ in the application or context of the skill from the first activity to the last activity. Whatever CPI Link is used for the first activity must also be used for the final activity.

### **Examples of two activities with different applications**

- The student is working on adding matrices
  1. by performing straight calculation problems
  2. by performing word problems
- The student is writing a personal narrative recalling a particular event
  1. by composing an essay on a computer about an event prior to starting school
  2. by writing an essay with paper and pencil about an event that happened while in school
- The student is classifying traits as inherited or acquired
  1. by using a graphic organizer to organize information
  2. by answering multiple choice questions

### **Examples of two activities with different context**

- The student is working on following vertex edge graphs
  1. by completing a worksheet
  2. after having a lesson on flight plans, the student uses a vertex edge graph to follow flight paths
- The student is working on following completing input/output tables
  1. in the context of a science experiment
  2. in the context of figuring out how much money could be made if he/she worked 2 hours vs. 8 hours
- The student is working on writing a cover letter
  1. after researching a job of a particular interest, write a cover letter that would be used when applying for the job
  2. after listening to speakers about different careers, write a cover letter for a job of interest
- The student is working on comparing and contrasting characters
  1. by answering multiple-choice questions after reading *Catwings*
  2. by answering multiple-choice questions after reading *Fantastic Mr. Fox*

Each of these examples demonstrates ways that activities can be different.

Using the same questions and answers in a different order or with different supports does not make an activity different. For instance, if assessing the same words, matching a word to its meaning using picture symbols is the same as matching a picture symbol to its corresponding word. Also, changing the order of questions does not make an activity different.

If something other than the CPI Link is assessed, check to see if there is another CPI Link for that CPI that matches all of the evidence. If so, score it based on the new link. If not, the entry will score zeros in all dimensions (per Universal Scoring Rule).

## Scoring Rules/Clarifications for Complexity Dimension

1. The CPI Link **addressed and evidenced** determines the score assigned.
2. An entry which does not satisfy one or more of the Universal Scoring Rules as outlined on pages 10 - 11 will score a zero in all dimensions.
  - a. If the evidence does not reflect the skill expectations of the Link chosen, check within that CPI and see if the evidence reflects a different Link. **Note: Evidence of the skill performance may be reflected in a rubric or in other evidence such as a student work sample, series of photographs with descriptions, etc.** If all of the evidence reflects a different Link within that CPI, score it according to the Link it matches, after reviewing with a table leader and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
    - i. If the evidence does not reflect a different Link within that CPI, see your table leader.
  - b. If the evidence only assesses part of the CPI Link, and no other CPI Link within that CPI fits the evidence, it is considered a major flaw and will be scored a 1 for Complexity. **This must be escalated to a supervisor using the escalation sheet.**
    - i. For example, Matched Link 4.4.7B4 *“Play a probability-based game (anything with a spinner or dice) and use probability to answer questions about fairness”* if the evidence only demonstrates the student playing a probability-based game then it is a major flaw and will score a 1 for Complexity.
  - c. If the evidence assesses more than the skills identified in the CPI Link, and does not address a different CPI Link within the same CPI, escalate to a supervisor using the escalation sheet.
3. **Two distinct activities are required to show evidence of instruction. If the same activity is used in both pieces of evidence, it is considered a major flaw and will score a 1 in complexity.**

**Note:** If an entry will score a zero for all dimensions follow the process on pages 12-13.

## Performance

**Performance** evaluates the student’s accuracy performing the skills represented in the CPI links identified within the portfolio.

Score point	0	1	2	3	4
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 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

### Definition of Terms

**Accuracy** is the number of items the student performed correctly. Any items that the student answers using a physical prompt must be marked as incorrect. Accuracy must be calculated as a percentage, and each item must be clearly marked as correct or incorrect.

**Physical prompt** is any prompt that requires the teacher to touch the student (e.g., physically moving the student’s hand, touching the student’s wrist) to assist the student when answering the question. **Items completed with a physical prompt must be scored as an incorrect performance.**

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

Student performance is documented by evidence of the student working on the CPI Link collected within the collection periods. The first piece of evidence must be collected between September 1 and November 11, 2011. The second piece of evidence must be collected between December 12, 2011 and February 17, 2012. **The student must score 39% accuracy or below on the initial piece of evidence in order to meet the Universal Scoring Rule for “baseline” data.**

- ✓ Each item must be marked as correct (+) or incorrect (–), and, for some Writing Links, a rubric must be used to score the writing sample.
  - Any student work where each item is not individually marked will result in a score of zero for the Performance dimension. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would.

- If a different system is used, then it should be clear as to what symbols are used to indicate correct and incorrect responses.
- ✓ Scorers must be able to calculate the percent accuracy score based on the markings (symbols) of each individual item.
  - Remember accuracy percent is determined by dividing the number of correct items by the total number of items presented and multiplying by 100.
- ✓ Any student performance that required the use of physical prompts must be marked as incorrect. If items completed with physical prompting are marked as correct, recalculate the percentage counting the physically prompted responses as incorrect.
- ✓ Performance scores are based on scorer calculations.
- ✓ If the **initial** piece of evidence has an accuracy score of 40% or higher, the Performance score will be zero. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would.

If a rubric was required for assessing a writing CPI Link, then it must meet the criterion for using a rubric. Rubrics must:

- ✓ be academic
- ✓ have a minimum of five skill elements or dimensions
- ✓ assess the entire CPI Link and *nothing but* the CPI Link
- ✓ be included with both pieces of evidence
- ✓ the same rubric must assess the same skills for both pieces of evidence

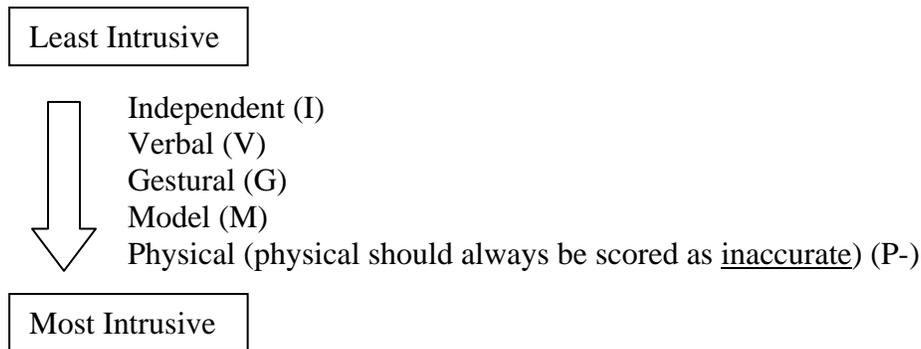
For scoring Performance when a writing rubric is required, the following rules apply:

- ✓ each dimension must have a way to indicate correct or incorrect responses (e.g., assigned score points from each dimension for accuracy)
- ✓ writing sample must include editing marks and/or feedback that correspond to the rubric

If either of these are missing, the entry will score zero for Performance. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would.

\* If the second piece of evidence has a more intrusive prompt level given than in the first piece of evidence, the entry will score a 1 for Performance. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would.

## The Prompt Hierarchy



If a prompt is used in the first piece of evidence, the second piece of evidence must contain the same level or less intrusive prompt.

Example:

- If the student performs all items independently on the first piece of evidence but requires verbal prompts, or some other prompt levels, on the final piece of evidence, that is considered more intrusive and will cause the entry to score one for Performance.
- If the student performs all items with a combination of verbal prompts and independent responses on the first piece of evidence but performs some items with model prompts, verbal, and independent responses on the final piece, the model prompts are considered more intrusive and will cause the entry to score one for Performance.

Teachers may indicate their own prompt hierarchy for their classrooms, but it must be clearly documented in the portfolio.

The final piece of evidence for each entry provides the score point used to score Performance.

- ✓ A student who scores 81-100% accuracy on the final piece of evidence will score a 4 for Performance.
- ✓ A student who scores 60-80% accuracy on the final piece of evidence will score a 3 for Performance.
- ✓ A student who scores 40-59% accuracy on the final piece of evidence will score a 2 for Performance.
- ✓ A student who scores 0-39% accuracy on the final piece of evidence will score a 1 for Performance.

### Scoring Rules/Clarifications for Performance Dimension

1. Ensure that all work meets the Universal Scoring Rules. If the rules are not met, follow the procedures in the Scoring Rules Guide (separate handout).
2. All items must be scored or graded for accuracy by a teacher. Scorers must be able to calculate the percent accuracy based on those scores. Accuracy reflects percent of items/tasks the student performed correctly without physical prompts. This includes rubrics when required. If you cannot determine the accuracy percentage, see your table leader.
3. Student responses that require physical prompting must be scored as incorrect. If physical prompts are marked as correct, then recalculate the percentage counting physically prompted responses as incorrect and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
4. If the accuracy percentage is missing from the evidence, calculate the percentage based on how each item is marked, assign the appropriate score and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
5. Performance scores are based on the scorer's calculations. If the scorer's calculation is different from the teacher's calculation, double check the calculation and assign a rubric score based on scorer's calculation. Place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
6. If the second piece of evidence has a more intrusive prompt than the first piece of evidence, score a 1 for Performance.
7. Initial evidence that starts with the student performing the skill at a level higher than 39% will result in a zero score for Performance. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
8. Writing samples that do not contain feedback which correspond to the rubric will score a zero in Performance. Score Complexity and Independence as you normally would and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
9. If the initial piece of evidence is considered more difficult than the final piece of evidence, score Complexity and Independence as you usually would and escalate performance to your table leader.
10. If one or more items do not appear to be accurately marked, escalate this to your table leader.

## Independence

**Independence** evaluates the extent to which the student completed items independently.

Score point	0	1	2	3	4
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

### Definition of Terms

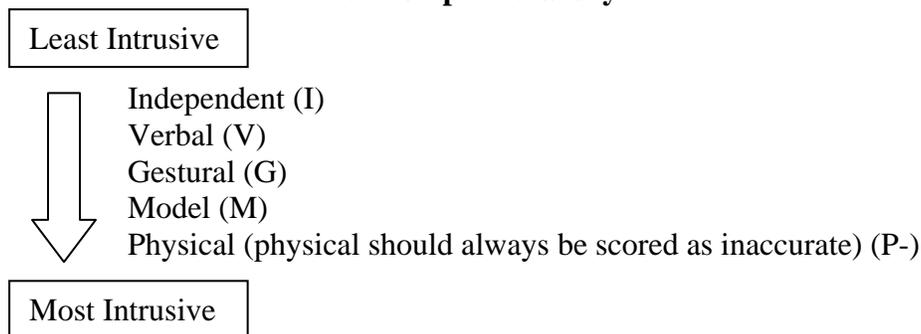
A **prompt** is a hint or clue that guides students to the correct answer.

**Prompts leading the student to the correct answer without actually telling the student the correct answer are acceptable.** Prompts may be verbal, gestural, model, or physical prompts.

For instance, the student is supposed to identify the main character of *Pippi Longstocking* from a choice of 3 pictures. One picture is Pippi, one is her monkey, and one is her horse.

- **Independent performance:** The teacher says, “Which one is the main character?”
- **Verbal prompt:** The teacher says, “Which one is the main character?” and then says, “The main character is the one who the story was mostly about.”
- **Gestural prompt:** The teacher says, “Which one is the main character?” and gestures to two of the three pictures
- **Model prompt:** The teacher says, “Which one is the main character?” and acts out one of Pippi’s actions (skating on the floor with sponges to wash it)
- **Physical prompt:** The teacher says, “Which one is the main character?” and then moves the student’s hand to the correct picture.

### The Prompt Hierarchy



If within the description of the activity the teacher mentions that she/he repeated directions or rephrased directions, this is not considered a prompt and has no effect on scoring.

Rephrasing: The teacher says, “Which one is the main character? Who was the story mostly about?”

The **final piece of evidence** for each entry provides the score point used to score Independence.

- ✓ A student who performs 81-100% of the items/tasks/questions independently will receive a score of 4 for Independence.
- ✓ A student who performs 60-80% of the items/tasks/questions independently will receive a score of 3 for Independence.
- ✓ A student who performs 40-59% of the items/tasks/questions independently will receive a score of 2 for Independence.
- ✓ A student who performs 0-39% of the items/tasks/questions independently will receive a score of 1 for Independence.
- ✓ Evidence that does not include the independence percentage will need the percentage recalculated based on how each item is marked and assigned a rubric score accordingly.

## Scoring Rules/Clarifications for Independence Dimension

1. A prompt level must be marked next to each question the student completes.
  - I = independent
  - V = verbal
  - G = gestural
  - M = model
  - P = physical
  - If some other system is used and there is no key, see your table leader.
2. If the student performed an item independently, the item must be marked with an I.
3. If the student requires a prompt for an item, the prompt level provided must be specified.
4. If each item/question the student completes is not marked with the specific prompt level then the entry will receive a zero for Independence. Score Complexity and Performance as you usually would and place an Entry Error Sheet in the binder.
5. Scorers must be able to calculate the percent independence score. This is done by dividing the number of independent responses by the total number of possible responses and multiplying by 100.
6. Independence scores are based on the scorer's calculations. If the scorer's calculation is different from the teacher's calculation, assign the rubric score based on the scorer's calculation and place a note in the binder.
7. If the independence percentage is missing from the evidence, calculate the percentage based on how each item is marked and assign a rubric score accordingly.
8. If you cannot calculate the percentage score, see your table leader.

**APPENDIX F: PSC Scorers' Directions for Monitoring Codes, Breaches, & Alerts**

## **Instructions for the Use of Monitor Codes**

### **Code 6      MUST be assigned for all entries and dimensions**

Code 6 is used when the scorer has determined that the portfolio is considered a **security breach** based on the guidelines provided in this handbook. If **any entry** matches the description of a **security breach**, see your table leader.

### **Code A      May be used for all content areas**

Code A is used when a portfolio contains a note from the school that states the student has been out of school on **extensive sick leave/hospitalization (medical emergency)**. The following conditions must exist for a portfolio to receive a medical exemption:

- 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 is provided, and
- A letter in the portfolio from an administrator documenting the medical emergency.

If one entry within a content area receives a condition code A, all entries and dimensions within the content area will receive the same condition code. However, **first confirm** that the entries have **less than the required amount of evidence** for each content area. You may only use this code for an entry that has no evidence, or less than the required amount of evidence. See your table leader.

### **Code B      Must be assigned for all entries and dimensions in a content area**

Code B is used when a content area has **no evidence** and there is **no note explaining** that the student was on **sick leave**. Code B may also be used for special circumstances but a letter from an administrator must be included. See your table leader if such a letter is included. **Code B is only used if all four entries in a content area are missing.** If less than four entries are missing, the missing entries will receive a score of 0. The entries that are present may still be scorable.

See your table leader if a content area contains any missing entries.

### **Code F      Must be assigned for all dimensions within an entry**

Code F is used when an entry is assigned zeroes that result in an explanation sheet being written by a Scoring Director/Floating Supervisor.

## Security Breaches – Preponderance of Evidence

There are several different occurrences that result in a security breach of an APA portfolio. This list is meant to be a guideline, but is not meant to be exhaustive. Scorers may indeed see other occurrences that lead them to believe a security breach has occurred. It is the scorer's responsibility to call attention to these portfolios and review the information with a table leader. This list will be updated as new occurrences are identified.

### **Evidence:**

- Sometimes evidence has a lot of white-out on the dates and/or names of the students, with writing on top of the white-out. Examine the evidence, and if it appears that the evidence has been changed to suit the portfolio, e.g., changing the student's name, changing dates to match other evidence, changing dates to fit collection period, etc., review the portfolio for a security breach.
- Sometimes there is a preponderance of erasures to change how answers were marked for performance and independence, e.g., wrong answers changed to correct answers, correct answers changed to wrong answers, wrong answers marked correct, prompt levels changed to independent performance, etc. Examine the evidence and if it appears that the evidence has been changed to suit the portfolio then review the portfolio for a security breach.
- There are times when a portfolio looks very familiar, because a scorer has scored other portfolios by that teacher. This sometimes generates the need to pull the other portfolios submitted by that teacher, if the scorer believes that the evidence and data look too similar. If a piece of evidence submitted in one portfolio exactly matches the information on another or multiple student's portfolios, then all of the teacher submitted portfolios should be reviewed for security breaches. It is acceptable to have the same types of evidence in the portfolios, and even evidence of the same classroom assignments. It is not acceptable to have the same performance data within an activity across students (e.g., a worksheet completed by one student is photocopied and used for two or more students).
- If the handwriting in any handwritten material matches the handwriting of a different author, or if the handwriting of one author appears different across evidence submitted, then the evidence should be reviewed for a security breach.

### **Use of Pictures:**

Pictures included in a portfolio must be dated, and the date (hence when the picture was taken) must match the date of the evidence. This is the instruction given to the educators. When you are reviewing pictures for questionable evidence, review the whole portfolio, not only within an entry.

- Pictures dated the same day that show the student in different clothes, accessories, and sometimes even hairstyles, should be reviewed for a security breach. Occasionally the student may have a smock over their clothes for art class. This would not indicate a security breach.
- Pictures dated different days that show the student in the same clothes AND peers/teacher in same outfits, and/or background materials/objects in same location/position (e.g., same writing on blackboard, same materials on student's desk, same materials in same position on teacher's desk, etc.) should be reviewed for a security breach. If the student is in the same clothes across pictures but there is no other circumstance described above, the portfolio would not be considered a security breach. There must be more evidence than the student wearing the same clothes.
- If the pictures appear tampered with, the portfolio should be reviewed for a security breach.

If the date of the picture seems unlikely (e.g., the date is January and the students are all wearing shorts and T-shirts), then review this for security breach. If the date of the picture is inconsistent with information in the picture (e.g., date is January but the calendar on the wall in the picture says March, the date is January but there are valentines on the bulletin board in the picture's background), then review for security breach.

### **Alerts**

There are several occurrences that result in an alert of an APA portfolio. If you suspect one of the following, see your table leader. These situations will be reviewed and escalated to the New Jersey Department of Education.

- The response suggests a situation which warrants investigation such as the possibility of abuse.
- The response suggests that the student intends harm to oneself or others.
- Evidence that appears to be of a troubling and/or private nature, including pictures of self-care tasks like showering, should be brought to your table leader to be reviewed for an alert.

## **APPENDIX G: Performance Level Descriptors**

## **Performance Level Descriptors Language Arts Literacy**

### **Grade 3 LAL**

#### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills of reading strategies, comprehension skills, response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Making predictions about a story when given a purpose
- Identifying context clues for decoding words
- Choosing appropriate graphic organizers
- Identifying cause and effect, fact and opinion, main idea
- Matching information in graphs, charts or diagrams
- Identifying theme, character, plot and setting
- Recalling information for descriptive, narrative and nonfiction text
- Identifying nouns, pronouns, verbs or adjectives
- Letter/sound recognition

#### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills of reading strategies, comprehension skills, response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Answer questions about the purpose of reading
- Make predictions with supports
- Identify and use context clues for decoding words
- Complete graphic organizers
- Utilize graphic organizers to answer questions
- Recognize cause and effect, fact and opinion, main ideas and supporting details in text
- Locate and match information in graphs, charts or diagrams
- Identify and describe theme, character, plot and setting
- Outline and organize information to write descriptive, narrative and nonfiction sentences and/or lists
- Write using correct capitalization, punctuation
- Identifying nouns, pronouns, verbs and/or adjectives
- Identify correct spelling of high frequency words
- Identify words with similar patterns

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills of reading strategies, comprehension skills, response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Assess the purpose of reading
- Make predictions and substantiate conclusions
- Identify and use context clues for decoding words
- Create and utilize graphic organizers to answer questions
- Analyze cause and effect, fact and opinion, main ideas and supporting details in text
- Interpret information in graphs, charts or diagrams
- Compare and contrast theme, character, plot and setting
- Outline and organize information to write descriptive, narrative and nonfiction sentences and/or paragraphs
- Write using correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and subject verb agreement

## **Grade 4 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills of vocabulary and concept development, comprehension skills, response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Matching words to their meanings
- Determining if words make sense in context
- Acquiring dictionary skills such as identifying and using guide words
- Answering basic comprehension questions about text
- Following single step directions containing direction words
- Identifying different types of literature
- Connecting details to a topic
- Writing a topic sentence when provided with details
- Identifying correct sequencing of ideas
- Identifying subjects and verbs
- Identifying a sentence

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills of vocabulary and concept development, comprehension skills, response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Identify the meaning of words given choices
- Identify contextual clues for word meaning
- Locate words in a dictionary
- Answer questions about text, such as drawing conclusions or identifying evidence to support given conclusions
- Sequence multi-step directions
- Match traits to types of literature
- Generate details about a topic
- Write a topic sentence
- Edit and revise sentences to include one or more of the following: dialogue, details, order of ideas, opening and closing statements, ending punctuation, commas, quotation marks, and capitalization

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills of vocabulary and concept development, comprehension skills and response to text, writing as a product, and mechanics independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Use contextual clues to determine meaning of unfamiliar words
- Use a dictionary
- Draw and support conclusions
- Sequence and follow multi-step directions to complete a task
- Compare and contrast different forms of literature
- Write a topic report including topic sentences and supporting details
- Write a short piece that includes one or more of the following: dialogue, details, order of ideas, and opening and closing statements
- Edit text for ending punctuation, commas, quotation marks, and capitalization

## **Grade 5 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text, inquiry and research, writing as a process, and writing as a product with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Identifying propaganda vocabulary
- Identifying topics and transition words in text and/or outlines
- Identifying figurative language vocabulary
- Matching sources with topics
- Identifying main idea
- Identifying basic characteristics of a paragraph
- Writing a topic sentence when given details.
- Identifying spelling mistakes
- Identifying different types of writing (e.g. persuasive, descriptive, essays, advertisements, etc.)
- Comparing and contrasting different types of basic prose
- Showing variety in sentences by changing the subject

### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills of comprehension and response to text, inquiry and research, writing as a process, and writing as a product with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Identify propaganda techniques and their purpose in text
- Identify topic and major/minor ideas in text and/or outlines
- Match and label types of figurative language
- Answer questions about a topic using a single source
- Write or outline a description of a setting or a plot
- Write or outline an informational paragraph when provided main idea and details
- Identify and correct spelling mistakes
- Utilize a graphic organizer to plan an essay and write a variety of prose
- Revise, expand, and classify simple sentences

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills of comprehension and response to text, inquiry and research, writing as a process, and writing as a product independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Identify propaganda techniques and reasons to support their purpose
- Identify and outline a topic including major/minor ideas
- Identify types of figurative language
- Answer questions about a topic or outline a report using multiple sources
- Summarize text
- Write a story with beginning, middle and end
- Identify and correct spelling mistakes in their own writing
- Utilize a graphic organizer to plan and write a variety of prose
- Write simple and compound sentences

## **Grade 6 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Identifying literary genres
- Identifying similarities between text and real life
- Identifying and give examples of cultural bias
- Answering questions from given information
- Identifying graphic sources in text
- Matching details and main ideas
- Identifying appropriate adjectives, verbs and adverbs to complete a sentence
- Revise writing for word choice, punctuation, and/or spelling.
- Matching words to the appropriate audience and purpose
- Identifying simple narrative elements

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Identify elements and characteristics of a literary genre
- Make connections between story elements and self
- Match elements in text to historical events or cultures
- Draw conclusions when given information from two different texts
- Identify relationships between text and a graphic source
- Summarize an informational text in writing or by completing a graphic organizer
- Write descriptive sentences and justify word choices
- Revise writing for word choice, punctuation and/or spelling.
- Revise writing to include compound or complex sentences.
- Demonstrate understanding of simple narrative elements and techniques through writing, describing, sorting or using a graphic organizer.
- Identify and use words appropriately for a variety of purposes and audiences in simple text

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Identify elements and characteristics of multiple literary genres
- Compare and contrast story elements across texts
- Compare and contrast points of view from two texts about different cultures or time periods
- Draw conclusions from multiple sources, including graphics and texts
- Write an informational essay
- Write a descriptive paragraph using details and sensory vocabulary
- Revise writing for correct word choice, sentence construction, clarity and spelling
- Revise writing to include compound and complex sentences.
- Demonstrate understanding of narrative elements and techniques through writing
- Select and use appropriate words based on audience and purpose

## **Grade 7 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Matching words to their meanings
- Determining if words make sense in context
- Dictionary skills such as identifying and using guide words
- Answering literal comprehension questions about text
- Following single step directions containing direction words
- Identifying different types of literature given choices
- Connecting details to a topic
- Writing a topic sentence when provided with details
- Identifying correct sequencing of ideas
- Identifying subjects and verbs
- Identifying a sentence

### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Identify the meaning of words, given choices
- Identify contextual clues for word meaning
- Locate words in a dictionary
- Answer questions about text, such as drawing conclusions or identifying evidence to support given conclusions
- Sequence multi-step directions
- Match traits to types of literature
- Generate details about a topic
- Write a topic sentence
- Edit and revise sentences to include at least one of the following: dialogue, details, order of ideas, opening and closing statements, ending punctuation, commas, quotation marks, and capitalization

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a process; and writing forms, audiences, and purposes independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Use contextual clues to determine meaning of unfamiliar words
- Use a dictionary
- Draw and support conclusions
- Sequence and follow multi-step directions to complete a task
- Compare and contrast different forms of literature
- Write a topic report including topic sentences and supporting details
- Write a short piece that includes at least one of the following: dialogue, details, order of ideas, and opening and closing statements
- Edit text for ending punctuation, commas, quotation marks, and/or capitalization

## **Grade 8 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a product; and mechanics with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Using pictures or a dictionary to define new words in text through matching
- Identifying connotative and denotative word meanings, and/or synonyms and antonyms
- Identifying types of propaganda or examples of its use, given choices
- Comparing and contrasting plots, characters, settings, and/or themes in text after reading, given choices
- Identifying mood, rising action, climax, and resolution in fiction
- Writing a personal narrative, or identify elements of different types of writing such as flashback and/or point of view
- Engaging in pre-writing using graphic organizers or outlining
- Writing sentences with appropriate capitalization and punctuation, including commas and colons in lists

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a product; and mechanics with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Choose dictionary definitions that best define new words in text, given choices
- Make connections between new words and known vocabulary based on context clues
- Identify connotative and denotative meanings of words
- Identify propaganda in advertisements and its type or purpose
- Identify and analyze the use of fiction elements such as characters, character traits, plot sequence and mood in text
- Write prose with appropriate textual elements, such as:
  - setting, plot and characters for fiction,
  - biographical details in chronological order for a biography or autobiography, or
  - essays with a clear purpose and supporting details.
  - Write using some mechanics appropriately such as paragraphs, grammar, transitional words, punctuation, and capitalization

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills in vocabulary and concept development; comprehension skills and response to text; writing as a product; and mechanics independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Use a dictionary to define new words and refine comprehension based on context clues
- Identify context clues such as restatement and/or contrast that enhance comprehension of new words
- Demonstrate understanding of complex words and relationships between words by:
  - identifying the correct use of words with multiple meanings,
  - matching synonyms, antonyms, connotations and denotations
  - identifying correct use, and/or
  - comparing complex words
- Identify propaganda in multiple sources, the type of propaganda used and its purpose
- Identify fiction elements such as character traits, plot sequence, setting and mood

- Explain how fiction elements in text influence the progression and/or resolution of plot
- Write prose with appropriate textual elements, including themes, literary elements, structures, and supporting details
- Write using mechanics appropriately; including paragraphs with a variety of sentences, grammar, transitional words, punctuation, and capitalization

## **Grade 11 LAL**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate emerging knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; mechanics; and writing forms, audiences and purposes with an inconsistent level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Partially proficient students are emerging in:

- Identifying literary devices given choices
- Identifying information in everyday texts and forms
- Matching electronic resources with a research purpose
- Identifying skills needed for particular careers
- Identifying text clues or prior information that could be used to support a given conclusion
- Ordering sentences using transitions, or revising writing by adding transitions
- Editing writing for initial capitalization, ending punctuation, and spelling using common reference materials such as dictionaries
- Ordering information within writing structures
- Using simple structures such as sequencing in own writing
- Pre-writing and producing simple writing, such as sentences, for everyday purposes such as filling out forms, and for different audiences

## **Proficient**

Students at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate basic knowledge and skills comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; mechanics; and writing forms, audiences and purposes with a moderate level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Proficient students typically:

- Identify literary devices used in text and match them with intended emotional responses
- Identify and explain the use of literary devices such as onomatopoeia, idioms, alliteration, metaphors, similes, and/or personification
- Identify purposes of everyday texts and forms
- Read and answer questions about technical manuals or instructions
- Evaluate the value of electronic resources for a research purpose
- Identify skills needed for particular careers; or compare personal interests with the skills needed for a particular career
- Identify text clues or prior information from multiple sources that could be used to support a given conclusion
- Use transition chains or transitions to change the direction of an argument in writing
- Use reference books and resources to make simple editing choices in own writing, e.g. thesaurus for synonyms, dictionary for capitalization
- Write using structures to enhance meaning, e.g., problem/solution, headings and subtitles, order of importance and/or cause and effect
- Complete forms and write within given templates for specific purposes, such as job applications, resumes, and cover letters

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students at the advanced proficient level generally demonstrate knowledge and skills in comprehension and response to text; inquiry and research; mechanics; and writing forms, audiences and purposes independently with a high level of performance using modified and supported materials.

Advanced proficient students typically:

- Identify literary devices used in text and identify an appropriate personal emotional response related to the device
- Identify and explain the use of literary devices such as onomatopoeia, idioms, alliteration, metaphors, similes, and/or personification
- Answer questions about everyday texts and completed forms
- Evaluate the appropriateness of instructions for particular tasks
- Follow instructions to complete a task or use an instructional manual
- Critique the value of electronic resources for particular research purposes

- Evaluate own work, school and life experiences for its applicability to career portfolios for particular careers
- Draw conclusions using information from multiple sources or points of view
- Use complex transitions in writing, e.g., transition chains, transitions to change the direction of an argument; cause and effect transitions, and/or compare and contrast transitions
- Edit writing, including own writing, for spelling, capitalization, punctuation; use proofreading marks and/or reference books and materials when appropriate
- Write within specific templates for specific purposes, e.g., reports with titles, subtitles, and headings; sequencing and/or setting within a problem/solution essay, diagrams within a text
- Write for everyday purposes such as completing forms, applications, and business letters

## **Performance Level Descriptors Mathematics**

### **Grade 3 Math**

#### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, geometric properties, patterns, and data analysis at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Recognize whole numbers in real world situations
- Recognize and/or identify place value in whole numbers
- Identify two-dimensional objects
- Recognize patterns
- Identify data displays

#### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, geometric properties, patterns, and data analysis at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Demonstrate an understanding of whole number place value
- Apply whole numbers to real world situations
- Order numbers
- Demonstrate an understanding of properties of two- and three-dimensional objects
- Demonstrate comprehension of the mathematical vocabulary describing spatial relationships of objects
- Demonstrate an understanding of, and extend, patterns
- Read and interpret existing data displays

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate knowledge of number sense, geometric properties, patterns, and data analysis at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Demonstrate an understanding of place value of 5-digit numbers
- Explain the use of whole numbers in real world situations
- Compare numbers
- Describe and/or classify properties of two- and three-dimensional objects
- Apply mathematical vocabulary describing spatial relationships of objects
- Create patterns
- Analyze, create questions about, and draw inferences from data displays
- Collect data to create data displays

## **Grade 4 Math**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of number sense, coordinate geometry, properties of operations and use of symbols, and systematic listing and counting, at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Identify numbers as being large or small
- Recognize that numbers apply to their daily life
- Match corresponding whole numbers, decimals, and fractions to models
- Use a number line to count and order numbers
- Identify the commutative property of addition and multiplication
- Identify  $<$ ,  $>$ , or  $=$  symbols
- Sort objects by attributes
- List some possibilities for a counting situation

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, coordinate geometry, properties of operations and use of symbols, and systematic listing and counting at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Order and compare fractions and decimals
- Apply numbers to real world situations
- Model fraction/decimal/whole number equivalents
- Use coordinates to locate and label points in the first quadrant
- Identify the commutative, associative, identity and zero properties
- Use symbols ( $<$ ,  $>$ ,  $=$ ) to compare numbers
- Organize objects in a Venn diagram according to attributes
- List all possibilities for a counting situation

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of number sense, coordinate geometry, properties of operations and use of symbols, and systematic listing and counting at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Explain how numbers represent specific information in the real world
- Illustrate equivalent forms of whole numbers, decimals, and fractions
- Count the horizontal and vertical units moved between two points in the first quadrant
- Demonstrate an understanding of the commutative, associative, identity and zero properties
- Create sentences using symbols
- Analyze information using a Venn diagram
- Represents in an organized way all possibilities of a counting situation

## Grade 5 Math

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, geometric properties, functions and data analysis at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Use manipulatives for adding and subtracting decimals and fractions with common denominators
- Identify dividend and divisor, sum, difference, product and quotient
- Identify triangles and quadrilaterals
- Recognize congruent shapes
- Recognize that an input/output table relies upon a pattern
- Conduct a survey
- Identify bar, line, and circle graphs and tables

### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, geometric properties, functions and data analysis at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Use procedures for adding and subtracting decimals and fractions with common denominators
- Use manipulatives to demonstrate basic division problems
- Use estimation skills to check reasonableness of an answer
- Identify polygons and describe them by their angles and sides
- Recognize congruent and similar shapes
- Complete a simple input/output table
- Collect and organize data from a survey
- Answer questions about graphs and tables

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate knowledge of numerical operations, geometric properties, functions and data analysis at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Use and explain procedures for adding and subtracting decimals and fractions with common denominators
- Perform division with single or double digit divisors
- Check answers using inverse operations
- Compare and classify polygons
- Illustrate and explain congruent and similar shapes and lines of symmetry
- Explain the rule used and graph coordinate points using an input/output table
- Create a survey, collect and display the data
- Create questions and make inferences and predictions based on a graph or table

## **Grade 6 Math**

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, units of measurement, modeling functions and relationships and systematic listing and counting at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Match operations to the corresponding key words
- Add and subtract fractions with the same denominator
- Identify the commutative, associative, identity and zero properties
- Demonstrate understanding of the concepts of area, surface area, and volume
- Identify scale on a map or scale drawing
- Estimate distance using non-standard units of measurement
- Complete a simple input/output table
- Recognize that a graph can represent the relationship between two variables
- List possibilities for a counting situation given a diagram
- Identify all members of a set

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, units of measurement, modeling functions and relationships and systematic listing and counting at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Match operational symbols to corresponding key words
- Perform all operations with fractions and/or decimals using manipulatives
- Use inverse operations to check answers in multiplication and division problems
- Identify appropriate measurement units for area, surface area, and volume
- Calculate distance using a scale drawing
- Estimate distance using standard units of measurement
- Create an input/output table modeling a real life situation
- Complete a graph showing a relationship between two variables
- Complete a tree or Venn diagram to illustrate a counting problem
- List possible combinations of two elements from a set

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of numerical operations, units of measurement, modeling functions and relationships and systematic listing and counting at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Identify the appropriate operation to solve a given problem involving a real world situation
- Perform all operations with fractions and/or decimals using pencil and paper
- Identify the use of the distributive property
- Use appropriate measurement units for problems involving area, surface area, and volume
- Calculate actual distance using a scale drawing
- Solve real world problems using estimated measurements
- Translate an input/output table into a mathematical equation
- Create a graph showing a relationship between two variables
- Create an organized list of all possibilities in a counting problem without duplication
- Apply the multiplication principle of counting

## Grade 7 Math

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, algebraic procedures, and probability at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Recognize that percents are a special case of ratios
- Use manipulatives to represent equivalent forms of fractions and decimals
- Distinguish between the use of area and perimeter
- Use manipulatives to compare volume of three-dimensional objects
- Identify integers on a number line
- Use manipulatives to solve linear equations
- Identify the order of operations
- Complete a chart to represent experimental probability
- Identify a situation that would cause a bias or random result in probability based games

### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, algebraic procedures, and probability at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Match a percent to an equivalent ratio
- Match equivalent forms of fractions, decimals, and percents
- Calculate perimeter and area for basic figures or shapes
- Use manipulatives to compare volumes of pyramids to prisms and cylinders to cones
- Use a number line to show absolute value as distance
- Use a T chart to solve linear equations
- Simplify an algebraic expression using order of operations
- Collect probability data and answer questions using that data
- Demonstrate an understanding of the connection between probability outcomes and fairness

### **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, algebraic procedures, and probability at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Use ratios, proportions, and percents in given situations
- Convert fractions, decimals, and percents to their equivalent forms
- Find the area and perimeter of combined shapes
- Compare volumes of figures with the same base and height
- Use a number line to graph absolute value or simple expressions
- Solve and graph simple linear equations
- Evaluate an expression using order of operations
- Compare theoretical and experimental probabilities
- Play a probability-based game and answer questions about fairness

### **Grade 8 Math**

#### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, number patterns, and vertex edge graphs at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Recognize scientific notation and match numbers in scientific notation to their standard notation counterparts
- Calculate perimeter and area for basic figures or shapes
- Classify prisms and pyramids according to their bases
- Identify a sphere and its diameter and radius
- Recognize and describe a number pattern

## **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, number patterns, and vertex edge graphs at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Convert numbers to scientific notation
- Order rational numbers (fraction, decimals, integers)
- Find the area and perimeter of combined shapes
- Find the surface area of various prisms and pyramids
- Match surface area and volume to the appropriate model
- Describe and extend a number pattern
- Identify a vertex edge graph and its parts

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of number sense, measuring geometric objects, number patterns, and vertex edge graphs at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Demonstrate the relative magnitude of rational numbers based on their distance from zero
- Compare and order rational numbers
- Find and compare the perimeter or area of a figure and its dilation
- Calculate the volume of three dimensional objects and their dilations and compare the two
- Find the surface area and volume of a sphere
- Create a pattern involving integers
- Follow a path on a vertex edge graph

## Grade 11 Math

### **Partially Proficient**

Students performing at the partially proficient level generally require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, coordinate geometry, functions and relationships and data analysis at a limited level of performance.

In general, partially proficient students:

- Identify square roots with the same radicand
- determine if two matrices can be added and/or subtracted
- Identify positive and negative slopes
- Identify parallel, perpendicular, and intersecting lines on a coordinate plane
- Identify the direction of a vector
- Locate the minimum and maximum points on a graph of a parabola
- Identify a reflection, dilation, and translation
- Identify different ways to collect data

### **Proficient**

Students performing at the proficient level may require prompting to demonstrate a basic knowledge of numerical operations, coordinate geometry, functions and relationships and data analysis at a moderate level of performance.

In general, proficient students:

- Identify whether radical expressions can be combined using addition and/or subtraction
- Add or subtract two matrices
- Find the midpoint of a line segment on a coordinate plane
- Describe the length and direction of a given vector
- Given a graph of a line, identify the x and y intercepts
- Match the graph of a function to its reflection or translation
- Make predictions using sampling data
- Identify a sample bias in real world situations

## **Advanced Proficient**

Students performing at the advanced proficient level generally require minimal prompting to demonstrate a knowledge of numerical operations, coordinate geometry, functions and relationships and data analysis at a high level of performance.

In general, advanced proficient students:

- Add or subtract square roots
- Multiply a matrix by a constant
- Find the slope of a line on a coordinate plane
- Add and subtract vectors
- Graph a simple linear function
- Match an algebraic rule to a graph of the function
- Draw conclusions using sampling data
- Draw mathematical conclusions about sample bias

## **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.

## **High School NJBCT**

### **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 H: Terms and Definitions Used in APA Score Reporting**

## 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.

**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 F of the 2012 Score Interpretation Manual 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 free or reduced-price school lunch.

**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, 2009, may not be coded as LEP.

There are six LEP codes for the current administration:

- < = Entered LEP program ON or AFTER 7/1/2011, and is currently enrolled.
- 1 = Entered LEP program BETWEEN 7/1/2010 and 6/30/2011, and is currently enrolled.
- 2 = Entered LEP program BETWEEN 7/1/2009 and 6/30/2010, and is currently enrolled.
- 3 = Entered LEP program BEFORE 7/1/2009, and is currently enrolled.
- F1** = Former LEP student exited a language assistance program BETWEEN July 1, 2010, 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, 2009, and June 30, 2010, 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, 2011 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.

**Local Student ID:** This stands for school- or district-assigned student identification number, if one was provided on the APA demographic scan sheet.

**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 fisher; and
- is, in the preceding 36 months, in order to obtain, or accompany such parent, spouse, or guardian in order to obtain, 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 (U).

**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), 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 “NA” 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.

**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).** 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
- 13 Social Maladjustment
- 14 Specific Learning Disability
- 15 Traumatic Brain Injury
- 16 Visually-Impaired

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

**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. 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 districts review and identify the performance of their students. Status 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 I student is a student who lives in an eligible attendance area, meets the criteria for selection to participate in the federal Title I program, and participates in a Title I program as indicated by the district on the student’s APA scan sheet (scannable form which contains student demographic information). If a student receives Title I 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, 2011).

**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, 2011).

**Unscorable:** An entry is deemed unscorable if the following occurs: extended medical leave, no evidence, took the general assessment, or security breach. A ‘Void’ is assigned to such unscorable entries. Instead of scores, the ISR will list an unscorable ‘U’ code instead of dimension scores for each entry that is voided, indicating the reason that the entry is deemed unscorable. The score for each dimension will be based on any remaining scorable entries within a content area.

If all entries within a content area are unscorable, a student will receive a void for the proficiency level. The unscorable ‘U’ code will be displayed in place of entry score for each dimension, and the sub-total of each dimension and total score for the content area is translated to the appropriate ‘Void’ code.

**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:

<b>Entry Deemed Unscorable (U)</b>	<b>Void Code</b>	<b>U Code</b>	<b>Proficiency Display</b>
Insufficient evidence collected due to extended sick leave	V1/ME	U <sup>A</sup>	Medical Emergency
No evidence provided in entry	V4	U <sup>B</sup>	Void 4
Student took general assessment in a content area	V4	U <sup>H</sup>	Took General Assessment
Security breach occurred	V5	U <sup>Y</sup>	Security Breach

**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 1 (medical emergency). The portfolio will be voided due to extended illness during the collection period. The student will receive an unscorable code of “U” for each dimension and a “Medical Emergency” for the proficiency level will be displayed on the reports. Eligibility is based only on the following:

- 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 the portfolio components, students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level.

A student transferred to New Jersey from out-of-state after October 27, 2011, is not required to submit portfolio evidence for scoring. These students will receive a Void 4 for their proficiency level.

**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 some content area(s) and the general assessment with accommodations in the other content area(s) or the APA in all content areas assessed. If the student took the general assessment in a content area, the result of the general assessment will be used for accountability reporting.

**Security Breach**

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

## **APPENDIX I: 2012 Executive Summary**

# 2012 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

## Executive Summary

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) is a portfolio assessment designed to measure progress toward achieving New Jersey's state educational standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in the general assessments: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJASK), the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), or New Jersey Biology Competency Test (NJBCT).

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

- To measure the progress of a small percentage of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the regular statewide assessments even with accommodations.
- To ensure that the educational results for all students are included in the statewide accountability system at the individual, school, district, and state levels.

Accountability through assessment provides equity in program and educational opportunities for all students. Alternate assessment ensures an inclusive statewide assessment system and student accountability.

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment was designed and developed to meet the requirements of the *Individuals With Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 1997)*, *Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004)*, and *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*.

The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students.

The Alternate Proficiency Assessment fulfills these requirements and is based on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS) in the content areas of Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science. In this manner, all students in New Jersey are moving toward the same general standards with whatever modifications or supports they need.

The 2011-2012 APA was administered in 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 was assessed in grades 4 and 8, and in grades 9, 10, 11 or 12, depending on the grade in which a student received Biology instruction. Evidence of student performance as demonstrated in the student portfolio was collected during two collection periods from September 1, 2011, through November 11, 2011, and December 12, 2011, through February 17, 2012. A portfolio is a collection of student work samples that measure a student's progress related to the Core Curriculum Content Standards, strands, grade-level cumulative progress indicators (CPIs), and skill statements called CPI links.

Extensive APA information is available at <http://pem.ncspearson.com/nj/apa>.

For the *Core Curriculum Content Standards (July 2004)*, see <http://www.nj.gov/njded/cccs>. The 2012 APA state summary reports appear at <http://www.state.nj.us/education/schools/achievement/>.

## Test Design

Peer reviewers from the U.S. Department of Education assisted the New Jersey Department of Education in designing the current version of the APA by providing test design and administration recommendations. These recommendations included the following:

- APA students must be assessed on a subset of skills from the general assessment. The skills must be mapped to the general assessment specifications, and address the breadth and depth of skills tested across grade levels.
- The skills assessed must link to the cumulative progress indicators of the student's assigned grade level.
- Students in the same grade must be assessed on the same content; teachers choose from a limited selection of standards and strands to assess their students.
- Strengthen the alignment of the APA program design to grade level academic content and progress indicators.

In accordance with these recommendations, the APA is developed using test specifications, by grade and content area, which prescribe the standards and strands that must be assessed. Test specifications were written in order to provide detailed guidance on how to link to grade level CPIs, and to address the federal requirement of linkage to the skills tested on the general assessments. Specifying the requirements increases standardization of the assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. For example, 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.

Test specifications for the 2011-2012 APA administration are provided below. For Science the specific standards to be assessed differ by grade.

**Language Arts Literacy** requires four entries from two different strands each from standards 3.1 and 3.2.

**Mathematics** requires four entries, one strand each, from standards 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, and 4.4.

**Science** requires four entries as follows:

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 (Grade 9, 10, 11, or 12): Two different strands each from standards 5.5 and 5.10.

The CPI links were developed from a subset of the Core Curriculum Content Standards, strands, and CPIs. The subset was prioritized for assessment on the APA by ILSSA (Inclusive Large Scale Standards and Assessment) content specialists, New Jersey Department of Education content specialists, New Jersey special education teachers and general education teachers, and the APA advisory committee. Individuals from each of these areas were also involved in drafting the content in

the CPI links and ensuring its alignment to the CCCS. Each CPI link offers three levels of connection to each CPI: Matched Link, Near Link, and Far Link. Educators choose one CPI link per entry and use that as the basis for developing portfolio entries for assessment within the APA.

New test standards should be set whenever a testing procedure is adopted that is judged to be meaningfully different from previous testing procedures. A standard setting for the re-designed APA, administered operationally for the first time in 2008-2009, was conducted June 9-12, 2009, to describe and delineate the thresholds of performance that are indicative of APA Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient performance for Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics in grades 3-8 and 11, and for Science in grades 4, 8, and high school (grades 9, 10, 11, or 12). Results from the standard setting studies were used to formulate recommendations to the Commissioner of Education and the New Jersey State Board of Education for the adoption of the cut scores (i.e., proficiency levels). Subsequently, in late June and early July of 2009, the standard setting panelists' recommendations were reviewed by the senior staff in the Office of State Assessments and the Office of Special Education Programs, the Assistant Commissioner for the Division of Student Services, the Deputy Commissioner, and the Commissioner. The review led to some modifications to the panels' recommended cut scores, chiefly affecting the advanced proficient cut points. These cut scores were presented to the State Board of Education on July 15, 2009, and approved unanimously.

## Scoring Process

The entries of the APA portfolio are scored based on three dimensions:

**Complexity:** Evaluates how closely the assessed grade-level CPIs link to the CCCS. 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.

**Independence:** Evaluates the extent to which the student completed test items (questions/tasks elements) independently.

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

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.

A proficiency classification for each content area is derived by combining the scores of the three dimensions. Performance contributes twice as many points as Complexity and Independence to the total score. Each content area assessed receives a proficiency level. The three proficiency levels are:

**Advanced Proficient** exceeded the level of proficiency

**Proficient** met the state level of proficiency

**Partially Proficient** is below the state minimum level of proficiency.

Scores are reported by content area. Entries that are inappropriate, missing, or when the student took the general assessment in a content area, are reported as unscorable. If all entries in a content area are

unscorable, then the Proficiency Level, Complexity subtotal and total, Performance subtotal and total, and Independence subtotal and total are reported as Void. Of the required four entries, only one scorable entry is required to assign a proficiency level. If the “subject portfolio” contains only one scorable entry, the total score and proficiency level are reported based on the dimension scores of that entry.

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

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

This executive summary includes four tables derived from the statewide summary for the 2012 APA. The state summary data file and the state level Performance by Demographic Group reports are produced and posted on the NJ DOE website. The Performance by Demographic Group reports show additional columns including the number of portfolios processed and the percentages of students who scored at the Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient level. Values are suppressed and an asterisk is printed when the number of students with valid scores for a particular group is greater than zero but 10 or less.

Table 1 in this executive summary provides the number of participating APA students with valid scores and the percent of students at each APA proficiency level. The percentages may not total to one hundred due to rounding.

As seen in the Table 1 summary data, a total of 9,807 students were evaluated by the 2012 APA. Of these, 9,161 students had valid Language Arts Literacy scores, 9,052 students had valid Mathematics scores, and 3,560 students had valid Science scores. Science was assessed in grade 4, in grade 8, and for high school in grade 9, 10, 11 or 12, if the student was enrolled in a biology course.

A small number of Grade 12 students participated in the high school level APA because they were either (1) students new to the state for whom IEP teams determined that the APA was the appropriate assessment, or (2) students who were juniors last year and should have participated in the APA last year but did not. Results for these students were extracted in order to report results for the Grade 11 students properly in this executive summary.

Tables 2 through 4 present the grade level performance by demographic groups for subject areas assessed. Results are presented for the total student group and the following demographic variables: limited English proficient status, gender, ethnicity, economic status, and migrant status. These tables show the number of students with valid scores and the percentage of students who scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios. This percentage, the students in Proficient or Advanced Proficient, was calculated by subtracting the percentage of students in Partially Proficient from one hundred.

Students are counted in the Total Students category only once, but are counted in as many other categories that apply. Some students might not be included in a gender group because of incomplete or missing information. Students with only one ethnic code are reported in the appropriate ethnic group. Examiners were asked to code all categories applicable to indicate a student's ethnicity. Students with multiple ethnic codes or no ethnic code (unspecified) are counted in the category called "Other." Limited English Proficient (LEP) is reported as LEP (Current plus Former) with two subcategories: Current LEP and Former LEP.

The demographic information originates from the data collected on the APA scan sheets submitted for the students by school districts. Demographic information was reviewed by the school district personnel prior to reporting, allowing them an opportunity to correct any errors.

### **Highlights from the 2012 APA Performance Results**

Tables 2, 3, and 4 present the number of students with valid scores and the percentage of APA students who scored at or above Proficient on their portfolios in the tested grade levels. Statewide results are shown in Table 2 for Language Arts Literacy, Table 3 for Mathematics and Table 4 for Science. Total results are summarized as follows:

#### Language Arts Literacy:

- Grade 3 – 71.0
- Grade 4 – 66.9
- Grade 5 – 63.4
- Grade 6 – 68.9
- Grade 7 – 59.6
- Grade 8 – 61.7
- Grade 11 – 52.9

#### Mathematics:

- Grade 3 – 62.9
- Grade 4 – 48.8
- Grade 5 – 66.6
- Grade 6 – 64.6
- Grade 7 – 66.0
- Grade 8 – 63.0
- Grade 11 – 65.4

#### Science

- Grade 4 – 59.4
- Grade 8 – 62.6
- Grade 9 – 67.0
- Grade 10 – 47.7
- Grade 11 – 55.8
- Grade 12 – 42.9

For high school, Science was assessed in Grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 depending on the grade in which a student received Biology instruction. The greatest number of students with valid scores was 704 students in Grade 11. Since much smaller numbers of students took Science in Grades 9, 10 and 12, the discussion is limited to the Grade 11 group.

**LEP Status** Less than 2% of the APA test taking population was classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). For the following summary of LEP students' performance, LEP is defined as current and former LEP students combined. The largest LEP N-count associated with any APA assessment was 19, which occurred in Grade 5 for Language Arts. Across grades within a content area the relative proportion of students classified as LEP tends to decrease slightly; however, the associated difference in N-counts is minimal. In addition, most LEP students were current LEP students rather than former LEP students. In Language Arts Literacy, the percentage of LEP students scoring at or above Proficient ranged from 69.2% for Grade 6 students to 93.3% for Grade 4 students. In Mathematics, the percentage of LEP students scoring at or above Proficient varied from 56.2% and above for students in Grade 4 to 80.0% for students in Grade 3. In Science, N-counts greater than 10 were only achieved in Grade 4. Of these 16 Grade 4 students, 68.7% were classified as Proficient or above. If there were no students associated with a particular sub-group, an N-count of 0 is provided and % At or Above Proficient is left blank.

**Gender** The number of portfolios processed indicates that 2 to 2.5 times as many male students took the APA as female students. Within a content area, this ratio generally had a decreasing trend from Grade 3 to Grade 11. For example, in Language Arts Literacy the percentage of male students decreased from approximately 69% at Grade 3 and 70% at Grade 5, to approximately 66% at Grades 8 and 11. In Mathematics the percentage of male students decreased from approximately 69% at Grade 3 and 70% at Grade 5, to approximately 65% at Grades 8 and 11. In Science the percentage decreased from 71% in Grade 4 to 66% in Grade 11.

#### **Language Arts Literacy:**

Across all grades, the percentage of female students scoring at or above Proficient was similar to the percentage of male students scoring at or above Proficient. The greatest difference was at Grade 7 with 65.3% of the females and 57.0% of the male students scoring at or above Proficient. In Grades 4, 7 and 8 the percentages of students scoring at or above Proficient was greater for female students compared to male students. In Grades 3, 5, 6, and 11 percentages were higher for male students.

#### **Mathematics:**

Across all grades, the percentages of female students and male students scoring at or above Proficient were similar. The greatest difference was at Grade 7 with 69.7% of the females and 64.3% of the male students scoring at or above Proficient. In Grade 7 the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient was greater for female students compared to male students. In Grade 5 the percentages were the same. In

Grades 3, 4, 6, 8, and 11 percentages were higher for male students. However, in Grades 3, 4, 6, and 8 the difference between male and female students scoring at or above Proficient was less than 0.3%.

**Science:**

Differences in the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient by gender in Science were very similar across most grades. The largest difference was at Grade 11 with 54.5% of females and 56.5% of males scoring at or above Proficient. In Grade 4 the percentages of students scoring at or above Proficient was greater for female students compared to male students. In Grades 8 and 11 percentages were higher for male students.

**Ethnicity**

The highest and lowest N-counts, in consideration of valid portfolios, associated with each content area varied as follows:

<b>White</b>	685 students in Grade 4 Language Arts Literacy to 358 students in Grade 11 Science
<b>Black</b>	351 students in Grade 5 Language Arts Literacy to 157 students in Grade 11 Science
<b>Asian</b>	123 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 45 students in Grade 11 Science
<b>Hispanic</b>	345 students in Grade 3 Language Arts Literacy to 139 students in Grade 11 Science

Since 10 or fewer students were associated with the Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native, and other ethnic groups (some grades had more than 10 students for this category, but the numbers were all below an N-count of 20), data for these groups were not reported. If there were no students associated with a particular sub-group, an N-count of 0 is provided and % At or Above Proficient is left blank.

**Language Arts Literacy:**

In general, within a given grade-level there were moderate differences in ethnic group performance on the Language Arts Literacy component of the APA. The difference between the highest and lowest performing ethnic group, in terms of percentage of students Proficient or above, ranged from 4.4% in Grade 4, to 10.0% in Grade 5. The average difference across grades was approximately 7.5%.

Across grades White and Asian students consistently had the highest percentages of students classified as Proficient or above, while Black students consistently had the lowest percentages. White students had the highest percentage of students classified

as Proficient or above for Grades 3, 4, 5, and 11. Asian students had the highest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for Grades 6, 7, and 8. Black students had the lowest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for all grades, except for Grades 7 and 11, which were Hispanic and Asian respectively.

For Grade 3, the percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level ranged from 66.8% for Black students to 74.7% for White students. (The percentages for the ethnic groups not stated fell between the percentages of the noted ethnic groups.) For Grade 4, the percentages ranged from 64.5% of the Black students to 68.9% of the White student group. The Grade 5 percentages ranged from 57.5% for Black students to 67.5% for the White student group. The Grade 6 percentages ranged from 63.6% for Black students to 72.6% for Asian students. The Grade 7 percentages ranged from 57.6% of the Hispanic student group to 64.9% of Asian students. The Grade 8 percentages ranged from 59.7% of Black students to 67.9% of Asian students. The Grade 11 percentages ranged from 50.0% of the Asian student group to 54.5% of the White student group.

### **Mathematics:**

Within a given grade-level moderate differences in ethnic group performance were observed. The difference between the highest and lowest performing ethnic group, with respect to the percentage of student classified as proficient or above, ranged from 5.9% in Grade 3, to 13.1% in Grade 5. The average difference across grades was approximately 9%.

Unlike Language Arts Literacy, across grades there was a varying pattern with respect to the ethnic group having the highest percentages of students classified as Proficient or above, while Black and Hispanic students consistently had the lowest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above. White students had the highest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for Grades 3, 4, 8, and 11. Asian students had the highest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for Grades 5 and 6, with Hispanic students having the highest percentage of such students for Grade 7. Hispanic students had the lowest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for Grades 3, 4, 8, and 11. Black students had the lowest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above for Grades 5, 6, and 7.

For Grade 3, the percentage of students who scored at or above the Proficient level ranged from 60.5% of the Hispanic student group to 66.4% of the White student group. The percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level for Grade 4 ranged from 44.8% of the Hispanic student group to 51.4% of the White student group. For Grade 5, the percentage ranged from 59.3% of the Black student group to 72.4% of the Asian student group. For Grade 6, the percentage ranged from 59.4% of the Black student group to 69.1% of the Asian student group. For Grade 7, the percentage ranged from 62.4% of the Black student group to 68.8% of the Asian student group. For Grade 8, the percentage ranged from 56.0% of the Hispanic student group to 65.2% of the White student group. For Grade 11, the percentage ranged from 57.1% of the Hispanic student group to 68.1% of White student group.

### **Science:**

In Science, there were moderate differences in ethnic group performance within a given grade-level. The difference between the highest and lowest performing ethnic group, in terms of percentage of students Proficient or above, ranged from 8.8% in Grade 11, to 10.9% in Grade 4. The average difference across grades 4, 8 and 11 was approximately 10%. In Grades 4, 8 and 11, the White student group had the highest percentage of students classified as Proficient or above.

For Grade 4, the percentage ranged from 53.2% of the Hispanic students to 64.1% of the White students. The percentage of students scoring at or above Proficient level for Grade 8 ranged from 55.4% of the Asian students to 65.6% of the Asian student group. The percentage of Grade 11 Science students who scored at or above Proficient level ranged from 49.6% of Hispanic students to 58.4% of the White student group.

**Economic Status** The number of portfolios processed indicates that approximately 35-40% of the students taking the APA were economically disadvantaged. The greatest percentages (~40%) of economically disadvantaged students taking the APA are associated with Grade 8, and the smallest percentages are associated with Grade 11 (~34%).

### **Language Arts Literacy:**

Non-economically disadvantaged students performed better than economically disadvantaged students across all grades, except for Grade 8. The greatest difference in performance was observed in Grade 7 with 61.8% of non-economically disadvantaged students and 56.1% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient, respectively. The smallest difference in performance was observed in Grade 5 with 63.6% of non-economically disadvantaged students, and 62.9% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient, respectively. The average difference in performance across grades, with respect to the percentage of students classified as proficient or above, was approximately 2.5%.

### **Mathematics:**

In Mathematics, the percentage of non-economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient was greater than the percentage of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient for all grade levels, except Grades 7 and 8. The greatest difference in performance was observed in Grade 11 with 67.4% of non-economically disadvantaged students and 61.4% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The smallest difference in performance was observed in Grade 8 with 62.7% of non-economically disadvantaged students, and 63.4% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The average difference in performance across grades, with respect to the percentage of students classified as proficient or above, was approximately 3%.

**Science:**

With respect to Science performance, the non-economically disadvantaged students did better than the economically disadvantaged group in all grades (4, 8 and 11). The difference in performance was small, except for Grade 4, which was moderate. The greatest difference was at Grade 4 with 62.1% of the non-economically disadvantaged and 55.2% of the economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The smallest difference in performance was observed in Grade 11 with 56.2% of non-economically disadvantaged students, and 55.1% of economically disadvantaged students scoring at or above Proficient. The average difference in performance across grades, with respect to the percentage of students classified as proficient or above, was approximately 3%.

**Migrant Status** Only Non-Migrant data appear on this report. Since ten or fewer migrant students took the APA in each grade and content area, data are suppressed for student confidentiality. If there were no students associated with a particular sub-group, an N-count of 0 is provided and % At or Above Proficient is left blank.

**Reporting Rules for APA State Summary**

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

- Data are not reported where the number of students with valid scores for a particular group is greater than zero but ten or less.
- Data are not reported when it is otherwise possible to identify individual student performance.

**Table 1**  
**2012 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Number of Valid Scores and Percent of Students at Each APA Proficiency Level**

YEAR	Number of Portfolios Processed	LANGUAGE ARTS LITERACY				MATHEMATICS				SCIENCE			
		Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient	Number of Valid Scores	% Partially Proficient	% Proficient	% Advanced Proficient
Grade 3	1406	1387	29.0	49.2	21.8	1360	37.1	44.6	18.3	-	-	-	-
Grade 4	1422	1387	33.1	58.5	8.4	1352	51.2	30.4	18.4	1299	40.6	58.9	0.5
Grade 5	1410	1387	36.6	59.5	3.9	1355	33.4	42.7	23.9	-	-	-	-
Grade 6	1351	1317	31.1	56.6	12.4	1290	35.4	44.4	20.2	-	-	-	-
Grade 7	1295	1255	40.4	48.1	11.5	1251	34.0	46.9	19.1	-	-	-	-
Grade 8	1224	1185	38.3	53.9	7.8	1175	37.0	48.2	14.8	1127	37.4	45.6	16.9
Grade 9*	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103	33.0	58.3	8.7
Grade 10*	224	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	222	52.3	44.1	3.6
Grade 11*	1223	1135	47.1	34.8	18.1	1158	34.6	43.4	21.9	704	44.2	49.4	6.4
Grade 12*	132	108	60.2	25.0	14.8	111	53.2	39.6	7.2	105	57.1	37.1	5.7
All Grades	9807	9161	36.4	51.6	11.9	9052	37.8	42.7	19.4	3560	41.3	51.2	7.4

\*In 2012, the APA assessed Science in grades 9, 10, 11, or 12 depending on the grade in which a student received Biology instruction.

**Table 2**  
**2012 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups**  
**Language Arts Literacy**

	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	1387	71	1387	66.9	1387	63.4	1317	68.9	1255	59.6	1185	61.7	1135	52.9
<b>LEP Status</b>														
LEP (Current & Former)	15	80	15	93.3	19	78.9	13	69.2	13	76.9	*	*	*	*
Current LEP	*	*	13	92.3	11	72.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Former LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-LEP	1381	70.9	1374	66.7	1376	63.3	1312	69	1249	59.5	1184	61.7	1133	53
<b>Gender</b>														
Female	426	70.7	422	69.7	411	63	406	68.2	395	65.3	397	63.5	386	50.5
Male	961	71.2	965	65.7	974	63.7	909	69.3	860	57	783	61.2	749	54.1
<b>Ethnicity</b>														
White	594	74.7	685	68.9	628	67.5	604	71.2	609	60.9	546	62.6	605	54.5
Black	304	66.8	304	64.5	351	57.5	283	63.6	301	58.1	283	59.7	238	51.3
Asian	123	73.2	78	66.7	76	59.2	84	72.6	74	64.9	84	67.9	70	50
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	345	68.1	306	65.4	312	62.2	326	68.7	257	57.6	255	60	212	52.4
Amer. Indian/AK Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	13	46.2	*	*	17	70.6	13	61.5	11	54.5	13	69.2	*	*
<b>Economic Status</b>														
Disadvantaged	518	68.9	547	66.2	526	62.9	518	67.8	481	56.1	472	62.7	386	50.8
Non-Disadvantaged	869	72.3	840	67.4	861	63.6	799	69.7	774	61.8	713	61	749	53.9
<b>Migrant Status</b>														
Migrant	0		*	*	0		0		0		0		0	
Non-Migrant	1387	71	1386	66.9	1387	63.4	1317	68.9	1255	59.6	1185	61.7	1135	52.9

\*Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less

**Table 3**  
**2012 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups**  
**Mathematics**

	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 11	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	1360	62.9	1352	48.8	1355	66.6	1290	64.6	1251	66	1175	63	1158	65.4
<b>LEP Status</b>														
LEP (Current & Former)	15	80	16	56.2	17	58.8	13	69.2	13	76.9	*	*	*	*
Current LEP	*	*	14	57.1	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Former LEP	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Non-LEP	1354	62.7	1338	48.7	1345	66.6	1285	64.6	1245	66	1174	62.9	1157	65.4
<b>Gender</b>														
Female	422	62.8	416	48.6	405	66.7	409	64.5	399	69.7	404	63.1	405	63.7
Male	938	62.9	936	48.9	948	66.7	879	64.7	852	64.3	766	63.2	753	66.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>														
White	580	66.4	669	51.4	612	70.4	584	67	607	66.7	546	65.2	631	68.1
Black	302	60.6	296	47.3	344	59.3	283	59.4	298	62.4	281	64.8	242	65.7
Asian	118	61	76	50	76	72.4	81	69.1	73	68.5	83	62.7	67	67.2
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Hispanic	339	60.5	297	44.8	303	64.4	322	64.9	260	68.8	248	56	210	57.1
Amer.Indian/AK Native	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Other	13	30.8	*	*	17	88.2	13	30.8	*	*	12	75	*	*
<b>Economic Status</b>														
Disadvantaged	506	61.1	528	45.8	504	65.1	505	63.6	480	67.3	464	63.4	391	61.4
Non-Disadvantaged	854	63.9	824	50.7	851	67.6	785	65.2	771	65.2	711	62.7	767	67.4
<b>Migrant Status</b>														
Migrant	0		*	*	0		0		0		0		0	
Non-Migrant	1360	62.9	1351	48.9	1355	66.6	1290	64.6	1251	66	1175	63	1158	65.4

\*Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less

**Table 4**  
**2012 New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**  
**Statewide Performance by Demographic Groups**  
**Science**

	Grade 4		Grade 8		Grade 9		Grade 10		Grade 11		Grade 12	
	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient	Number of Students with Valid Scores	% At or Above Proficient
<b>STATE TOTAL</b>	1299	59.4	1127	62.6	103	67	222	47.7	704	55.8	105	42.9
<b>LEP Status</b>												
LEP (Current & Former)	16	68.7	*	*	0		*	*	*	*	0	
Current LEP	14	71.4	*	*	0		*	*	0		0	
Former LEP	*	*	*	*	0		0		*	*	0	
Non-LEP	1285	59.3	1125	62.5	103	67	221	47.5	704	55.8	105	42.9
<b>Gender</b>												
Female	397	60.2	374	62.3	35	65.7	68	38.2	233	54.5	38	36.8
Male	902	59.1	748	63.1	67	67.2	154	51.9	471	56.5	67	46.3
<b>Ethnicity</b>												
White	629	64.1	523	65.6	43	76.7	109	55	358	58.4	41	46.3
Black	286	56.6	270	62.2	28	78.6	62	46.8	157	57.3	27	40.7
Asian	75	56	83	55.4	*	*	13	38.5	45	55.6	*	*
Pacific Islander	*	*	*	*	0		*	*	*	*	0	
Hispanic	295	53.2	235	57.9	24	41.7	35	28.6	139	49.6	32	37.5
Amer. Indian/AK Native	*	*	*	*	0		0		0		0	
Other	*	*	12	66.7	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	
<b>Economic Status</b>												
Disadvantaged	507	55.2	435	61.1	46	63	112	42	247	55.1	42	42.9
Non-Disadvantaged	792	62.1	692	63.4	57	70.2	110	53.6	457	56.2	63	42.9
<b>Migrant Status</b>												
Migrant	*	*	0		0		0		0		0	
Non-Migrant	1298	59.4	1127	62.6	103	67	222	47.7	704	55.8	105	42.9

\*Values are suppressed for student counts of 10 or less

## **APPENDIX J: 2012 Frequency Tables of Proficiency Levels by Disability Category**

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 3**

	LAL				Math				SCIENCE			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	2	4	--	6	--	5	1	6	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	123	291	175	589	104	281	201	586	--	--	--	0
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	30	67	53	150	22	58	66	146	--	--	--	0
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	27	60	20	107	32	38	33	103	--	--	--	0
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	2	3	1	6	3	--	2	5	--	--	--	0
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	68	198	116	382	50	180	149	379	--	--	--	0
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	1	1	--	2	1	--	--	1	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	28	30	15	73	18	29	23	70	--	--	--	0
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	16	17	8	41	17	7	10	34	--	--	--	0
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	2	5	2	9	1	5	2	8	--	--	--	0
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	1	2	--	3	1	--	2	3	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	2	5	12	19	--	3	16	19	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	302	683	402	1387	249	606	505	1360	0	0	0	0

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 4**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	2	2	2	6	3	1	1	5	--	3	--	3
<b>Autistic</b>	27	330	191	548	100	174	268	542	4	328	204	536
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	13	89	63	165	30	48	85	163	--	83	73	156
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	17	51	29	97	19	32	36	87	--	50	36	86
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	3	1	4	--	1	1	2	--	1	1	2
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	25	270	134	429	65	117	243	425	1	236	172	409
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	1	--	1	2	1	1	--	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	8	34	19	61	13	15	30	58	1	32	21	54
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	20	27	13	60	16	21	15	52	1	24	13	38
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	4	5	4	13	2	1	10	13	--	8	5	13
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	--	2	2	--	--	3	3	--	--	2	2
<b>Total</b>	117	811	459	1387	249	411	692	1352	7	765	527	1299

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 5**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	1	1	2	--	--	2	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	13	318	223	554	134	235	181	550	--	--	--	0
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	9	104	62	175	39	72	64	175	--	--	--	0
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	9	60	18	87	29	40	12	81	--	--	--	0
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	3	--	3	--	1	1	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	11	255	173	439	91	187	160	438	--	--	--	0
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	3	36	10	49	11	22	12	45	--	--	--	0
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	8	32	13	53	12	15	12	39	--	--	--	0
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	1	10	3	14	4	5	5	14	--	--	--	0
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	3	1	4	1	1	1	3	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	3	4	7	3	1	2	6	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	54	825	508	1387	324	579	452	1355	0	0	0	0

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 6**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	1	2	1	4	2	2	--	4	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	51	260	145	456	77	194	179	450	--	--	--	0
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	18	90	55	163	33	67	60	160	--	--	--	0
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	16	32	18	66	23	28	14	65	--	--	--	0
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	4	--	4	1	2	1	4	--	--	--	0
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	43	291	152	486	76	236	170	482	--	--	--	0
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	1	--	1	2	--	2	--	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	11	29	13	53	18	17	14	49	--	--	--	0
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	21	33	17	71	28	22	13	63	--	--	--	0
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	--	--	2	2	--	1	1	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	1	4	5	10	2	2	5	9	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	163	745	409	1317	260	573	457	1290	0	0	0	0

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 7**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	37	216	170	423	72	195	155	422	--	--	--	0
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	22	75	66	163	38	79	46	163	--	--	--	0
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	9	28	21	58	20	27	11	58	--	--	--	0
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	2	5	1	8	6	2	--	8	--	--	--	0
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	44	224	204	472	70	222	181	473	--	--	--	0
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	2	2	2	2	--	4	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	13	29	19	61	15	28	17	60	--	--	--	0
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	16	22	18	56	13	26	13	52	--	--	--	0
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	--	2	2	4	1	2	--	3	--	--	--	0
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	1	--	1	2	1	--	1	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	3	3	6	1	4	1	6	--	--	--	0
<b>Total</b>	144	604	507	1255	239	587	425	1251	0	0	0	0

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 8**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	5	1	6	--	4	1	5	2	3	--	5
<b>Autistic</b>	24	190	124	338	42	182	111	335	46	161	122	329
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	13	94	74	181	34	76	72	182	29	72	68	169
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	7	34	18	59	16	23	18	57	14	24	16	54
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	3	1	4	--	2	2	4	--	3	1	4
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	33	259	210	502	55	229	213	497	71	217	199	487
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	6	20	10	36	15	15	8	38	10	20	6	36
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	7	25	12	44	10	27	7	44	15	8	7	30
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	2	5	1	8	1	5	2	8	3	4	1	8
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	2	--	2	--	1	--	1	--	1	--	1
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	3	3	6	1	2	2	5	1	1	3	5
<b>Total</b>	92	640	454	1186	174	566	436	1176	191	514	423	1128

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 9**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	6	22	5	33
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	3	5	8
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	2	--	2
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	1	--	1
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	26	18	45
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	2	3	6
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	3	1	5
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	1	1
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	60	34	103

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 10**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	1	--	1
<b>Autistic</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	33	20	54
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	9	13	23
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	7	3	11
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	1	--	1
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	2	36	55	93
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	2	2
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	4	6	10
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	3	2	13	18
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	2	2	4
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	1	1
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	3	1	4
<b>Total</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	98	116	222

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 11**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	1	1	2	1	1	--	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	61	84	125	270	57	117	97	271	12	116	80	208
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	29	51	111	191	39	72	79	190	7	56	56	119
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	7	16	18	41	13	17	9	39	--	3	9	12
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	2	4	4	10	3	3	3	9	--	--	1	1
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	89	180	216	485	87	221	181	489	24	161	145	330
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	1	1	1	--	1	2	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	4	11	22	37	17	17	9	43	--	4	5	9
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	9	39	24	72	32	44	15	91	2	2	8	12
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	2	4	3	9	2	6	1	9	--	1	3	4
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	1	1	--	2	1	--	--	1	--	1	--	1
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	1	4	11	16	1	5	7	13	--	4	5	9
<b>Total</b>	205	395	536	1136	254	503	402	1159	45	348	312	705

**Proficiency Level Distribution by Disability Category – Grade 12**

	LAL				Math				SCI			
	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total	Advanced Proficient	Proficient	Partially Proficient	Total
<b>Auditorily Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Autistic</b>	2	5	15	22	1	11	11	23	2	5	17	24
<b>Cognitively Impaired</b>	3	4	12	19	1	7	11	19	--	7	8	15
<b>Communication Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	1	--	--	1
<b>Deaf-Blindness</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Emotionally Disturbed</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Multiply Disabled</b>	9	18	29	56	3	24	30	57	3	25	27	55
<b>Orthopedically Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	1	--	3	4	2	2	1	5	--	1	1	2
<b>Social Maladjustment</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	1	--	2	3	1	--	2	3	--	--	2	2
<b>Traumatic Brain Injury</b>	--	--	2	2	--	--	2	2	--	--	3	3
<b>Visually Impaired</b>	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0	--	--	--	0
<b>Blank or Multiple Grid</b>	--	--	2	2	--	--	2	2	--	1	2	3
<b>Total</b>	16	27	65	108	8	44	59	111	6	39	60	105

## **APPENDIX K: Convergent Validity Study**

New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

Convergent Validity Study

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Pearson

## **New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Convergent Validity Study**

### **Introduction**

New Jersey began implementation of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) during the 2001-2002 school year. This was in response to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997*, which required that states develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning no later than July 1, 2000. Additionally, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students. During the 2007-2008 school year, design changes were instituted based on the U.S. Department of Education peer review. The purpose of this report was to investigate how successfully the redesigned APA estimates a student's proficiency. This is part of an overall group of four research studies conducted to assess the validity of the APA. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* states, "Ultimately, the validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the available evidence relevant to the technical quality of a testing system. This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring, accurate score scaling, equating, and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees" (p. 17). This research report is one piece of evidence in assessing the overall validity of the APA. This was accomplished by comparing a student's proficiency level as determined by the APA with expected proficiency level as estimated by the student's teacher. This convergent validity study concluded that there is a potential disconnect

between APA teachers' classroom assessments of students and the APA's assessments of students. Potential remedies for this disconnect are addressed in the Limitations and Conclusions section.

## **Methods**

### **Sample**

All APA teachers in New Jersey were provided the opportunity to participate during the APA administration for the school year 2010-2011. A total of 20,412 different APA assessments were possible for the APA student population over all of the grades, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and the three subject areas—Language Arts Literacy (LAL, 8,528 possible), Mathematics (8,447 possible), and Science (3,437 possible). The total number of prediction responses that Pearson received was 14,260 (5,970 LAL, 5,901 Mathematics, and 2,389 Science). The overall percentage of responses from APA teachers was 69.9%, which did not vary much at the subject level. There was minor variability in the response rate at the grade-level, highlighted by a slightly lower response rate for 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade APA teachers (with a low of 66% for 8<sup>th</sup> grade APA teachers). Additionally, there was wide variability of the response rate for 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science, 45.3%, 10<sup>th</sup> grade Science, 88.8%, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade LAL and Mathematics (83.3% and 84.4%). This may have occurred probably due to the relatively low number of APA students in those areas when compared to APA students generally. Table 1 displays the actual number of responses and response rate by grade level and subject area.

**Table 1 Response Rate for Convergent Validity Study**

	LAL		Math		Science	
	n-count	Response Rate	n-count	Response Rate	n-count	Response Rate
Grade 3	1,252	72.3%	1,229	72.1%		
Grade 4	1,338	71.1%	1,309	71.2%	1,278	70.7%
Grade 5	1,250	71.3%	1,219	70.7%		
Grade 6	1,197	67.5%	1,185	67.3%		
Grade 7	1,178	66.2%	1,168	66.5%		
Grade 8	1,113	66.6%	1,110	66.1%	1,054	65.4%
Grade 9					95	45.3%
Grade 10					170	88.8%
Grade 11	1,122	73.9%	1,150	73.7%	711	71.3%
Grade 12	78	83.3%	77	84.4%	129	73.69%

There are substantially fewer students tested in 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Science and in 12<sup>th</sup> grade LAL and Mathematics with the APA. Therefore, there are a much smaller number of potential responses in those categories.

All of the teachers that participated were asked to identify the expected proficiency level for the relevant student, Advanced Proficient, Proficient, or Partially Proficient. This assessment was done based on the APA performance level descriptors for the student's grade level and the teacher's *classroom experience with the student* regarding the skills assessed by the APA.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected on the student demographic scan sheets that teachers returned with the APA portfolio submissions. The specific directions that were provided in the Scan Sheet Directions were:

For each content area, please indicate the expected proficiency level for this student based on the APA performance level descriptors for the student's grade level and your classroom experience with the student regarding the skills assessed by the four portfolio entries.

1 = Advanced Proficient

- 2 = Proficient
- 3 = Partially Proficient

### **Analyses**

The teacher respondents assigned a 1, 2, or 3 for expected proficiency for each relevant subject area for each APA examinee based on the above quoted directions. The APA examinees received a proficiency level based on the results of their performance on the APA of advanced proficient, proficient, and partially proficient. Examinees that received no proficiency level due to taking the General Assessment, the APA not being required, or the APA receiving a void code, were not included in this analysis. The data were then read into SAS 9.2 for analysis. A frequency analysis was done to create a 3 x 3 table of the two variables—expected proficiency versus APA proficiency. Percentages were calculated using Excel.

### **Results**

The results were collated into five distinct areas—exact agreement, adjacent high, adjacent low, non-adjacent high, and non-adjacent low. Exact agreement consists of the teacher’s expectation of the student’s proficiency level being identical to the student’s proficiency level on the APA. Adjacent high consists of the student’s proficiency level on the APA being one level higher than the teacher’s expectation of the student’s proficiency level. For instance, the student receiving an advanced proficient score on the APA and the teacher expecting the student to be proficient would be classified as adjacent high. Adjacent low consists of the student’s proficiency level on the APA being one level lower than the teacher’s expectation of the student’s proficiency level. For instance, the student receiving a partially proficient score on the APA and the teacher expecting the student to be proficient would be considered adjacent low. Non-adjacent

high occurs only when the student’s proficiency level on the APA is advanced proficient and the teacher expects the student to be partially proficient. Non-adjacent low occurs only when the student’s proficiency level on the APA is partially proficient and the teacher expects the student to be advanced proficient.

**Exact Agreement**

The percentage of exact agreement between the expected proficiency (what the teacher thought the student’s classroom performance merited) and the actual proficiency (what the student received) varied between 48% and 58% for all subject areas in all grades with the following exceptions—4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics, 6<sup>th</sup> grade LAL, 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science, and 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade LAL. Due to the much smaller sample size for 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science and 12<sup>th</sup> grade LAL, the variability associated with those categories is not surprising. Looking only at subject matter, the average percent of exact agreement was slightly higher for LAL and Science than for Mathematics, 53.34% and 52.66% versus 47.92%, however this was primarily due to the 38.84% for 4<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics. See Table 2 for percentages.

**Table 2 Percentages of Exact Agreement**

	LAL	Math	Science
Overall	53.34	47.92	52.66
Grade 3	51.49	50.68	
Grade 4	52.89	38.84	52.76
Grade 5	57.24	44.31	
Grade 6	61.01	51.94	
Grade 7	56.54	51.35	
Grade 8	54.12	48.63	52.40
Grade 9			34.89
Grade 10			56.29
Grade 11	41.01	50.47	52.47
Grade 12	47.70	56.92	56.85

## Adjacent High

Adjacent high consists of the student's proficiency level on the APA being one level higher than the teacher's expectation of the student's proficiency level. The percentage of adjacent high between the expected proficiency and the actual proficiency varied between 8.5% and 18.5% for all subject areas in all grades with the following exceptions—3<sup>rd</sup> grade LAL, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics, 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade Science, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade LAL and Mathematics. Again, due to the much smaller sample size for 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade science, the variability associated with those categories is not surprising. Looking only at subject matter, the average percent of adjacent high was slightly higher for LAL and Mathematics than for Science, 15.12% and 17.11% vs. 10.93%, however this was primarily due to the 8.51% for 4<sup>th</sup> grade Science. See Table 3 for percentages.

**Table 3 Percentages of Adjacent High**

	LAL	Math	Science
Overall	15.12	17.11	10.93
Grade 3	23.43	18.17	
Grade 4	16.30	19.53	8.51
Grade 5	8.87	22.97	
Grade 6	14.61	18.20	
Grade 7	11.29	12.23	
Grade 8	10.25	8.31	14.51
Grade 9			2.33
Grade 10			8.60
Grade 11	20.27	18.98	13.02
Grade 12	10.77	10.77	4.21

## Adjacent Low

Adjacent low consists of the student's proficiency level on the APA being one level lower than the teacher's expectation of the student's proficiency level. The percentage of adjacent low between the expected proficiency and the actual proficiency

varied between 25.5% and 35.5% for all subject areas in all grades with the following exceptions—3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade LAL, 6<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science. Again, due to the much smaller sample size for 9<sup>th</sup> grade science, the variability associated with those categories is not surprising. Looking only at subject matter, the average percent of adjacent low appeared similar across subject areas. See Table 4 for percentages.

**Table 4 Percentages of Adjacent Low**

	LAL	Math	Science
Overall	26.61	29.37	30.72
Grade 3	19.78	25.96	
Grade 4	25.65	35.30	33.96
Grade 5	29.52	26.45	
Grade 6	21.66	24.35	
Grade 7	27.82	31.40	
Grade 8	31.58	34.74	26.70
Grade 9			48.84
Grade 10			32.45
Grade 11	30.76	27.48	28.01
Grade 12	33.85	30.77	32.63

**Non-Adjacent High**

Non-adjacent high occurs only when the student’s proficiency level on the APA is advanced proficient and the teacher expects the student to be partially proficient. The percentage of non-adjacent high between the expected proficiency and the actual proficiency varied between 0% and 1% for all subject areas in all grades with the following exceptions—3<sup>rd</sup> grade LAL, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics, and 11<sup>th</sup> grade LAL. Looking only at subject matter, the average percent of non-adjacent high appeared similar across subject areas. See Table 5 for percentages.

**Table 5 Percentages of Non-Adjacent High**

	LAL	Math	Science
Overall	0.47	0.83	0.25
Grade 3	1.22	0.90	
Grade 4	0.21	1.29	0.00
Grade 5	0.00	1.74	
Grade 6	0.37	0.75	
Grade 7	0.13	0.26	
Grade 8	0.00	0.14	0.29
Grade 9			0.00
Grade 10			0.00
Grade 11	1.33	0.59	0.79
Grade 12	0.00	0.00	0.00

**Non-Adjacent Low**

Non-adjacent low occurs only when the student's proficiency level on the APA is partially proficient and the teacher expects the student to be advanced proficient. The percentage of non-adjacent low between the expected proficiency and the actual proficiency varied between 4% and 5% in all subject areas for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade with the following exceptions—4<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics and 6<sup>th</sup> grade LAL. The percentage of non-adjacent low between the expected proficiency and the actual proficiency varied between 1% and 8% in all subject areas for 8<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade with the following exceptions—8<sup>th</sup> grade Mathematics and 9<sup>th</sup> grade Science. Grades 8 through 12 have a much higher variability than 3<sup>rd</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade for the non-adjacent low statistic. Looking only at subject matter, the average percent of non-adjacent low appeared similar across subject areas. See Table 6 for percentages.

**Table 6 Percentages of Non-Adjacent Low**

	LAL	Math	Science
Overall	4.44	4.76	5.44
Grade 3	4.09	4.29	
Grade 4	4.94	5.04	4.76
Grade 5	4.38	4.52	
Grade 6	2.35	4.77	
Grade 7	4.23	4.76	
Grade 8	4.05	8.17	6.10
Grade 9			13.95
Grade 10			2.65
Grade 11	6.63	2.48	5.72
Grade 12	7.69	1.54	6.32

### **Discussion**

In looking at the classification areas, three issues emerge. First, the level of exact agreement hovers around 50%. There are several possible reasons for this. The first possible reason is that teachers do not fully understand APA performance level descriptors. It is possible that the teachers did not accurately predict their students' actual performance due to a less than complete understanding of what the APA is measuring. If a teacher believes a student is proficient based on off-grade level skills, that belief will not be reflected in an APA assessment tied to the student's grade level. Another possible reason is that the materials submitted did not adhere to the APA test design and universal scoring rules. It could also be that teachers may not be as comfortable with standards-based teaching and assessments as they are with behavioral-based teaching and assessments. The introduction of the APA brought a much sharper focus on standards-based teaching and assessments that previously had not existed. A fourth possible reason is that the portfolios submitted for the APA are not fully capturing student performance. This could occur for a few reasons. First, teachers only test four skills related to four

content standards. There is a much larger area of the content domain that is not being tested. When teachers are making these predictions, they are presumably doing so based on the entire content domain and not just on the four CPI links tested. It is possible that the APA assessment is not adequately measuring the examinee's ability with regard to CPI links. Second, the procedure for constructing the Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs)<sup>1</sup> was difficult because students in the same grade can be tested on entirely different skills. Therefore, the PLDs are broader and more abstract than desirable due to the nature of the APA with certain portfolios not matching up very well to the PLD structure. This could add to the less than optimal agreement between APA teacher predictions and examinees actual APA performance.

Second, when off in their expectations, APA teachers are usually overestimating their students proficiency level, not underestimating it. On average, adjacent low is twice as large as adjacent high. This could mean one of two things. First, it could be that teachers' lack of understanding concerning the APA performance level descriptors is based on viewing them as less challenging than they are, hence the discrepancy in adjacent agreements. Second, based on the previously stated limitations, it could be that the APA assessment is possibly classifying students in a lower proficiency category.

Lastly, there only appears to be a grade difference for non-adjacent low, which is a much more variable number for grades 8 through 11 than for grades 3 through 7. There is no, or virtually no, non-adjacent high. The only way to get non-adjacent low is for the APA teacher to expect advanced proficient while the APA determines partially proficient. However, there is consistent 4% to 5% non-adjacent low for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 7<sup>th</sup> grade. From

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<sup>1</sup> Statements of what a student should know and be able to do at each performance level (Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced Proficient) give the content standards assessed.

8<sup>th</sup> grade to 11<sup>th</sup> grade this value begins to fluctuate much more, going from 2.48% to 8.17% for 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade for all three subject areas (9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> were not included in this statement due to the low number of APA students in those grades). Four of the six percentages of non-adjacent low are above 5% and only one is below 4%. Therefore, it appears that something at 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade is negatively impacting the proficiency assessment. As was previously stated, examinees that had voided APA results were not part of this study, so something probably occurred to negatively impact these examinees' scores—possibly due to the greater difficulty in accurately developing appropriate APA tasks that satisfy the necessary CPI links. This could be occurring due to possibly incorrect APA procedures executed by the teacher. Regardless, there appears to be a change from grades 3-7 to grades 8-11 regarding non-adjacent low.

### **Limitations and Conclusions**

This convergent validity study was designed to investigate the level of agreement between APA teachers' classroom experience with their students and APA proficiency classification. However, several limitations should be taken into account when interpreting results. First, the response rate was between 66% and 74% for most subject areas and grades (except for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade Science and 12<sup>th</sup> grade LAL and Mathematics, all of which had very small sample sizes). Although a substantial majority of APA tests had a response, it is unknown whether there was a systematic reason for non-responses (lack of providing an expected proficiency level), i.e., race, SES, type of disability of examinee, geographical, etc. Second, it is possible that the student's teacher is not the one who filled out the student demographic scan sheet, therefore it is possible that this is not the APA teacher's assessment of the examinee. Lastly, although the

directions specify that classroom experience with the student is supposed to guide the teacher's response for expected proficiency, it is possible that the examinee's performance on the APA could affect the respondent's answer concerning expected proficiency. All of these issues should be considered when interpreting the data.

Despite these limitations, the convergent validity study provided interesting data and shed light on potential disconnects between APA teachers' classroom assessments of students and the APA's assessments of students. First, the level of exact agreement hovers around 50%. There are two possibilities for the relatively low exact agreement. One possibility is that teachers' predictions are not in line with the accurate performance assessment by the APA. This could occur due to a misunderstanding of the APA by the teachers, the complexity of the CPI links, or a teacher disconnect with standards-based vs. behavioral-based teaching and assessment. A second possibility is that the portfolios submitted for the APA are not fully capturing student performance, and therefore the APA is not more accurately assessing the student when compared to teacher predictions. This could occur due to the inability of four CPI links to fully encompass the entire content domain or to the intentionally broad PLDs created for the proficiency levels. Second, when the expectations of APA teachers do not exactly agree with the students' performance on the APA, the APA teachers are usually overestimating their students' proficiency level, not underestimating it. This appears to be a systemic issue, either with APA teachers' expectations or the APA. Lastly, there only appears to be a grade difference for non-adjacent low, which is a much more variable number for grades 8 through 11 than grades 3 through 7. This could be occurring due to the greater difficulty in accurately developing appropriate APA tasks that satisfy the necessary CPI links. This

is supported by the fact that there is a general increase in non-adjacent low for grades 8 through 11.

Possible next steps to address the issues raised by this report would consist of the following: 1) Reduce the number of CPI links available to teachers so that the potential complexity is reduced and teachers are more able to construct a scorable portfolio; 2) Create more specific PLDs for each proficiency level that will inform teachers what their students will need to demonstrate for categorization; 3) Create an item bank or other way of standardizing the APA so that teachers use less discretion in assembling the APA; 4) Increase training opportunities for teachers so that they are better prepared for building portfolios and better able to implement standards-based skills instruction as opposed to functional life skills or behavioral skills instruction.

## **APPENDIX L: Consequential Validity Survey**

A Consequential Validity Survey Related to the  
New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Pearson

## I. Introduction

New Jersey began implementation of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) during the 2001-2002 school year. This was in response to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997*, which required that states develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning no later than July 1, 2000. Additionally, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students. During the 2007-2008 school year, design changes were instituted based on the U.S. Department of Education peer review. The impact of the implementation of the APA and the subsequent design changes is the purpose of this report. This is a part of an overall group of four research studies conducted to assess the validity of the APA. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* states, “Ultimately, the validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the available evidence relevant to the technical quality of a testing system. This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring, accurate score scaling, equating, and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees” (p. 17). This research report is one piece of evidence in assessing the overall validity of the APA. . To address that issue, Pearson developed and administered a survey to parents, teachers, and administrators and conducted focus groups with a small subset of those administrators. The parent and teacher survey was administered online. For the administrators, both the survey and the focus groups occurred during mandatory administrator training sessions to maximize the number of potential participants

(participation was voluntary). The purpose of both the surveys and the focus groups was to more fully understand the impact the APA has had on various areas, including teachers, students, parents, instruction, and curriculum. The specific research questions addressed were:

1. Has the APA accomplished one of its intended consequences of more closely integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
2. What are some of the other consequences of the implementation of the APA?
3. What are some modifications that could be made to the APA to improve the APA process?

This report contains all three surveys and the focus group. The research report concludes that the teachers and parents have fairly negative views of the APA, while the responding administrators have more balanced views of the APA. Possible improvements to the APA could include more training for teachers and a more standardized APA process, possibly involving an item bank or a more predetermined testing situation.

## **II. Parent Survey**

### **Methods**

#### **Survey**

An online survey, which had 299 responses, was administered to New Jersey parents/guardians with New Jersey APA students between October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The survey took parents/guardians approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and included two sections that are outlined below. The survey was administered online using Survey Monkey. The online data was tallied using Survey Monkey and percentages were calculated using Excel.

#### **Demographics/Background**

Two questions were provided to gather data on the characteristics of parents/guardians. These consisted of the county where the APA child attends school and grade level information. No personal identifying information was collected.

#### **Statements About the APA<sup>2</sup>**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, parents/guardians were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify their agreement with certain statements. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Strongly Disagree, b) Disagree, c) Neutral, d) Agree, and e) Strongly Agree.

Pearson did not compensate any of the parents/guardians who took part in the survey.

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<sup>2</sup> See Table 2.3 for a list of the statements.

## **Analyses**

Prior to analysis, data were cleaned. There were a total of 299 responses to the survey but 52 of the online surveys had only demographic responses. Analyses were based on the remaining 247 responses.

### **Demographics**

The frequencies of responses for the various demographic and background questions were determined. These data are displayed in Table 2.1 in terms of percentages of the 247 respondents.

### **Survey Responses**

The frequencies of responses for the various levels associated with each statement were determined. These data are displayed in Table 2.2 in terms of percentages of the 247 respondents.

## **Results**

### **Demographics**

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 below provide demographic distributions of responses with regards to county and grade level. No parents/guardians left either question blank. Table 2.1 provides a comparison of parents/guardians that responded to the survey with APA students. The parent/guardian distribution is roughly similar to the APA student distribution with a few exceptions. The following counties were substantially underrepresented—Atlantic, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Passaic, Salem, and Union. The following counties were substantially overrepresented—Hunterdon, Monmouth, Morris, and Somerset. The remaining 10 counties had comparable representation from

parents/guardians as from APA students. Due to the voluntary nature of this survey, it would be difficult to achieve more similar distribution patterns.

Table 2.2 contains the non-compared demographic distribution information for the parents/guardians. The breakdown is roughly comparable to the total number of APA portfolios for the APA student population. However because kindergarten to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade information is not available due to no APA testing, a comparison similar to table 2.1 is unavailable.

**Table 2.1. Demographic Distribution Comparison**

Parents		APA Students	
Demographic	Percent*	Demographic	Percent*
County		County (Private Schools not Included)	
Atlantic	1.2	Atlantic	2.6
Bergen	10.5	Bergen	8.2
Burlington	6.9	Burlington	5.6
Camden	2.4	Camden	3.2
Cape May	4.5	Cape May	3.8
Cumberland	0.4	Cumberland	1.3
Essex	4.9	Essex	8.6
Gloucester	3.2	Gloucester	4.4
Hudson	0.0	Hudson	5.5
Hunterdon	2.8	Hunterdon	1.3
Mercer	3.6	Mercer	7.9
Middlesex	12.1	Middlesex	9.7
Monmouth	17.0	Monmouth	6.9
Morris	7.3	Morris	3.9
Ocean	6.9	Ocean	8.8
Passaic	2.8	Passaic	5.7
Salem	0.0	Salem	1
Somerset	9.3	Somerset	2.6
Sussex	0.8	Sussex	1.3
Union	2.0	Union	6.6
Warren	1.2	Warren	1.1
No Response	0.0		

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

**Table 2.2. Parent Demographic Distribution**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
K-2	2.4
3-5	39.3
6-8	37.7
High School	20.6
No Response	0.0

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Statements About the APA**

Table 2.3 provides the percentage responses of parents/guardians to 16 different statements about the APA. The first two statements show that the survey respondents generally are familiar with the APA testing process for their child and with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJ CCCS), both of which received a majority of agree and strongly agree responses and only approximately 20% disagree and strongly disagree responses. The next two statements—APA effect on 1) the child’s unique testing needs being met and 2) the child’s involvement in the general education curriculum—elicited a broader range of responses, although the most popular were strongly disagree, neutral, and agree, each receiving between 20 and 32%. There is a somewhat similar, although slightly more negative, split on the next two statements—APA is a good measure of my child’s educational 1) strengths and 2) challenges. However, there is an approximately 30% agreement/strong agreement with those statements, which seems to indicate that part of the population is satisfied and pleased with the NJ APA.

The next group of statements concerns the effect of the child’s participation in the APA. There is a split on the statement dealing with the parent/guardian having concerns about their child’s participation in the APA program, with 45% agreeing or strongly agreeing and about 32% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This supports the previous

statements dealing with the APA as a good measure. The next two statements have over 50% of respondents disagreeing to some degree (strongly disagreeing 2 to 1 compared to disagreeing) with the statements 1) participation in the APA has improved the quality of his/her IEP and 2) participation in the APA will increase his/her success post school. Less than 20% of the respondents agreed to some level with those statements (agreeing 2 to 1 compared to strongly agreeing).

The remaining statements all have more than 45% of respondents disagreeing (with the majority of those strongly disagreeing), between 20 and 32% neutral, and varying degrees of agreement (with the majority of those agreeing and very few strongly agreeing). These statements concern the following topics: 1) the APA score is an accurate reflection of my child’s ability, 2) my child has been introduced to more academic concepts and skills of language arts literacy, mathematics, or science (each subject area is a separate statement), 3) the use of the APA encourages teachers to provide my child with a meaningful education, 4) I am more involved in my child’s academic career due to his/her involvement in the APA program, and 5) the APA ensures my child is given the opportunity for interaction with general education students. There are a greater number of respondents disagreeing with every statement compared with agreeing. The only statement that has 30% of respondents agreeing with it is the use of the APA encourages teachers to provide my child with a meaningful education.

**Table 2.3. Parent Survey Percentage\* Responses**

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. I am familiar with the APA testing process for my child.	11.7	12.6	13.0	42.9	19.4	0.4
B. I am familiar with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.	8.5	13.0	20.6	37.2	19.8	0.8

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
C. The APA allows my child's unique needs in a testing environment to be met.	23.1	12.6	21.1	31.6	10.5	1.2
D. The APA ensures my child is involved in the general education curriculum.	25.9	14.2	24.7	26.3	6.9	2.0
E. The APA is a good measure of my child's educational strengths.	35.6	15.4	18.2	20.2	8.9	1.6
F. The APA is a good measure of my child's educational challenges.	33.2	15.8	18.6	22.7	8.5	1.2
G. I have concerns about my child's participation in the APA program.	17.8	13.8	21.1	18.6	27.5	1.2
H. My child's participation in the APA has improved the quality of his/her IEP.	34.8	18.2	28.3	11.3	5.7	1.6
I. My child's participation in the APA will increase his/her success post school.	36.8	15.0	28.7	11.7	6.1	1.6
J. My child's APA score is an accurate reflection of my child's ability.	39.3	12.1	25.9	15.8	6.1	0.8
K. My child has been introduced to more academic concepts and skills of language arts literacy due to the APA.	34.8	14.6	27.5	18.2	4.5	0.4
L. My child has been introduced to more academic concepts and skills of mathematics due to the APA.	34.4	14.2	28.3	18.2	4.5	0.4
M. My child has been introduced to more academic concepts and skills of science due to the APA.	33.6	13.4	31.2	16.6	4.9	0.4
N. The use of the APA encourages teachers to provide my child with a meaningful education.	32.0	14.2	19.8	21.5	11.3	1.2
O. I am more involved in my child's academic career due to his/her involvement in the APA program.	37.7	18.6	25.9	11.3	4.9	1.6
P. The APA ensures my child is given the opportunity for interaction with general education students.	38.9	14.6	24.3	14.6	4.9	2.8

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Discussion**

In considering the survey results, there appears to be three groups of parents. The first consists of roughly 20-30% of respondents who are neutral concerning the APA. They do not feel that the APA has helped or hindered their child. The second consists of roughly

20-30% of respondents who feel that the APA has been helpful for their child's development and progress, depending on the degree of that helpfulness. Fewer respondents agree that their child's IEP has improved or their child's success post-school has improved. More respondents agree that their child's teacher has been encouraged to provide a meaningful education or that the APA is a good measure of their child's educational strengths and challenges. The third group consists of roughly 45-60% of respondents who feel that the APA has not been helpful for their child's development and progress, depending on the degree of that helpfulness. This indicates that overall parents are not pleased with the NJ APA, however there are some parents that are either neutral or pleased with it.

### **III. Teacher Survey**

#### **Methods**

An online survey, which had 1054 responses, was administered to New Jersey APA teachers between October 5<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The survey took teachers approximately 15-30 minutes to complete and included two sections that are outlined below. The survey was administered online using Survey Monkey. The online data was tallied with Survey Monkey and analyzed using Excel.

#### **Demographics/Background**

A series of questions were used to gather data on the characteristics of the teachers and their schools. Information was collected on the following topics:

- School Type—Public or Private
- School Size
- District Factor Groups (DFG)
- Number of Years Teaching
- Number of Years Teaching Special Education
- County

No personal identifying information was collected.

#### **Levels of Impact of the APA<sup>3</sup>**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, NJ APA teachers were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify their agreement with certain statements. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Strongly Disagree, b) Disagree, c) Neutral, d) Agree, and e) Strongly Agree.

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<sup>3</sup> See Table 3.3 for a list of the statements.

### **Influence of the APA on Various Topics<sup>4</sup>**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, NJ APA teachers were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify their agreement with certain statements. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Significant Decrease, b) Decrease, c) No Change, d) Increase, and e) Significant Increase.

### **Influence of Various Aspects of the APA on Daily Instruction<sup>5</sup>**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, NJ APA teachers were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify their agreement with certain statements. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Not at All, b) Some, c) Greatly.

### **Statements About the APA<sup>6</sup>**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, NJ APA teachers were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify their agreement with certain statements. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Strongly Disagree, b) Disagree, c) Neutral, d) Agree, and e) Strongly Agree.

### **Percentages of Time Spent on Functional Skills and Content Standards**

Teachers were presented with three potential situations and asked to assign percentages to the amount of time spent on functional skills and content standards. The three situations were: a) Before the implementation of the APA, b) After the implementation of the APA, and c) In your opinion, what percentages of time should be spent.

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<sup>4</sup> See Table 3.4 for a list of the statements.

<sup>5</sup> See Table 3.5 for a list of the statements.

<sup>6</sup> See Table 3.6 for a list of the statements.

Pearson did not compensate any of the parents/guardians who took part in the survey.

## **Analyses**

Prior to analysis, data were cleaned. There were a total of 1054 responses to the survey but 121 of the online surveys had only demographic responses or responses that showed a pattern of disinterest. Analyses were based on the remaining 933 responses.

## **Results**

### **Demographics**

Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below provide demographic distributions of responses with regards to school type, school size, DFG, county, number of years teaching, and number of years teaching special education. Only the DFG information was left blank by any teachers. Table 3.1 provides a comparison of teachers that responded to the survey with APA students in three categories—school type, DFG, and county. The school type, public or private, is comparable to the actual distribution of students. The DFG breakdown is fairly similar, particularly when the no response/other category is included. Many teachers do not know the DFG designation for their school. For the county breakdown, the teacher distribution is roughly similar to the APA student distribution with a few exceptions. The following counties were substantially underrepresented—Cape May, Hudson, and Mercer. The following counties were substantially overrepresented—Camden, Somerset, and Sussex. The remaining 15 counties had comparable representation from teachers as from APA students.

**Table 3.1. Demographic Distributions Comparison**

Responding APA Teachers		APA Students	
Demographic	Percent*	Demographic	Percent*
<b>DFG</b>		<b>DFG</b>	
A	4.4	A	11.7
B	3.3	B	8.4
CD	3.4	CD	5.1
DE	4.3	DE	9.5
FG	4.4	FG	5.3
GH	4.9	GH	7.6
I	5.5	I	7.6
J	1.0	J	1.2
No Response/ Other	56.6	Other	43.6
<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percent*</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
Public	66.1	Public	76.8
Private	33.9	Private	23.2
No Response	0.0	No Response	
<b>County</b>	<b>Percent*</b>	<b>County (Private Schools not Included)</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
Atlantic	4.5	Atlantic	2.6
Bergen	8.1	Bergen	8.2
Burlington	4.5	Burlington	5.6
Camden	8.3	Camden	3.2
Cape May	1.9	Cape May	3.8
Cumberland	0.8	Cumberland	1.3
Essex	6.3	Essex	8.6
Gloucester	4.1	Gloucester	4.4
Hudson	2.6	Hudson	5.5
Hunterdon	2.4	Hunterdon	1.3
Mercer	3.4	Mercer	7.9
Middlesex	9.8	Middlesex	9.7
Monmouth	8.9	Monmouth	6.9
Morris	4.8	Morris	3.9
Ocean	8.8	Ocean	8.8
Passaic	4.7	Passaic	5.7
Salem	0.9	Salem	1
Somerset	5.6	Somerset	2.6
Sussex	2.6	Sussex	1.3
Union	5.1	Union	6.6
Warren	2.0	Warren	1.1
No Response	0.0		

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Table 3.2 contains the non-compared demographic distribution information for the teachers. Nearly three-fourths of the respondents were connected to schools with less than 1,000 students. Approximately 59% of respondents had 10 or more years of teaching experience, while around 55% of respondents had 10 or more years of special education teaching experience.

**Table 3.2 Teacher Demographic Distribution**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
<b>School Size</b>	
< 1,000	72.2
1,000 - 5,000	23.8
5,001 - 10,000	2.0
> 10,000	1.9
No Response	0.0
<b>Years Teaching</b>	
< 5	16.2
5 - 9	25.4
10 - 14	21.8
15 -19	11.5
20 +	25.2
No Response	0.0
<b>Years Teaching Special Ed.</b>	
< 5	18.8
5 - 9	26.7
10 - 14	21.1
15 -19	10.9
20 +	22.5
No Response	0.0

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Levels of Impact of the APA**

Tables 3.3 to 3.6 provide the percentage responses of teachers to 50 different statements about the APA nested in four different categories (I. through IV.). The first category, I. shown in Table 3.3, deals with the level of impact that the APA has had on various things. The percentage responses to the statements can be grouped into three

different response patterns. The first pattern, generally neutral, is for the impact that the APA has had on the development of students' IEPs and opportunities for professional development. Both of these had “none” as the dominant response (40-52%), with opportunities for professional development having “positive” at 23.7%. The second pattern, generally neutral to negative, is for the impact that the APA has had on student performance on academic content in the classroom, student motivation, range of skills addressed in the classroom, and academic emphasis in the classroom. All four had “none” as the dominant response (30-42%), but the combined “very negative” and “negative” accounted for 44-48% of the responses. The third pattern, generally negative, is for the impact that the APA has had on daily instruction and teacher motivation. Both had “very negative” and “negative” accounting for 53-57% of the responses.

**Table 3.3. Teacher Survey Percentage\* Responses**

<b>I. The impact the APA has had on the following</b>	<b>Very Negative</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Very Positive</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. Development of your students' IEPs	16.7	15.6	52.0	13.1	1.7	0.9
B. Your daily instruction	29.2	32.8	19.6	15.6	2.5	0.3
C. Student performance on academic content in the classroom	21.0	23.3	39.8	14.1	1.1	0.8
D. Student motivation	27.5	20.2	41.4	9.3	1.4	0.2
E. Teacher motivation	30.3	27.0	25.4	13.8	2.5	1.0
F. Range of skills addressed in the classroom	23.0	23.8	30.2	20.0	1.6	1.3
G. Opportunities for professional development	18.3	13.6	40.7	23.7	2.6	1.1
H. Academic emphasis in the classroom	23.2	21.0	33.8	18.4	2.4	1.3

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Influence of the APA on Various Topics**

The second category, II. shown in Table 3.4, deals with the degree that the APA has influenced various things. The percentage responses to the statements can be grouped

into four different response patterns. The first pattern, generally “no change,” is for the influence that the APA has had on the number of student IEP goals related to learning academic content, student interaction with general education students, teacher interaction with general education teachers, teacher understanding of their students’ academic strengths and challenges, and the use of data to support classroom placement decisions. All five of these had “no change” as the dominant response (58-68%), with no other option receiving more than 20% of the responses. The second pattern, generally “no change” to “increase,” is for the influence that the APA has had on time spent on instruction focused on grade-level linked academic content in Language Arts Literacy, Mathematics, and Science and the sharing of instructional responsibilities with other educators or school personnel. All four had “no change” and “increase” combining for about 68% of the responses. The Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics were roughly equivalent percentages for “no change” and “increase,” while Science and sharing instructional responsibilities had a roughly 40 to 25% ratio for “no change” and “increase” respectively. The third pattern, generally “increase” to “significant increase,” is for the influence that the APA has had on the amount of time outside of the classroom spent preparing for instruction and assessment. Both of these had “significant increase” as the most popular response (45-57%) and “increase as the second most popular (20-22%). The fourth pattern, generally “no change” to “significant decrease,” is for the influence that the APA has had on the time spent on instruction focused on functional skills. The largest percentage, 29%, was for “no change,” but “significant decrease” had 28.9% and “decrease” had 19.7%, which totals to approximately 47% of responses claiming a decrease of time spent on functional skills instruction.

**Table 3.4. Teacher Survey Percentage\* Responses**

<b>II. The degree to which the APA has influenced the following</b>	<b>Significant Decrease</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Significant Increase</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. Number of student IEP goals related to learning academic content	6.6	7.7	58.8	16.3	2.8	7.7
B. Time spent on instruction focused on grade-level linked academic content in Language Arts Literacy	6.3	8.1	34.6	34.1	8.1	8.7
C. Time spent on instruction focused on grade-level linked academic content in Mathematics	6.0	7.9	34.9	33.3	8.4	9.4
D. Time spent on instruction focused on grade-level linked academic content in Science	5.6	7.6	42.3	27.4	7.0	10.1
E. Time spent on instruction focused on functional skills	28.9	19.7	29.0	12.3	2.3	7.7
F. Your interaction time with general education teachers	9.0	9.1	62.0	8.3	1.3	10.4
G. Student interaction with general education students	9.2	7.2	68.1	5.4	0.5	9.6
H. Your understanding of your students' academic strengths and challenges	5.9	3.9	61.1	18.8	2.5	7.9
I. Amount of time outside of the classroom spent preparing for instruction	5.4	3.2	14.9	22.6	45.6	8.4
J. Amount of time outside of the classroom spent preparing for assessment	4.9	2.0	7.4	20.9	57.4	7.3
K. Sharing of instructional responsibilities with other educators or school personnel	6.2	5.4	44.6	25.8	9.8	8.3
L. Use of data to support classroom placement decisions	7.0	3.4	65.9	12.3	2.8	8.6

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Influence of Various Aspects of the APA on Daily Instruction**

The third category, III. shown in Table 3.5, deals with the degree that various situations influence a teacher’s daily instruction. The percentage responses to the statements can be grouped into three different response patterns. The first pattern, generally “some,” is for the influence that the CPI Links identified for assessment on the APA, the specific pieces of evidence developed for assessment on the APA, district expectations regarding student performance on the APA, and APA training and support materials have on daily instruction. All four of these had “some” as the dominant response (37-46%), with the two other options receiving similar percentages to each other (20-30%). The second pattern, generally “not at all” or “some,” is for the influence that the teacher expectations regarding student performance on the APA has on daily instruction. This had between 34 and 37% for both responses. The third pattern, generally “not at all,” is for the influence that parent expectations regarding student performance on the APA has on daily instruction. This had 56% for “not at all.”

**Table 3.5. Teacher Survey Percentage\* Responses**

<b>III. The degree to which each of the following influences your daily instruction</b>	<b>Not at All</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Greatly</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. The CPI Links identified for assessment on the APA	25.4	46.4	20.2	8.0
B. The specific pieces of evidence developed for assessment on the APA	23.3	42.0	26.4	8.4
C. Teacher expectations regarding student performance on the APA	34.5	37.0	20.3	8.3
D. Parent expectations regarding student performance on the APA	56.2	28.5	5.8	9.5
E. District expectations regarding student performance on the APA	27.7	37.0	26.0	9.3
F. APA training and support materials	29.5	42.2	19.6	8.7

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## Statements About the APA

The fourth category, IV. shown in Table 3.6, deals with the level of agreement with various statements concerning the APA. The percentage responses to the statements can be grouped into four different response patterns. The first pattern, generally “strongly agree,” is for the level of agreement with “assembling my students’ portfolios reduces the time I am able to spend on instruction,” “the APA creates unrealistic expectations for student performance,” “the APA reduces my ability to provide individualized student instruction,” “the APA limits the scope of instruction I can provide,” and “I experience personal pressure to produce portfolios that will score at the highest level.” All five of these had “strongly agree” as the most often chosen response (32-54%), with the combined percentages of “strongly agree” and “agree” ranging from 57-73%. The second pattern, generally “agree,” is for the level of agreement with “I have a sufficient understanding of the purpose of the APA.” This had 35% for “agree” and no other option had more than 17.5%. The third pattern, generally “neutral,” is for the level of agreement with statements concerning increasing or decreasing the content-standards based curriculum covered based on students’ performance on the APA and generally using the APA results to improve classroom instruction. All three of these had “neutral” ranging from 31-46%, with increasing or decreasing the content-standards based curriculum having “disagree” and “strongly disagree” the next most popular (32-37% combined), while using the APA results to improve instruction had “agree” as the next most popular (21%). The fourth pattern, generally “strongly disagree,” is for the level of agreement with 15 other statements that describe the APA in a positive way, either as an effective test or providing some benefit from its existence. The “strongly disagree” percentages

range from 26 to 58%. There are differing levels of disagreement over the 15 statements. On one side, there are responses to statements like “the district provides more opportunities to meet with my colleagues since the implementation of the APA” or “the APA has helped me align my classroom instruction with the CPI Links” having a general, but not extreme level of disagreement (41-44% choosing “neutral,” “agree,” or “strongly agree”). On the other side, there are responses to statements like “the APA is an effective way to assess students” and “the APA is a good measure of my students’ educational strengths” or “challenges” (“strongly disagree” or “disagree” chosen by 61%).

**Table 3.6. Teacher Survey Percentage\* Responses**

<b>IV. Level of agreement with the following statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. School placement decisions for students with sever cognitive disabilities have been positively impacted by the APA.	37.0	19.9	24.7	5.9	1.4	11.1
B. Because of my involvement with the APA, my expectations about what my students know and can do in academic areas have increased.	36.9	22.3	16.1	12.6	1.0	11.1
C. The students' instructional program based on the APA rubric, has led to increased student performance on the CPI Link skills.	34.4	20.6	22.3	11.1	0.4	11.1
D. I have a sufficient understanding of the purpose of the APA.	13.3	8.0	17.5	35.0	15.0	11.1
E. The IEPs have been improved since the APA began.	32.2	23.9	25.5	5.9	1.4	11.1
F. The APA has positively influenced the manner in which I instruct my students.	38.4	23.8	17.5	8.6	0.6	11.1
G. The APA has positively influenced my curriculum.	37.9	24.3	18.1	7.8	0.6	11.1
H. The APA has influenced my use of age-appropriate instructional materials.	29.6	19.0	23.7	15.5	1.1	11.1

<b>IV. Level of agreement with the following statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>No Response</b>
I. The APA has influenced my use of grade-level instructional materials.	30.5	19.9	22.1	15.2	1.1	11.1
J. The district provides more opportunities for me to meet with my colleagues since the implementation of the APA.	26.3	18.3	19.1	20.2	5.0	11.1
K. My school and/or district has partnered with other schools/districts as a result of the APA.	32.6	22.2	26.0	6.8	1.3	11.1
L. I experience personal pressure to produce portfolios that will score at the highest level.	7.5	7.8	15.1	26.3	32.2	11.1
M. Assembling my students' portfolios reduces the time I am able to spend on instruction.	3.6	3.5	8.5	18.8	54.4	11.1
N. I increase the content-standards based curriculum I cover based on my students' performance on the APA.	20.3	16.7	38.6	11.6	1.7	11.1
O. I decrease the content-standards based curriculum I cover based on my students' performance on the APA.	15.4	17.3	46.5	7.0	2.7	11.1
P. I have a sufficient understanding of using the APA results to improve instruction in the classroom.	17.8	13.5	30.8	20.8	6.0	11.1
Q. The APA is an effective way to assess students.	58.1	13.1	11.5	5.3	1.0	11.1
R. The APA creates unrealistic expectations for student performance.	6.5	5.9	10.2	16.1	50.2	11.1
S. The APA reduces my ability to provide individualized student instruction.	5.8	9.3	16.2	18.6	38.9	11.1
T. The APA limits the scope of instruction I can provide.	4.9	7.3	19.0	21.9	35.8	11.1
U. The APA has helped me align my classroom instruction with the CPI Links.	28.0	19.9	28.2	11.8	1.0	11.1
V. The APA has helped me better understand my students' potential.	39.3	22.0	15.6	10.5	1.4	11.1

IV. Level of agreement with the following statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No Response
W. The APA is a good measure of my students' educational strengths.	53.1	17.9	10.7	5.8	1.4	11.1
X. The APA is a good measure of my students' educational challenges.	46.7	14.5	13.5	11.0	3.1	11.1

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### Percentages of Time Spent on Functional Skills and Content Standards

Following the four categories of responses, there were responses from the APA teachers concerning the allocation of time between functional skills and content standards. There were three scenarios that were presented to the APA teachers. For each of the scenarios, the APA teachers were asked to state the percentage of time spent on functional skills and the percentage of time spent on content standards. The percentages often did not add up to 100%. Sometimes the percentages were above 100% indicating instruction that addressed both areas. Sometimes the percentages were below 100% indicating classroom time that addressed neither functional skills nor content standards. Of the 933 responses for the overall survey, there were 548 responses for these six responses (three scenarios with two time percentages) that could be averaged to come up with the following figures. Others could not be averaged due to respondents placing ranges, words, or not responding appropriately.

The first question concerns the percentage of time spent on functional skills before the implementation of the APA. The mean was about 63.5% with about a 26.8% standard deviation. The second question concerns the percentage of time spent on content standards before the implementation of the APA. The mean was about 50.0% with about a 28.0% standard deviation. The third question moves to the second scenario dealing with percentages after the implementation of the APA. For functional skill percentages the

mean was about 46.7% with about a 27.2% standard deviation. The fourth question concerns the percentage of time spent on content standards after the implementation of the APA. The mean was about 59.2% with about a 26.6% standard deviation. The last scenario concerns what percentages of time, in the opinion of the APA teacher respondent, should be spent on functional skills and content standards. The fifth question focusing on functional skills had a mean of about 70.4% with a standard deviation of 23.8%. The sixth question addressing content standards had a mean of about 41.8% with a standard deviation of 27.2%.

### **Discussion**

In considering the survey results for the four category blocks of questions, there appear to be four groups of teachers. The first consists of roughly 30% of respondents who are negative to very negative about the APA in general. They feel that the APA is not an effective test, does not improve the quality of their students' lives, and takes time away from other more worthwhile activities. The second group consists of about 35% of respondents who are negative to neutral regarding the APA generally. On some issues, like the APA's impact on professional development or their students' IEPs or whether the APA has helped in aligning classroom instruction with the CPI Links, this second group is closer to neutral. On other issues, like the APA's impact on teacher motivation or daily instruction or the effectiveness or the accuracy of the APA, this second group is less neutral and more negative. The third consists of roughly 20% of respondents who are negative to positive about the APA in general. They do not feel too strongly about the APA and depending on the issue raised, will vacillate in their opinion from somewhat positive to somewhat negative. The fourth group consists of about 15% of teachers who

are somewhat neutral to very positive about the APA generally. They appear to like the APA generally and seem to account for the roughly 18% of teachers that strongly agree (1%), agree (5%), or are neutral (12%) to the statement “The APA is an effective way to assess students.” Overall, teachers are not pleased with or supportive of the APA, although there are two groups that are not generally negative that comprise about one-third of APA teacher respondents.

Looking next at the percentage breakdowns for functional skills and content standards, the standard deviations of all six questions are comparable, ranging from 23.8 to 28.0%. This indicates a decent amount of variance associated with the responses, but there doesn't appear to be much difference in variance between scenarios or between functional skills and content standards. In terms of looking at the means, there is a pronounced difference based on the scenarios. Before implementation of the APA more time was spent on functional skills than on content standards—63.5% to 50.0%. After implementation of the APA more time was spent on content standards than on functional skills—59.2% to 46.7%. The numbers basically flipped after implementation of the APA. However, when asked what they felt *should* be the percentages of time spent on functional skills compared to content standards, the APA teachers responded with a larger number for functional skills, 70.4%, than either before or after implementation of the APA. They also responded with a smaller number for content standards, 41.8%, than either before or after implementation of the APA. This indicates that the respondents thought that there was already more focus on content standards than there should be before the implementation of the APA, and that the APA has exacerbated the situation. Additionally, the respondents thought that there was insufficient time spent on functional

skills before the implementation of the APA, and that the APA has exacerbated that situation too.

## **IV. Administrator Survey**

### **Methods**

An in-person survey, which had 304 respondents, was administered to New Jersey administrators affiliated with the New Jersey APA September 19<sup>th</sup> through 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. For those not in attendance, an online survey was provided, which had 19 respondents. The online survey was available from September 23<sup>rd</sup> through 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The survey took administrators approximately 10-20 minutes to complete and included four sections that are outlined below. (See Appendix A for the complete survey.) The survey was given during training sessions for the administrators at four different locations in New Jersey to get the maximum number of responses possible. The survey was paper-based for the in-person respondents and administered online (using Survey Monkey) for those not in attendances. The paper-based survey results were tallied using Remark Office OMR and the online data was combined with the OMR data using Excel. Percentages were calculated using Excel.

### **Demographics/Background**

A series of questions were used to gather data on the characteristics of the administrators and their schools. Information was collected on the following topics:

- School Type—Public or Private
- School Size
- District Factor Groups (DFG)
- Number of Years Teaching
- Number of Years in Administration
- Job Title
- County

No personal identifying information was collected.

### **Levels of Change Since the Implementation of the APA**

To gain a better understanding of the consequences of the implementation of the APA, administrators were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify the level of change associated with various areas. The following options were provided as response choices: a) Significant Decrease, b) Decrease, c) No Change, d) Increase, and e) Significant Increase.

### **Levels of Professional Development Support**

To gain a better understanding of the amount of support provided by New Jersey to teachers and paraprofessionals in certain areas of the APA, administrators were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify the level of professional development support within various areas. The following options were provided as response choices: a) None, b) Little, c) Some, d) Significant.

### **Levels of Information to Parents**

To gain a better understanding of the amount of information provided by New Jersey to parents regarding certain aspects of the APA, administrators were presented with a series of statements and asked to specify the level of information provided for certain areas. The following options were provided as response choices: a) None, b) Little, c) Some, d) Significant.

Pearson did not compensate any of the administrators who completed this survey.

### **Analyses**

Prior to analysis, data were cleaned. There were a total of 323 responses to the survey but one of the in-person surveys had only demographic responses and 10 of the

online surveys had only demographic responses. Analyses were based on the remaining 312 responses.

### **Demographics**

The frequencies of responses for the various demographic and background questions were determined. These data are displayed in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in terms of percentages of the 312 respondents.

### **Survey Responses**

The frequencies of responses for the various levels associated with each statement were determined. These data are displayed in Figures 1 through 20 in terms of percentages of the 312 respondents.

## **Results**

### **Demographics**

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below provide demographic distributions of responses with regards to school type, school size, county, District Factor Groups (DFG), years teaching, years in administration, and job title. Table 4.1 provides a comparison of administrators that responded to the survey with APA students. The DFG data was left blank by 60.9% of respondents,<sup>7</sup> and roughly evenly distributed by the remainder, except for J. The APA student demographic is roughly similar (including the J difference), particularly when the non-response rate is added. The public/private ratio is similar for both groups—a roughly 75/25 split. Lastly, the county breakdown is similar for both groups as well (particularly because private schools are not in the student analysis), with Cape May being a notable exception.

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<sup>7</sup> Private schools are not assigned to a particular DFG, which accounts for almost half of the blank responses. Additionally, some administrators did not know their DFG.

**Table 4.1. Demographic Distributions Comparison**

Responding Administrators		APA Students	
Demographic	Percent*	Demographic	Percent*
<b>DFG</b>		<b>DFG</b>	
A	4.2	A	11.7
B	5.8	B	8.4
CD	5.1	CD	5.1
DE	5.1	DE	9.5
FG	7.4	FG	5.3
GH	3.5	GH	7.6
I	6.1	I	7.6
J	1.9	J	1.2
No Response	60.9	Other (charter & private schools Included)	43.6
<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percent*</b>	<b>School Type</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
Public	71.8	Public	76.8
Private	25.6	Private	23.2
No Response	2.6		
<b>County</b>	<b>Percent*</b>	<b>County (Private Schools not Included)</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
Atlantic	2.9	Atlantic	2.6
Bergen	9.9	Bergen	8.2
Burlington	8.0	Burlington	5.6
Camden	6.7	Camden	3.2
Cape May	0.3	Cape May	3.8
Cumberland	2.9	Cumberland	1.3
Essex	5.8	Essex	8.6
Gloucester	4.5	Gloucester	4.4
Hudson	4.5	Hudson	5.5
Hunterdon	1.3	Hunterdon	1.3
Mercer	5.4	Mercer	7.9
Middlesex	6.7	Middlesex	9.7
Monmouth	10.3	Monmouth	6.9
Morris	6.1	Morris	3.9
Ocean	3.5	Ocean	8.8
Passaic	7.1	Passaic	5.7
Salem	1.9	Salem	1
Somerset	3.5	Somerset	2.6
Sussex	3.2	Sussex	1.3
Union	3.5	Union	6.6
Warren	1.3	Warren	1.1
No Response	0.6		

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

Table 4.2 contains the non-compared demographic distribution information for the administrators. Nearly half of the respondents were connected to schools with less than 1,000 students. About 58% of respondents had 10 or more years teaching, while about 55% of them had less than 10 years in administration. Lastly, 65% of respondents were either APA Test Coordinators or Directors or Supervisors of Special Education.

**Table 4.2. Administrator Demographic Distribution**

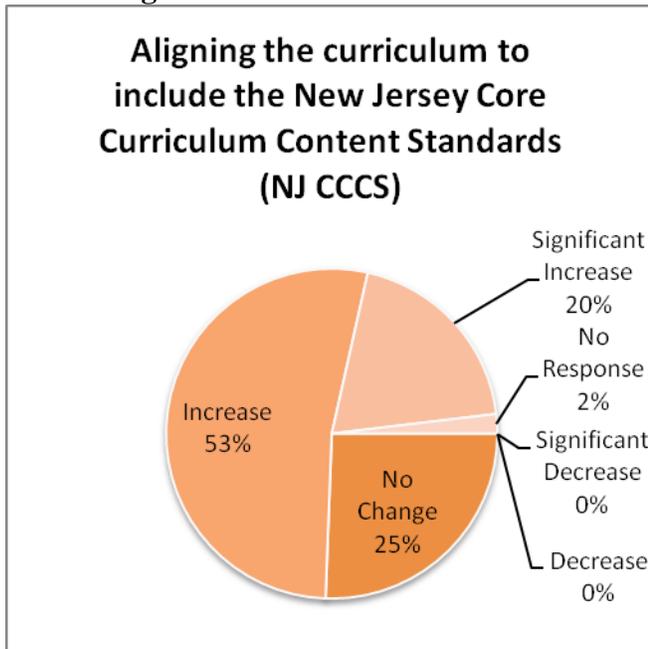
<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
<b>School Size</b>	
< 1,000	47.1
1,000 - 5,000	29.2
5,001 - 10,000	7.4
> 10,000	2.9
No Response	13.5
<b>Years Teaching</b>	
<b>Percent*</b>	
< 5	6.7
5 - 9	18.6
10 - 14	18.9
15 - 19	12.5
20 +	26.6
No Response	16.7
<b>Years in Administration</b>	
<b>Percent*</b>	
< 5	31.4
5 - 9	23.7
10 - 14	12.5
15 - 19	6.1
20 +	11.2
No Response	15.1
<b>Job Title</b>	
<b>Percent*</b>	
Superintendent	0.3
Director of a private school	1.6
Chief School Administrator	0.3
School Principal	9.0
Director or Supervisor of Special Education	36.2
APA Test Coordinator	28.8
Curriculum Specialist	1.3
Other	13.8
No Response	8.7

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## Levels of Change Since the Implementation of the APA

The following figures show the results of the first section of the survey, which consisted of statements presented to the respondents. Appendix B has the full results of the entire administrator survey in table form. The 12 statements were prefaced in the survey with “Please indicate the level of change associated with each of the following areas since the APA was implemented.” Figures 1 and 2 show that 73% of respondents feel that since the implementation of the APA there has been either an increase or a significant increase in both alignment of the curriculum to include the NJ CCCS and expansion of the curriculum to more fully address the NJ CCCS as related to the required cumulative progress indicators (CPIs) for assessment.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

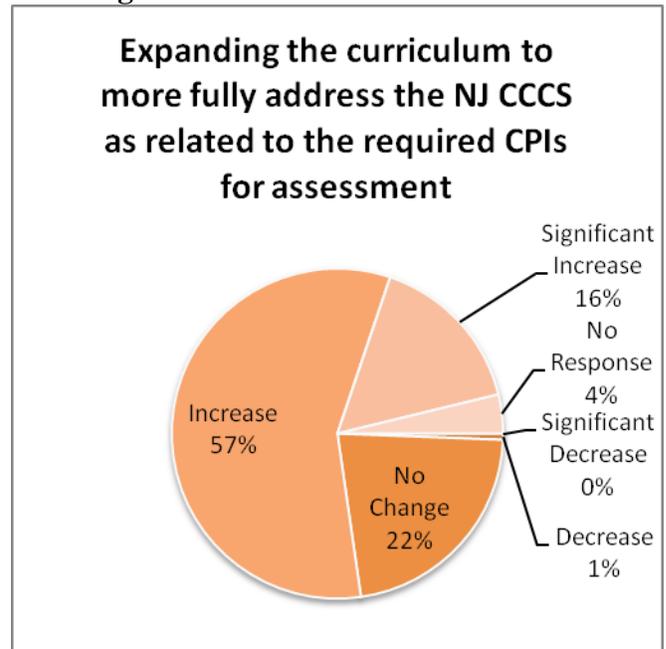
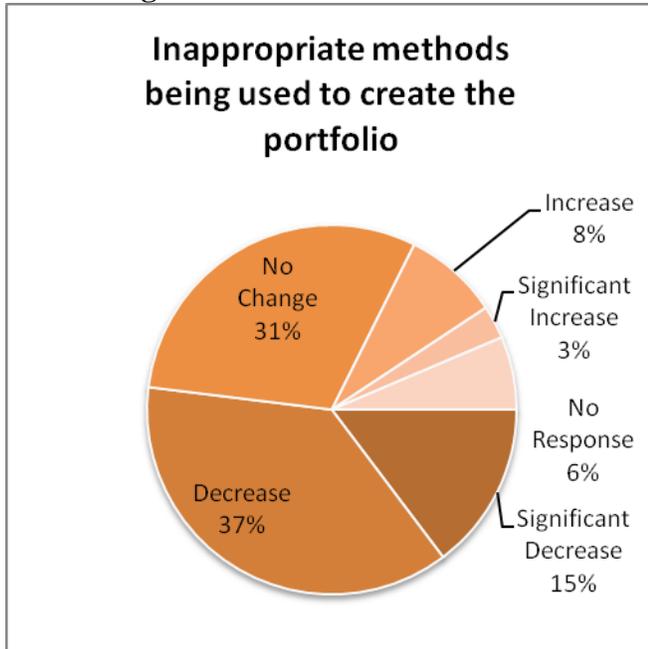


Figure 3 indicates that 52% of respondents believe that there has been a decrease or significant decrease in inappropriate methods being used to create portfolios since the implementation of the APA, and 31% believe that there has been no change. Figure 4 shows that 57% of respondents think that there has been an increase or a significant

increase in teacher concerns about too much time being taken from instruction for testing purposes since the implementation of the APA, and 27% think there has been no change.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 4**

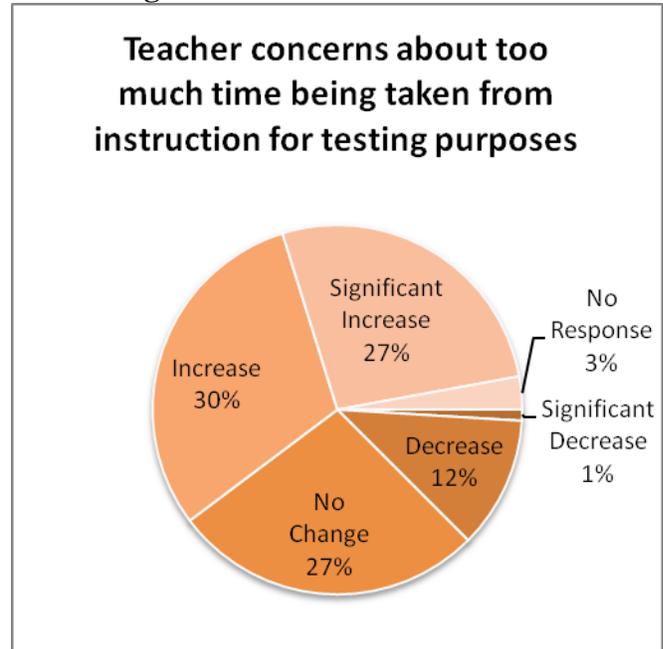
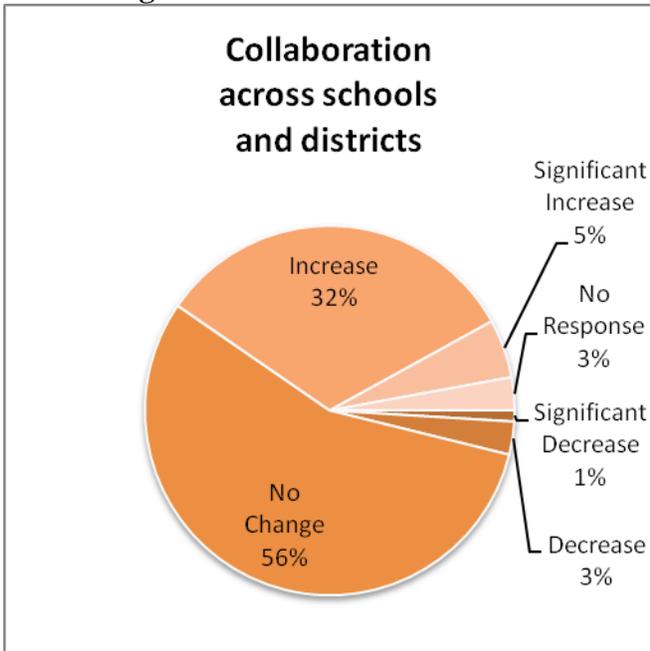


Figure 5 indicates that 56% of respondents believe that since the implementation of the APA, there has been no change in collaboration *across* schools and districts, while 32% feel that there has been an increase. Conversely, Figure 6 shows that 67% of respondents think that there has been an increase in collaboration *within* the school since the implementation of the APA, and only 29% think there has been no change.

**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**

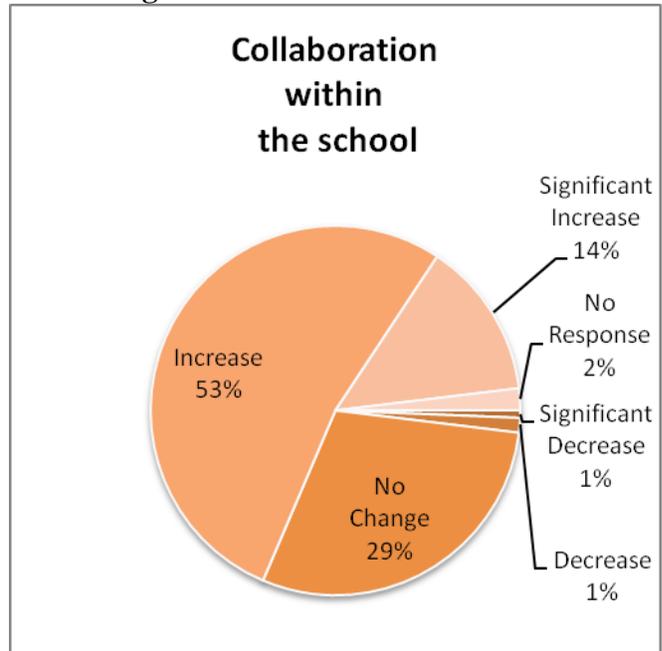
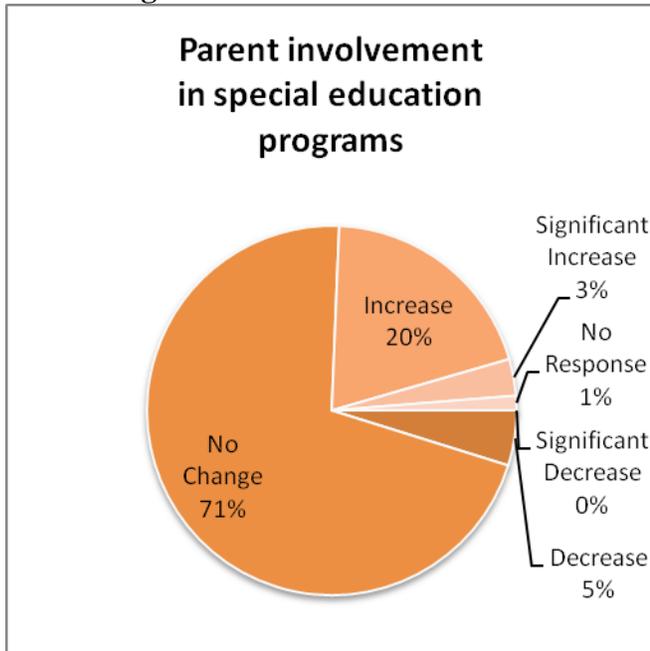


Figure 7 demonstrates that 71% of respondents believe that there's been no change in parental involvement in special education programs after the implementation of the APA, while 20% of respondents believe there's been an increase in parental involvement. Figure 8 shows that 70% of respondents think there's been no change in special education teacher turnover since the implementation of the APA, while 19% of respondents feel there's been an increase in special education teacher turnover since then.

**Figure 7**



**Figure 8**

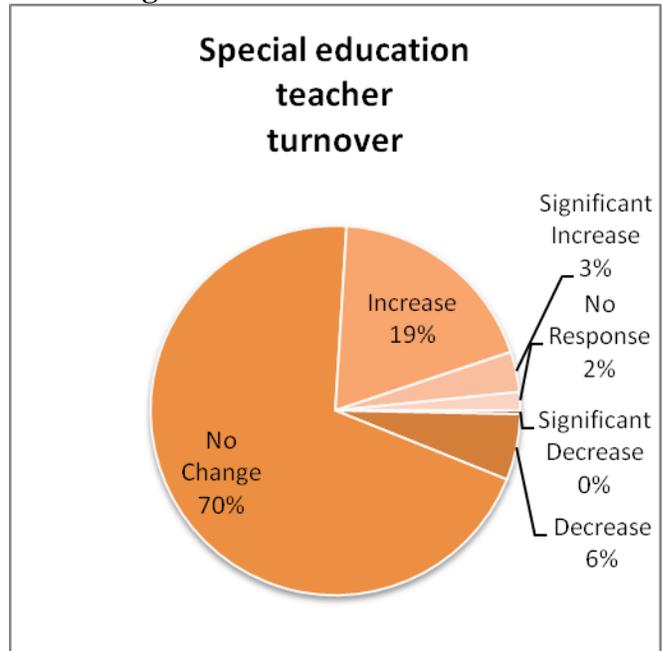
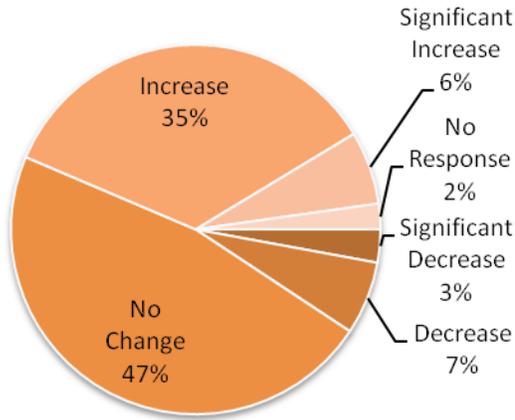


Figure 9 shows that 47% of respondents feel that since the implementation of the APA there has been no change in APA students' opportunity for interaction with general education students, but 35% of respondents thought that there has been an increase in APA students' opportunity for interaction. Figures 10, 11, and 12 all indicate the respondents assessment of the levels of change associated with students' IEP related to grade-level goals and objectives in three subject areas—language arts literacy, mathematics, and science. Figures 10, 11, and 12 all show that roughly 55% of respondents feel that there has been an increase or significant increase in students' IEPs' relation to grade-level goals and objectives since the implementation of the APA, while roughly 42% of respondents feel that there has been no change in the relationship between students' IEPs and grade-level goals and objectives.

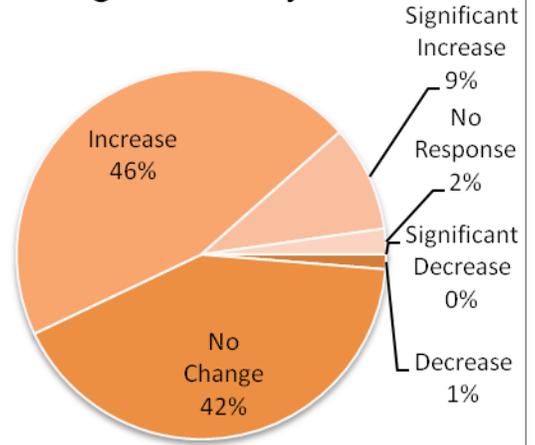
**Figure 9**

**APA students' opportunity for interaction with general education students**



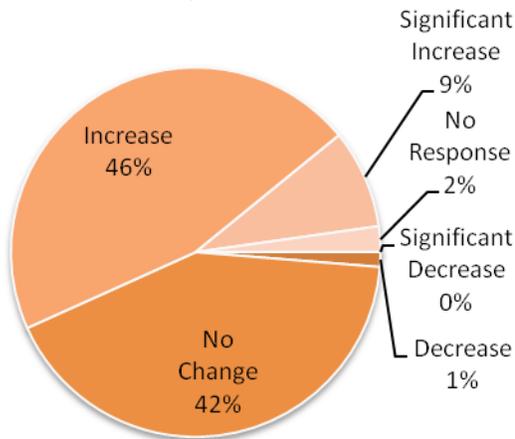
**Figure 10**

**Students' IEP related to language arts literacy grade-level goals and objectives**



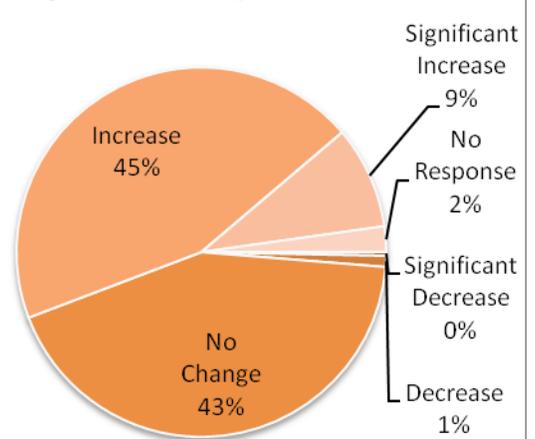
**Figure 11**

**Students' IEP related to mathematics grade-level goals and objectives**



**Figure 12**

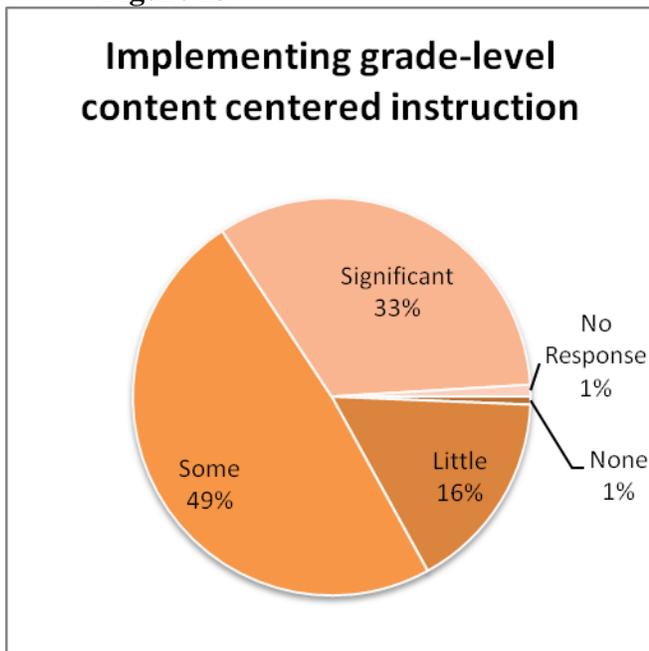
**Students' IEP related to science grade-level goals and objectives**



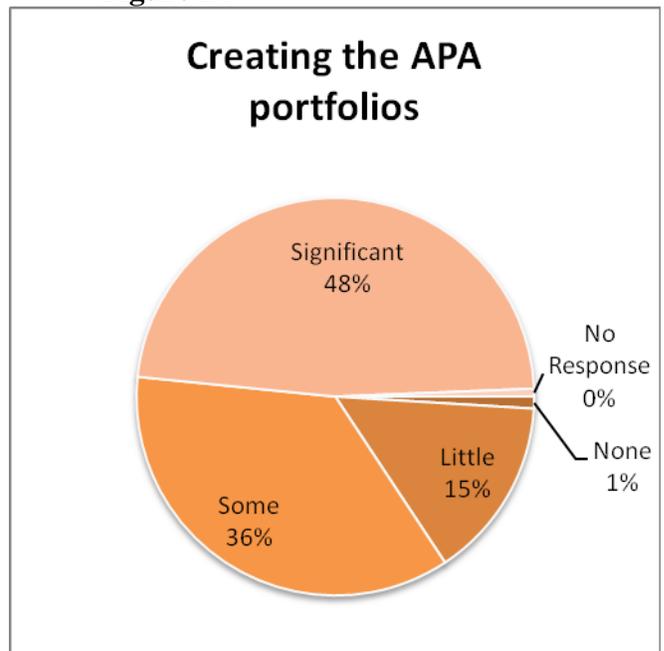
## Levels of Professional Development Support

The following figures show the results of the second section of the survey, which also consisted of statements presented to the respondents. The five statements were prefaced in the survey with “Please indicate what level of professional development support exists for teachers and paraprofessionals for the following topics.” Figure 13 shows that 82% of respondents feel the level of professional development support provided to teachers and paraprofessionals for implementing grade-level content centered instruction is either significant or some. Figure 14 shows that 84% of respondents believe that either significant or some professional development support is provided to teachers and paraprofessionals for creating the APA portfolios. However, although the combined percentages are similar for both Figures 13 and 14, there is a marked increase in the amount of respondents choosing significant from Figure 13 to Figure 14, 33% to 48%.

**Figure 13**

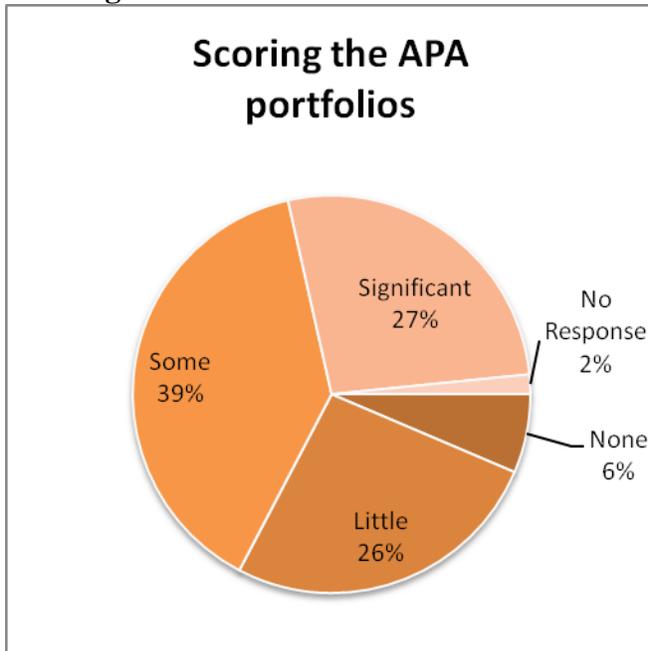


**Figure 14**



Figures 15 and 16 show that for roughly 65% of respondents the levels of professional development support that exists for teachers and paraprofessionals are either significant or some for both scoring the APA portfolios and understanding the results provided.

**Figure 15**



**Figure 16**

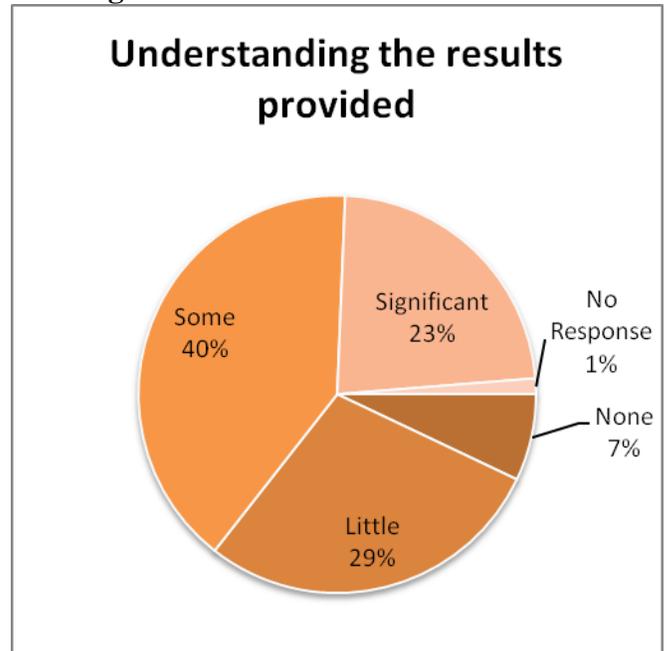
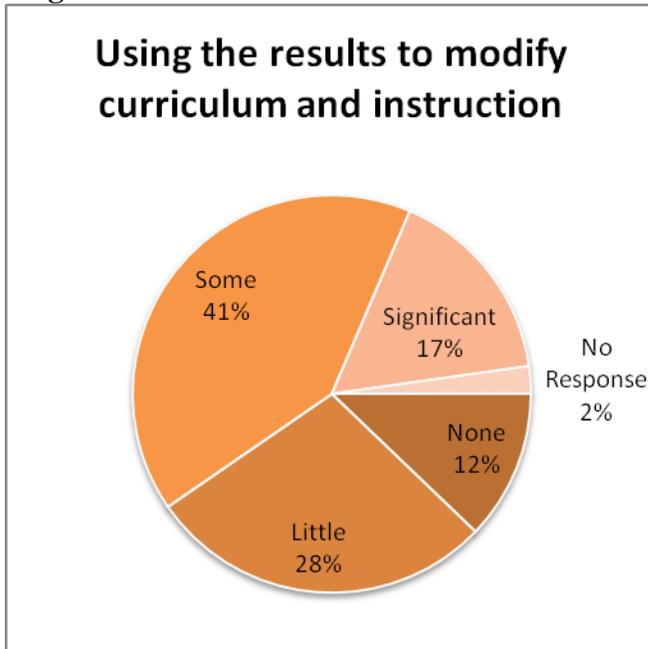


Figure 17 indicates that only 58% of respondents feel that either significant or some professional development support exists for teachers and paraprofessionals for using the APA results to modify curriculum and instruction.

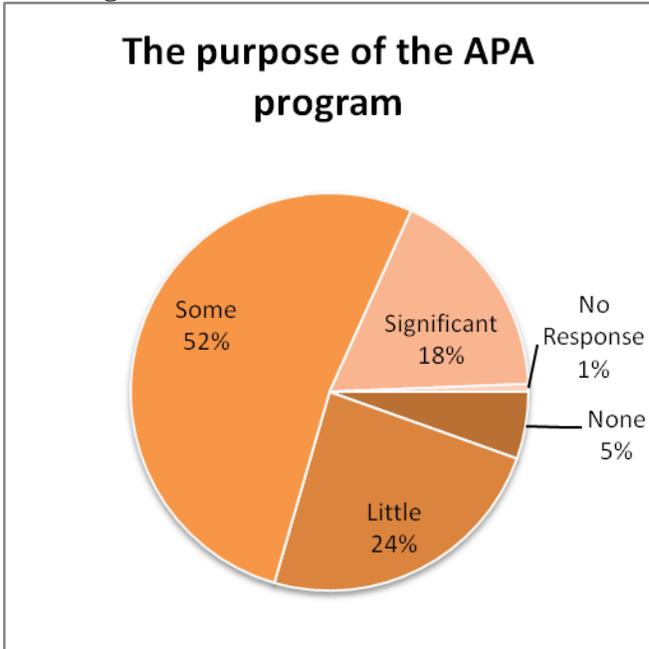
**Figure 17**



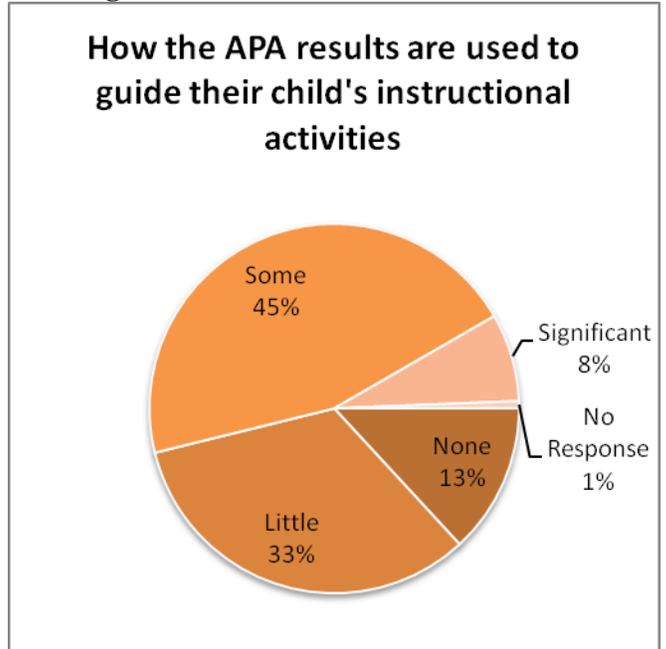
### **Levels of Information to Parents**

The following figures show the results of the third section of the survey, which also consisted of statements presented to the respondents. The three statements were prefaced in the survey with “Please indicate what level of information is provided to parents for the following topics.” Figure 18 shows the level of information provided to the parents about the purpose of the APA program is either significant or some for 70% of respondents. Figures 19 and 20 show that for roughly 50% of respondents the levels of information provided to the parents are either significant or some for both how the APA results are used to guide their child’s instructional activities and how the APA is used to guide the development of their child’s IEP related to the NJ CCCS.

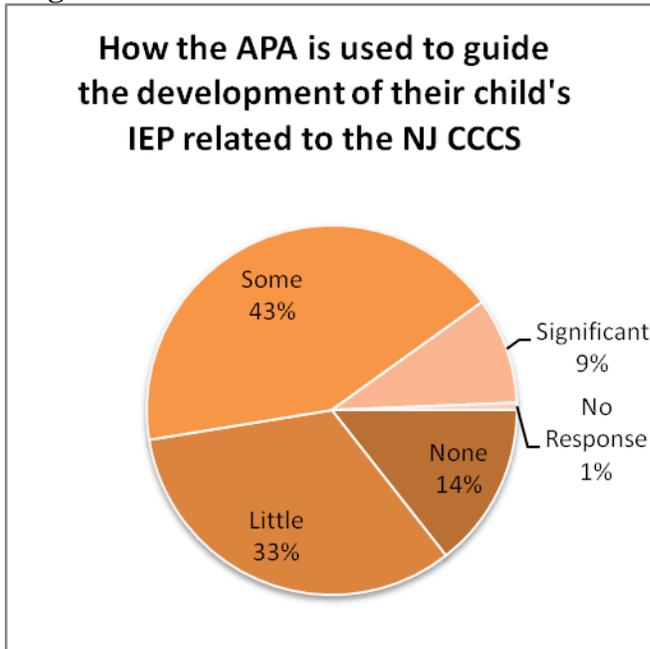
**Figure 18**



**Figure 19**



**Figure 20**



## **Discussion**

In considering the survey results, several themes emerged that seem worthy of attention. These included: 1) positive intended changes; 2) positive unintended changes; 3) negative changes; 4) differences in support for teachers; and 5) differences in information provided to parents. These themes address the first two research questions:

1. Has the APA accomplished one of its intended consequences of more closely integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
2. What are some of the other consequences of the implementation of the APA?

### **Positive Intended Changes**

Based on the survey responses, there are some clear positive intended changes that occurred due to the APA. The administrators surveyed indicated that since the implementation of the APA the curriculum used for APA students has become much more closely aligned to the NJ CCCS. Additionally, their responses showed that the curriculum has been expanded to more fully address the NJ CCCS based on the required CPIs. The administrators surveyed also indicated that they felt that students' IEPs were becoming more closely related to grade-level goals and objectives for language arts literacy, mathematics, and science, although this was felt by a substantially lower. All of these changes are directly tied to the purpose and creation of the APA. In the New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment Procedures Manual for 2011-2012, it states "[t]he New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment represents a cohesive approach where curriculum, instruction, and assessment work together to build a comprehensive educational program. . . . Assessment and instruction inform the curriculum as well as each other. . . . High-quality assessment practices provide information upon which to

base ongoing development of curriculum that is responsive to individual student needs.” Therefore, the strengthening of the relationships between curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the influence that the APA has on curriculum and instruction are positive intended changes.

Another positive intended change that has occurred is the decrease in inappropriate methods used to create portfolios. Although there is no further information about the context and cause of this decrease, it is possible that through the repeated training materials and sessions for APA teachers that the correct and appropriate methods for creating portfolios have been adequately communicated to APA teachers. This would then result in a decrease in inappropriate methods being used to create portfolios—a positive intended change in the APA process.

### **Positive Unintended Changes**

Based on the administrator survey, there appear to be three positive unintended changes related to the implementation of the APA. First, there is an increase in collaboration across schools and districts to some extent and within the schools to a greater extent. The increase in collaboration across schools and districts was noted by about one-third of the administrators, but the collaboration within the school was claimed by about two thirds of the administrators. Collaboration both across schools and districts and within the school will have numerous unintended beneficial consequences, including a more effective use of talents and abilities, a transfer of knowledge and skills, a source of stimulation and creativity, an extension of personal connections, and the broadening of perspectives.<sup>8</sup> Second, there was an increase in parental involvement in special education programs noticed by about one-fourth of the responding administrators. While this is a

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<sup>8</sup> Certain collaborations will be looked at in depth in the focus group section.

minority of administrators, it's still a substantial increase from the time prior to the APA. Anecdotal evidence from the focus groups suggests that increased parental involvement in special education programs can result in better situations for both the students and the schools. Third, an increase in APA students' opportunity for interaction with general education students was cited by about 40% of responding administrators. This consequence stems from APA students sharing a somewhat tangential version of the curriculum that general education students are participating in (this will be further explored in the focus group section of this report). All three of the above listed changes are beneficial and were not part of the planned APA consequences.

### **Negative Consequences**

In addition to the positive consequences, both intended and unintended, there were also two negative consequences highlighted by the administrator survey. First, almost 60% of respondents felt that there was at least some increase in teacher concerns about too much time being taken from instruction for testing purposes after the introduction of the APA. The results of the focus group in the following section provide context for this concern in that almost all of the administrator participants stated that teachers see functional or life skills as more beneficial to most APA students than academic skills and that parental desires for functional or life skills often contradicted required academic goals. As will be expanded on in the focus group section of this report, the APA requires substantial portfolio preparation (consisting of implementing instructionally-based classroom activities for academic skills) from a large section of APA teachers. It could be that there is an inclination for teachers to focus on life skills and that their tasks related to teaching and assessing academic skills via the APA is seen

as a negative since it is contradictory to the parents' desired learning outcomes, when in fact it is precisely the purpose of the APA.

Second, around one-fifth of administrators responding indicated that there has been some increase in special education teacher turnover since the implementation of the APA. There is some anecdotal expansion on this in the focus group section. The majority of administrators (70%) felt that there has been no change, but if one out of five feel there has been an increase, that is substantial enough to raise some concern. Therefore, the two negative consequences related to the introduction of the APA are teacher concerns about lost instruction time and special education teacher turnover.

### **Other Outcomes: Differences in Support for Teachers**

The professional development support provided for teachers was consistently deemed some or significant by a majority of administrator respondents. However, there was a bit of variation to the five different areas of support. Over 80% of the surveyed administrators felt that there was some or significant professional development support for both implementing grade-level content centered instruction and creating the APA portfolios, with a substantially higher percentage citing significant support for creating the APA portfolios than for implementing grade-level content centered instruction (48% decreasing to 33%). About two-thirds of respondents (65%) indicated that there was some or significant professional development support both for scoring the APA portfolios and for understanding the results provided. This could be an area that the New Jersey Department of Education (DOE) focuses on in the future to ensure that administrators realize that such support is provided. Lastly, only 58% of administrators responding believed that there was some or significant professional development support for using

the results to modify curriculum and instruction. This supports the overall analysis that administrators think that there is more support at the beginning of the APA process, and that such support begins to diminish as the APA process continues—most support for creating appropriate APA portfolios (84%) and implementing instruction (82%), medium support for scoring (66%) and understanding the results (63%), and least support for using the results to modify curriculum and instruction (58%).

### **Other Outcomes: Differences in Information Provided to Parents**

In a similar way as the last section, the information provided to parents was consistently deemed some or significant by a majority of administrator respondents. However, there was also a bit of variation to the three areas of information. Eighty percent of respondents felt that some or significant information was provided to parents concerning the purpose of the APA program. That number dropped to approximately 50% for some or significant information being provided to parents concerning both how the APA results were used to guide their child's instructional activities and how the APA was used to guide the development of their child's IEP related to the NJ CCCS. The first area, how the APA results were used to guide their child's instructional activities, is understandable because only 58% of respondents felt that there was some or significant professional development support for teachers to use the APA results to modify curriculum and instruction. Additionally, the second area, how the APA is used to guide the development of their child's IEP related to the NJ CCCS, is also understandable because a comparable percent of respondents, 55%, felt that there was an increase in the relationship between students' IEPs and grade-level goals and objectives necessitated by the APA. As will be discussed in the following focus groups section, some administrators

believe that a percent-age of their teachers feel that it's impossible to put grade-level goals and objectives into a student's IEP while others feel that it was already being done by their teachers prior to the introduction of the APA.

## **V. Focus Groups**

### **Methods**

The focus groups were moderated by Neil Stephens and Dr. Jen Beimers and involved 66 participants. They were held from September 19-22, 2011 and the participants were New Jersey administrators affiliated with the New Jersey APA. The focus groups were held in the afternoon following administrator training at four different locations and lasted approximately 90-120 minutes. Focus group demographics were designed to roughly mirror the administrator survey with a heavier emphasis on private school representation. Focus group participants were selected based on availability and some teaching or administrative experience with the APA. The focus group itself was a somewhat directed open conversation with four prompting questions provided by the moderators. See Appendix C for the general script used by both moderators. There were no time-limits on any answers. Participants were provided the opportunity to write any comments if they were uncomfortable presenting those ideas aloud to the others in the forum. No participants wrote any comments. The demographic information was entered on a very similar sheet to the administrator survey and was analyzed using Remark Office OMR. The focus group conversations were digitally recorded and then transcribed by Pearson to support analyses.

### **Demographics/Background**

Table 5.1 below provides demographic distributions of focus group participants. Of the participants, 54.5 % were affiliated with a public school (compared with 71.8% of the survey respondents) and slightly over half were connected to schools with less than 1,000 students (compared with nearly half of the survey respondents). The DFG data was

left blank by 62.1% of participants (compared with 60.9% of survey respondents), and roughly evenly distributed by the remainder, which was the same for survey respondents. About 62% of participants had more than 10 years teaching (compared with 58% of survey respondents), while about 45% of them had less than 10 years in administration (compared to 55% of survey respondents). Lastly, 77% of participants were either APA Test Coordinators or Directors or Supervisors of Special Education (compared to 65% of survey respondents). Generally, the demographics of the focus groups were very similar to the demographics of the survey respondents, except for the public/private split, which was specifically requested by the New Jersey DOE to ensure that the views of private schools were adequately represented.

**Table 5.1. Focus Group Demographic Distributions**

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
<b>School Type</b>	
Public	54.5
Private	43.9
No Response	1.5
<b>School Size</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
< 1,000	56.1
1,000 - 5,000	22.7
5,001 - 10,000	6.1
> 10,000	3
No Response	12.1
<b>DFG</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
A	4.5
B	3
CD	0
DE	4.5
FG	7.6
GH	6.1
I	6.1
J	6.1
No Response	62.1

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

<b>Years Teaching</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
< 5	6.1
5 - 9	21.2
10 - 14	18.2
15 - 19	12.1
20 +	31.8
No Response	10.6
<b>Years in Administration</b>	<b>Percent*</b>
< 5	22.7
5 - 9	22.7
10 - 14	18.2
15 - 19	7.6
20 +	15.1
No Response	13.6
<b>Job Title</b>	
Superintendent	0
Director of a private school	3
Chief School Administrator	0
School Principal	9.1
Director or Supervisor of Special Education	30.3
APA Test Coordinator	47
Curriculum Specialist	1.5
Other	7.6
No Response	1.5

\*Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding

### **Discussion Topics**

The focus groups were presented four broad topics to discuss:

- 1) Since the implementation of the APA, what changes have there been relative to the use of the CCCS?
- 2) How do teachers divide their instructional time between the APA CPI Links, the general CCCS, and other skills?
- 3) When constructing an IEP how is the curriculum determined and to what extent is it connected to the CCCS? and

- 4) Are there ways to improve the APA and what issues should be brought to the attention of the NJ DOE?

### **Results & Discussion**

The responses to these four prompts addressed all three research questions posed in the introduction:

1. Has the APA accomplished one of its intended consequences of more closely integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment?
2. What are some of the other consequences of the implementation of the APA?
3. What are some modifications that could be made to the APA to improve the APA process?

On the first topic, participants generally agreed that APA students were now exposed to content that was much more similar to that of the general education population. They also felt that the introduction of the APA eliminated the “warehousing” of special education students. In addition, there was a strong feeling that a minority of APA students benefitted from the APA because these students would not have been challenged to the same degree without the APA. The issue was raised that the grade-level requirement for CPI Links was more difficult to attain at higher grades, particularly at the high school level. There were many suggestions that the developmental-level of APA students should be taken into account when determining an APA student’s IEP, not just grade-level. Interestingly, one participant did comment that because this is the first generation of children that have been taught this way, it is unclear how this will affect the CPI Links at the middle school and high school level for children exposed to grade-level curriculum since grade school.

On the second topic, pertaining to division of instructional time, participants varied quite a bit based on the type of school, the number of APA students in a class, and the number of grades spanned by APA students in a class (some administrators said they had teachers that spanned four grade-levels in one class). Generally, most administrators stated that the APA CPI Links are only focused on when they had to be—from September to February. The percentage breakdown of time spent on the APA CPI Links ranged from 10% (one administrator had as much of the process handled at the district level as possible for all teachers in that district) to 90%. The percentage breakdown of time spent on the general CCCS ranged from 0% to 60%. The percentage breakdown of time spent on other skills, which were identified by the administrators as functional or life skills (although some administrators included therapies in this category), ranged from 30% to 90%. Almost all of the administrator participants stated that teachers see functional or life skills as more beneficial to most APA students than academic skills are. The participants felt that some parents were unaware of the division of teachers' time, but that in general parents saw functional or life skills as more important than APA CPI Links or general CCCS. Lastly, all of the participants felt that the APA demands a greater than ideal amount of teachers' time from instruction generally—largely due to the paperwork and planning requirements associated with the APA. Some administrators stated that the burden on APA teachers was so extreme that they knew teachers that had left the profession instead of dealing with the requirements of the APA.

For the third topic, IEP creation, participants stated that there has always been an IEP connection to curriculum, although it has usually not been at grade-level as is required by the APA. They stated that the grade-level requirement is often inappropriate

for students. Participants listed many other resources used during the IEP process, including ABLLS, the Brigance, VB-MAPP, Handwriting Without Tears, and the Batelle Developmental Inventory, stating that the most important qualification for using alternative resources was whether they would benefit the APA students. Lastly, participants indicated that parental desires for functional or life skills often contradicted required academic goals during the IEP process.

Numerous issues were raised during the fourth topic, general recommendations, due to its catch-all nature. Participants continually stated that the APA was completely inappropriate for the lowest skill levels of the 1% students—many administrators said that there should be a 0.5% of students that are exempt from the APA. A claim repeated by many administrators was that the APA measures teachers' ability to follow instructions and not students' academic ability. Regarding ways in which the participants felt that the APA could be improved, two areas stood out—scoring and standardization. The scoring concerns were ubiquitous. In all sessions of the focus groups virtually every participant cited an example of scoring inconsistencies, usually consisting of different teachers using the same task, creating the same portfolio, and receiving different scores. While this occurs very infrequently and is primarily anecdotally cited, it does speak to the lack of trust that teachers have in the outcomes. It is suggested that additional informational sessions be provided to teachers so that they understand the scoring process and have a venue for addressing any concerns they may have. The requests for standardization in some fashion were not as numerous, but were still prevalent. Often participants would say “If the general education students get a prepackaged test, why don't the APA students?” One suggestion for standardization included item banks of

preapproved tasks, which one large district already utilizes. The administrator stated that anytime a task worked, it would be added to the bank and used by all other APA teachers in the district; anytime a task received a zero due to linkage problems, it was removed from the item bank. The suggestion for New Jersey to create a bank of pre-approved tasks could potentially solve three issues—1) teacher selection of tasks which negatively impact student scores (e.g., receiving zeroes for linkage issues), 2) amount of time teachers devote to creating tasks for the APA, and 3) tasks that are pre-approved are guaranteed acceptable. If creating an item bank is impractical, several administrators felt both that CPI Links being made available before September 1<sup>st</sup> would be very helpful for APA preparation and that samples are always extremely helpful. Lastly, a few administrators felt that administrator training would be more beneficial if there were a refresher section for experienced administrators highlighting changes and a new administrator training session for those needing the entire training.

## **VI. Limitations and Conclusions**

The three surveys—parent, teacher, and administrator—and the administrator focus groups are the foundation of this research study dealing with consequential validity issues surrounding the implementation of the APA. As with any survey study, there were limitations that should be taken into account as results are considered. First, the issue of the number of respondents should be considered. The two surveys that had less than perfect response rates were the parent and administrator surveys. The parent survey had 247 responses. Due to the voluntary nature of the survey though, 247 would be a large enough number, if those responding adequately represented the population. Based on the demographic analysis of the parent respondents, this appears to be the case.

Approximately 300 administrators responded to the survey, a larger number than the parent group. Like the parent group, based on the demographic analysis of the administrator respondents, this appears to be a representative sample.

The survey and focus group results provided information concerning the effect the introduction of the APA has had on the education process in New Jersey from three different groups of stakeholders. Regarding the first group, responding administrators, they are marginally positive about the APA. From the administrators view, the APA has been successful in more closely integrating curriculum, instruction, and assessment for APA students. Additionally, the APA has some positive unintended consequences (more collaboration within and across schools, more interaction between APA students and the general education population, and an increase in parental involvement in special education programs) and some negative consequences (increased teacher concerns about lost instruction time and increased special education teacher turnover). Lastly, two

suggestions for improving the APA emerged from the administrator focus groups. First, improved perceptions in the consistency of scoring would help teachers and administrators overall understanding of the APA process. Second, some sort of standardization of tasks, which are pre-approved for use in the APA portfolio, could potentially improve the APA process.

In terms of the second group, responding parents, they are generally neutral to negative about the APA. Roughly 70-80% of responding parents are neutral to negative concerning their views about the APA. Only 20-30% of responding parents believe either that the APA has benefited their child or that the APA is a good measure of their child's educational strengths or challenges. It does not appear overall that there is strong support from those parents responding for the APA in its current form. The third group, responding teachers, has generally neutral to negative feelings about the APA. Roughly 65% of the responding teachers are neutral to very negative about the APA, with 30% negative to very negative. 20% of responding teachers have both negative and positive opinions of the APA, depending on the issue. The last group is roughly 15% of responding teachers that have neutral to very positive opinions of the APA. Teacher respondents generally have a negative view of the APA and are neither pleased with nor supportive of this instrument. When asked about allocation of time for functional skills and content standards, responding teachers indicated that insufficient time is spent on functional skills. They also expressed that even before the implementation of the APA, not enough time was spent on functional skills, but that since the implementation of the APA even less time is spent on functional skills. Additionally, they feel that even before the implementation of the APA too much time was spent on content standards, and that

since the implementation of the APA even more time has been spent on content standards.

In conclusion, of those responding, the teachers and parents have fairly negative views of the APA. The responding administrators have more balanced views of the APA. It is possible this is due to the levels of training and information concerning the APA that is provided to the three groups of stakeholders and the amount of direct contact with the APA that each group has. The administrators are provided with quite a bit of training and information and have substantial participation with the APA. Teachers have quite a bit of participation, but less training and information concerning the APA. Parents have minimal training and information and not much contact with the APA process.

## **Appendix L-A: Administrator Survey**

**New Jersey Department of Education--Administrator Survey Form**

School Type	Public	Private	School Size	<1,000	1,000-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,000+	DFG	A	B	CD	DE	FG	GH	I	J	Years Teaching	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>											

Years in Administration	<5	5-9	10-14	15-19	20+	Job Title	Superintendent	Director of a private school	Chief School Administrator	School Principal	Director or Supervisor of Special Education	APA Test Coordinator	Curriculum Specialist	Other
	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>				

County	Atlantic	Bergen	Burlington	Camden	Cape May	Cumberland	Essex	Gloucester	Hudson	Hunterdon	Mercer	Middlesex	Monmouth	Morris	Ocean	Passaic	Salem	Somerset	Sussex	Union	Warren
	<input type="radio"/>																				

I. Please indicate the level of change associated with each of the following areas since the APA was implemented:		Significant Decrease	Decrease	No Change	Increase	Significant Increase
a.	Aligning the curriculum to include New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards	<input type="radio"/>				
b.	Expanding the curriculum to more fully address the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards as related to the required CPIs for assessment	<input type="radio"/>				
c.	Inappropriate methods being used to create the portfolio	<input type="radio"/>				
d.	Teacher concerns about too much time being taken from instruction for testing purposes	<input type="radio"/>				
e.	Collaboration across schools and districts	<input type="radio"/>				
f.	Collaboration within the school	<input type="radio"/>				
g.	Parent involvement in special education programs	<input type="radio"/>				
h.	Special education teacher turnover	<input type="radio"/>				
i.	APA students' opportunity for interaction with general education students	<input type="radio"/>				
j.	Students' IEPs related to language arts literacy grade-level goals and objectives	<input type="radio"/>				
k.	Students' IEPs related to mathematics grade-level goals and objectives	<input type="radio"/>				
l.	Students' IEPs related to science grade-level goals and objectives	<input type="radio"/>				
II. Please indicate what level of professional development support exists for teachers and paraprofessionals for the following topics:		None	Little	Some	Significant	
a.	Implementing grade-level content centered instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
b.	Creating the APA portfolios	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
c.	Scoring the APA portfolios	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
d.	Understanding the results provided	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
e.	Using the results to modify curriculum and instruction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
III. Please indicate what level of information is provided to parents for the following topics:		None	Little	Some	Significant	
a.	The purpose of the APA program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
b.	How the APA results are used to guide their child's instructional activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	
c.	How the APA is used to guide the development of their child's IEP related to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

**Appendix L-B: Administrator Survey Percentage Response**

<b>I. The level of change associated with the following areas since the APA was implemented</b>	<b>Significant Decrease</b>	<b>Decrease</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Increase</b>	<b>Significant Increase</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. Aligning the curriculum to include New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards	0	0	25.6	52.9	19.6	1.9
B. Expanding the curriculum to more fully address the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards as related to the required CPIs for assessment	0	0.6	22.1	57.4	16.0	3.8
C. Inappropriate methods being used to create the portfolio	14.7	37.2	30.4	8.3	2.9	6.4
D. Teacher concerns about too much time being taken from instruction for testing purposes	1.0	11.5	27.2	30.4	26.9	2.9
E. Collaboration across schools and districts	1.0	2.9	55.8	32.4	5.1	2.9
F. Collaboration within the school	0.6	1.3	29.5	52.9	13.8	1.9
G. Parent involvement in special education programs	0.0	4.8	70.8	19.9	3.2	1.3
H. Special education teacher turnover	0.3	5.8	69.9	18.9	3.5	1.6
I. APA students' opportunity for interaction with general education students	2.9	6.4	47.1	34.9	6.4	2.2
J. Students' IEPs related to language arts literacy grade-level goals and objectives	0.0	1.3	41.7	45.5	9.3	2.2
K. Students' IEPs related to mathematics grade-level goals and objectives	0.0	1.3	42.0	45.8	8.7	2.2
L. Students' IEPs related to science grade-level goals and objectives	0.3	1.0	42.9	44.6	9.0	2.2

<b>II. The level of professional development support that exists for teachers and paraprofessionals for the following</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. Implementing grade-level content centered instruction	0.6	16.3	48.7	33.3	1.0
B. Creating the APA portfolios	1.0	14.7	35.9	47.8	0.6
C. Scoring the APA portfolios	6.4	26.3	38.8	26.9	1.6
D. Understanding the results provided	7.1	28.5	40.1	23.1	1.3
E. Using the results to modify curriculum and instruction	12.2	28.2	41.0	16.3	2.2
<b>III. The level of information provided to parents for the following</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Little</b>	<b>Some</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>No Response</b>
A. The purpose of the APA program	5.4	24.0	52.2	17.6	0.6
B. How the APA results are used to guide their child's instructional activities	13.1	33.0	45.5	7.7	0.6
C. How the APA is used to guide the development of their child's IEP related to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards	14.4	33.0	42.6	9.3	0.6

## Appendix L-C

### Script for NJ Focus Groups

*Prior to the focus groups beginning, the Pearson staff will organize the room so that all participants have a seat near the digital recorder.*

Good afternoon. My name is xxx and I will be facilitating today's focus group. First of all, thank you for participating. This focus group is being held on behalf of the New Jersey Department of Education who is interested in collecting information on the impact that the APA has had on schools, teachers, and students. Today you completed a survey that asked about changes in your schools due to the implementation of the APA, professional development support that is available for teachers, and parental involvement. The purpose of this focus group is to delve further into those issues by allowing you to share your personal experiences with the APA. I will be asking you four broad questions to guide your comments but the format of this focus group will be free flowing giving everyone an opportunity to share. The session will be audio recorded for transcription purposes so please take turns speaking and be sure to speak up. Your responses will remain anonymous so please feel free to honestly share your experiences. Before we begin, are there any questions?

*Turn on recorder.*

1. Thinking back to how students with disabilities were taught in NJ prior to the implementation of the APA versus how they are taught now, what changes have you seen relative to the use of the Core Curriculum Content Standards (CCCS)?
  - What types of changes in instruction have occurred?
    - If you haven't seen any changes, why do you think this is the case?
  - How have teachers demonstrated a stronger knowledge of the curriculum?
    - If you don't think teachers have engaged more with the curriculum, what do you believe is the impediment to their doing so?
2. How do teachers divide their instructional time between the APA CPI links, the general CCCS (if at all independent from the APA), and other skills?
  - How do you think teachers feel about the division of their time to focus on content versus functional skills?
  - How do you think parents feel about this division of focus?
3. When deciding which skills to include in an IEP how is the curriculum determined and to what degree is it connected to the CCCS?
  - What other resources are used during the IEP process?
  - Are parents' input taken into consideration?
    - If not, please explain why it should or should not be.

4. Is there any other aspect of the APA that you would like to make note of for the DOE to take into consideration when reviewing the results of these various focus groups?
  - Please describe ways in which the program could be improved OR areas of concern that are not being brought to light.

We appreciate your willingness to help the DOE better understand the impact of the APA program. As a reminder, your comments will be aggregated with the other focus group ongoing at this site as well as the other two sites later this week. The overall conclusions will be provided to the state in a fashion that will keep you anonymous with regard to specific comments made. Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration of the questions posed to you today.

## **APPENDIX M: Performance Scoring Center Study**

New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

Performance Scoring Center Study

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Pearson

## **New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**

### **Performance Scoring Center Study**

#### **Introduction**

New Jersey began implementation of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) during the 2001-2002 school year. This was in response to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997*, which required that states develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning no later than July 1, 2000. Additionally, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students. During the 2007-2008 school year, design changes were instituted based on the U.S. Department of Education peer review. The purpose of this report is to provide feedback concerning APA scoring issues to the New Jersey State Department of Education (NJDOE) that could potentially be used to help inform teacher training on the development and assembly of portfolios for the APA. This is a part of an overall group of four research studies conducted to assess the validity of the APA. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* states, “Ultimately, the validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the available evidence relevant to the technical quality of a testing system. This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring, accurate score scaling, equating, and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees” (p. 17). This research report is one piece of evidence in assessing the overall validity of the APA. Currently, if a student’s individual score report (ISR) receives a zero score for any dimension (complexity, performance, or independence), an explanation sheet may be filled out by a scoring staff member, depending on the cause of the

zero score. This research report examined the explanation sheets to ascertain the errors associated with construction of portfolios for the APA. The research report concludes that devoting training resources to the top five issues, which account for 80% of overall issues on the explanation sheets, could have an impact in reducing the incidence of those errors. The top four errors are all content alignment-based, which would be a good starting focus for any training project.

### **Methods**

The first step in the analysis is to process the explanation sheets and take a random sample of them. Explanation sheets are forms that have a limited number of explanations available for a scorer to denote the reason for the score assigned to the particular entry. Although the explanation sheets have a limited number of explanations, there is an option provided to write-in the cause of the score, the comments section. A random sample of explanation sheets was taken from data provided by Pearson's Performance Scoring Center (PSC). The PSC placed all of their explanation sheets separated by grade level into pdf files. The first and last explanation sheet in each pdf was then selected for analysis. A broad picture of the incidence of the different types of issues surrounding the development and assembly of portfolios by the APA teachers is the goal of this report. The analysis was done using SAS to generate frequency distributions overall, by grade, and by subject. A total of 1,521 individual issues were analyzed.

### **Results**

This section will show the results of the analysis of the explanation sheets. The analysis will be broken down by overall frequency, grade level, and subject matter. The overall distribution of the data is shown in the following three tables. Table 1 displays the breakdown of the overall distribution of the explanation sheet issues in the sample.

**Table 1. Overall Issue Frequency**

Issue	Total	Percent
Evidence/rubric does not assess CPI link	776	51.0
Evidence/rubric does not connect to the essence of the CPI/strand/standard	123	8.1
Evidence/rubric assesses two different CPI links	119	7.8
Evidence/rubric assess more than the CPI link	101	6.6
Physically prompted to an incorrect answer	96	6.3
CPI link/strand/standard was not allowable for assigned level of student	88	5.8
Evidence assesses only part of the CPI link	56	3.7
The first activity in the entry is clearly more difficult than the second activity	42	2.8
Student responses are unclear, unreadable, etc.	28	1.8
The CPI link includes multiple skills, but each piece of evidence assessed a different skill of the link	23	1.5
Evidence indicates the concept was incorrectly assessed	17	1.1
CPI link/strand was duplicated in another entry	16	1.1
Inappropriate format of evidence	15	1.0
Other: Eight other issues (each cited less than .5 %)	21	1.4

The majority of issues concerned the evidence/rubric improperly assessing the CPI link, which means that there is a content alignment issue. Content alignment is the issue that teachers have the most difficulty addressing appropriately. This occurred in several ways, including the evidence/rubric not assessing the CPI link, not connecting to the essence of the CPI/strand/standard, assessing two different CPI links, assessing more than the CPI link, and assessing only part of the CPI link. Those five issues accounted for approximately 75% of the explanation sheet issues with the evidence/rubric not assessing the CPI link issue accounting for over 50%. The only other issues above 5% were the APA student being physically prompted to an incorrect answer and the CPI link/strand/standard not being allowed for the assigned level of student.

Table 2 shows the overall distribution of grade levels in the sample.

**Table 2. Overall Grade Frequency**

Grade	Total	Percent
3 <sup>rd</sup>	216	14.2
4 <sup>th</sup>	275	18.1
5 <sup>th</sup>	146	9.6
6 <sup>th</sup>	164	10.8
7 <sup>th</sup>	189	12.4
8 <sup>th</sup>	224	14.7
9 <sup>th</sup>	11	0.7
10 <sup>th</sup>	30	2
11 <sup>th</sup>	225	14.8
12 <sup>th</sup>	41	2.7

There is roughly equal distribution among the grades, with a slight bump at 4<sup>th</sup> grade and a slight dip for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Ninth, tenth, and twelfth grade are grades that only test in somewhat unusual circumstances. Ninth and tenth grades only test in science, and then only if the APA student is considered to be taking Biology. An APA student will test in 12<sup>th</sup> grade if that student has transferred and was not tested in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade.

Table 3 displays the overall distribution of the subject matters in the sample. The APA tests language arts literacy (LAL) (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>), mathematics (3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>), and science (4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and Biology).

**Table 3. Overall Subject Matter Frequency**

Subject	Total	Percent
LAL	576	37.9
Mathematics	698	45.9
Science	247	16.2

There is a slightly larger percentage of mathematics, which is mainly due to 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade having a larger percentage of issues in portfolios in the mathematics area.

A distribution for the comments section, which allowed the scoring reader to comment on why the issue was selected, was also created. However, there were no more than three

occurrences for any given comment, so further statistical analysis would have been exceptionally difficult.

### **Grade Level**

In Table 4, issues on explanation sheets are broken down by percentages at each grade level. The issues are still ordered based on most common to least common overall, as they were in Table 1. Although 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade information is provided for, those grades will not be part of the analysis due to the extremely low samples sizes. Looking at the issue breakdown by grade level, a few interesting aspects appear. First, physically prompted to an incorrect answer appeared at a much higher rate for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students than any other grade. Additionally, physically prompted to an incorrect answer was substantially less frequent at 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Second, evidence/rubric assesses two different links had an interesting pattern—more frequent at 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade, less frequent at 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and then slightly above average frequency at 11<sup>th</sup> grade. It does not appear to be related to the academic level of the material. Third, CPI link/strand/standard was not allowable for assigned level of student was very frequent for 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade, very infrequent at 5<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and did not occur in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Lastly, the most frequent issue, evidence/rubric does not assess the CPI link, was less frequent in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and then occurred at a much higher rate for the other grades (although 7<sup>th</sup> grade was moderate).

**Table 4. Issue Percentages by Grade**

Issue*	Grade										Total
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Evidence/rubric does not assess CPI link	41.7	43.6	56.2	58.5	49.7	56.3	54.6	50.0	55.1	56.1	51.0
Evidence/rubric does not connect to the essence of the CPI/strand/standard	7.9	9.1	6.2	7.9	7.9	9.8	9.1	0.0	6.7	14.6	8.1
Evidence/rubric assesses two different CPI links	12.0	11.3	6.9	7.9	4.2	3.1	9.1	3.3	8.4	7.3	7.8
Evidence/rubric assess more than the CPI link	6.5	9.5	6.2	4.3	4.8	6.7	18.2	3.3	7.6	2.4	6.6
Physically prompted to an incorrect answer	14.8	7.6	1.4	6.1	5.8	1.8	0.0	6.7	5.8	2.4	6.3
CPI link/strand/standard was not allowable for assigned level of student	5.1	9.1	1.4	0.0	12.7	5.8	0.0	26.7	2.2	0.0	5.8
Evidence assesses only part of the CPI link	0.9	2.9	4.8	1.2	5.8	4.0	0.0	10.0	5.8	2.4	3.7
The first activity in the entry is clearly more difficult than the second activity	0.5	2.2	2.1	6.1	3.7	4.5	0.0	0.0	1.3	4.9	2.8
Student responses are unclear, unreadable, etc.	1.9	1.1	2.7	3.1	0.0	5.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8
The CPI link includes multiple skills, but each piece of evidence assessed a different skill of the link	2.3	0.4	0.7	2.4	2.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	1.5
Evidence indicates the concept was incorrectly assessed	0.9	1.5	1.4	0.6	2.1	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.0	1.1
CPI link/strand was duplicated in another entry	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1	2.4	1.1
Inappropriate format of evidence	3.2	0.4	2.7	0.6	0.5	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0
Other: Eight other issues	0.9	0.6	5.9	0.6	0.5	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.4	7.3	1.4

\*1,521 total issues analyzed.

## Subject Matter

In Table 5, issues on explanation sheets are broken down by percentages for each subject matter. The issues are still ordered based on most common to least common overall, as they were in Table 1. Looking at the issue breakdown by subject matter, one interesting aspect appears when comparing the subject matters distributions.

**Table 5. Issue Percentages by Subject Matter**

Issue*	LAL	Mathematics	Science	Total
Evidence/rubric does not assess CPI link	49.7	53.1	48.6	51.0
Evidence/rubric does not connect to the essence of the CPI/strand/standard	9.9	8.2	3.6	8.1
Evidence/rubric assesses two different CPI links	8.3	7.0	8.9	7.8
Evidence/rubric assess more than the CPI link	6.8	5.3	10.1	6.6
Physically prompted to an incorrect answer	6.3	5.7	8.1	6.3
CPI link/strand/standard was not allowable for assigned level of student	6.6	5.5	4.9	5.8
Evidence assesses only part of the CPI link	3.1	3.3	6.1	3.7
The first activity in the entry is clearly more difficult than the second activity	2.1	3.0	3.6	2.8
Student responses are unclear, unreadable, etc.	1.9	1.9	1.6	1.8
The CPI link includes multiple skills, but each piece of evidence assessed a different skill of the link	1.4	1.9	0.8	1.5
Evidence indicates the concept was incorrectly assessed	0.5	1.3	1.6	1.1
CPI link/strand was duplicated in another entry	0.9	1.4	0.4	1.1
Inappropriate format of evidence	1.6	0.6	0.8	1.0
Other: Eight other issues	0.9	1.8	0.8	1.4

\*1,521 total issues analyzed.

Science has a slightly different distribution than LAL and mathematics. This is clearest for three issues—first, evidence/rubric does not connect to the essence of the CPI/strand/standards; second, evidence/rubric assesses more than the CPI link; and third, evidence assesses only part of the CPI link. All three of these issues are content alignment issues.

### **Discussion**

Generally, most issues cited on the explanation sheets concerned problems with CPI link or evidence. The issue with the greatest incidence being evidence/rubric does not assess CPI link. Training APA teachers on this issue, could result in an increase in scorable portfolios. The distribution of issues does not appear to vary with grade level. There are a couple issues that have a high incidence at one or two grades, but there is not a sufficiently strong pattern to change APA teacher training at those grade levels. Additionally, there does not appear to be any meaningful variation of the distribution of issues for the different subject matters. The vast majority of issues deal with content alignment, which could be a good starting point if teacher training were instituted.

### **Conclusions**

The explanation sheets are a helpful starting place for improving APA portfolio instruction to teachers, but due to the extremely large variations on explanation sheet issues, it is difficult to specify the different ways in which teachers are misapplying the APA process even knowing the mistakes made. Although comments were analyzed with the other categories, no comment occurred more than three times in the analysis, so attempting to further explain the issues through that information would not be appropriate. However, the summary information provided by this report is a great starting

point for training teachers in the most common errors associated with APA portfolios. These errors are all correctable by the teachers regardless of why the teacher misapplied the APA process, so devoting training resources to the top five issues, which account for 80% of overall issues on the explanation sheets, could have an impact in reducing the incidence of those errors. The top four errors are all content alignment-based, which would be a good starting focus for any training project.

**APPENDIX N: Scoring Patterns Study**

New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment

Scoring Patterns Study

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Pearson

# **New Jersey Alternate Proficiency Assessment**

## **Scoring Patterns Study**

### **Introduction**

New Jersey began implementation of the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA) during the 2001-2002 school year. This was in response to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997*, which required that states develop and conduct alternate assessments beginning no later than July 1, 2000. Additionally, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* requires that all students, including those with disabilities, participate in the state assessment program. NCLB also requires that the measurement of progress toward meeting state standards include assessment results for all students. During the 2007-2008 school year, design changes were instituted based on the U.S. Department of Education peer review. The purpose of this report was to investigate the scoring patterns of the redesigned APA. This is a part of an overall group of four research studies conducted to assess the validity of the APA. The *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* states, “Ultimately, the validity of an intended interpretation of test scores relies on all the available evidence relevant to the technical quality of a testing system. This includes evidence of careful test construction; adequate score reliability; appropriate test administration and scoring, accurate score scaling, equating, and standard setting; and careful attention to fairness for all examinees” (p. 17). This research report is one piece of evidence in assessing the overall validity of the APA. This was accomplished by computing the correlations among complexity, performance, and independence on the APA, looking at the frequencies of certain score combinations for those domains, and conducting several step-wise regression analyses. This research report concludes that the APA is primarily a performance based instrument, because an examinee’s performance subtotal accounts for almost all of the examinee’s total score variance.

## Data

The data for this report comes from the results of the 2010-2011 NJ APA administration. There were a total of 9,270 examinees taking the APA in one or more subject areas—language arts literacy (LAL), mathematics, and science. This resulted in a total of 20,412 valid scores for the examinees from all three subject areas—8,528 in LAL, 8,447 in mathematics, and 3,437 in science. Each score is comprised of four pieces of evidence. Each piece of evidence is given a score in three dimensions: complexity, performance, and independence. Table 1 shows the scoring by dimension. Complexity can be a zero, one, two, three, or four. Performance can be a zero, two, four, six, or eight. Independence can be a zero, one, two, three, or four. These values are then summed across the four pieces of evidence to obtain a complexity subtotal ranging from zero to 16, a performance subtotal ranging from zero to 32, and an independence subtotal ranging from zero to 16. These three subtotals are then summed to arrive at a subject total, which determines the examinee’s level of proficiency for that subject. The data used for this report consists of all of the dimensional scores for each piece of evidence for each examinee that resulted in a valid score in that subject for the examinee.

**Table 1. Dimension Scoring**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Score Range per Reader</b>	<b>Calculation of Two Reader Scores</b>	<b>Score Range per entry</b>	<b>Entries Required per Subject</b>	<b>Maximum Possible Points By Subject (Across Entries)</b>
Complexity	0 – 4	average	0 - 4	4	16
Performance	0 – 4	add	0 - 8	4	32
Independence	0 – 4	average	0 - 4	4	16
<b>Maximum Possible Score per Subject</b>					<b>64</b>

## Analyses

SAS 9.2 was used to calculate a correlation matrix for complexity subtotal, performance subtotal, independence subtotal, and subject total for three situations—overall, by subject area, and by grade level. This analysis was done for two purposes. First, to determine which of the three subtotals is

most highly correlated with subject total. Second, to determine which pair of the three subtotals has the lowest correlation.

SAS 9.2 was also used to create a frequency table for all three pairs of subtotal variables overall, by subject area, and by grade level. The frequency table results, coupled with the correlation results, can help to identify any potential misalignment between the dimension scores for the pieces of evidence. If, for instance, pieces of evidence are receiving scores of one or two in complexity and scores of three or four in independence, it could be argued that teachers are constructing tasks that are insufficiently complex to maximize the examinees potential score. Ideally, the scores for both dimensions should be similar, i.e., scoring one for both dimensions or three for both dimensions. Evidence-level variables will be used for these frequency tables. Subtotal variables will not be used due to the unwieldy aspects of zero to 16 versus zero to 32 in table form.

Lastly, SAS 9.2 was used to conduct a stepwise regression analysis of the data. A stepwise regression analysis shows which dimension accounts most strongly for the variance in the subject total. Ideally, performance subtotal accounts most strongly for the variance in the subject total, so that complexity subtotal and independence subtotal, two variables controlled by the NJ APA teacher, have less influence on a student's proficiency level.

## Results

The results of the correlation matrix are displayed in Table 2, which is based on an n-count of 20,412. The subtotal variable with the highest correlation with subject total is performance subtotal at 0.967. The next highest correlation between a subtotal variable and subject total is 0.899 for independence subtotal and subject total. The lowest correlation with subject total is for complexity subtotal at 0.845. The pair of subtotal variables with the lowest correlation is complexity subtotal and independence subtotal at 0.683.

**Table 2. Overall Correlation Matrix**

	<b>Complexity Subtotal</b>	<b>Performance Subtotal</b>	<b>Independence Subtotal</b>	<b>Subject Total</b>
<b>Complexity Subtotal</b>	1	0.746	0.683	0.845
<b>Performance Subtotal</b>	0.746	1	0.798	0.967
<b>Independence Subtotal</b>	0.683	0.798	1	0.899
<b>Subject Total</b>	0.845	0.967	0.899	1

When the correlation matrix is computed for each of the three different subject matters, LAL, mathematics, and science, it is roughly similar in terms of correlation values and has identical hierarchy. When the correlation matrix is computed for each grade level, 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, it is roughly similar in terms of correlation values and has identical hierarchy for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade. At 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade there are a limited number of students that take the NJ APA, so there is not always identical hierarchy for the substantially smaller sample sizes. Additionally, the correlation matrices at the evidence-level were comparable to the values in Table 2.

The results of the frequency table for complexity and independence overall are displayed in Table 3, which is based on an n-count of 81,648. The most frequently paired values for complexity and independence are (2, 4), (0, 0), (3, 4), and (4, 4) at about 28%, 20%, 18%, and 13% respectively (these

four values account for approximately 79% of all combinations). The only value that seems to stray from the identity axis is the (2, 4) combination, which is also the most frequent combination.

**Table 3. Overall Frequency Table Percentages for Complexity and Independence Scores**

		Independence (%)				
		0	1	2	3	4
Complexity (%)	0	19.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	1	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.51
	2	1.12	3.84	1.49	5.02	27.55
	3	0.84	1.31	0.83	3.26	18.07
	4	0.55	0.62	0.44	1.94	12.89

The next frequency table is for performance and independence, displayed in Table 4, which is based on an n-count of 81,648. The most frequently paired values for performance and independence are (8, 4), (0, 0), and (6, 4) at about 44%, 21 %, and 11% respectively (these three values account for approximately 76% of all combinations).

**Table 4. Overall Frequency Table Percentages for Performance and Independence Scores**

		Independence (%)				
		0	1	2	3	4
Performance (%)	0	21.19	0.08	0.04	0.16	0.92
	2	0.04	1.30	0.24	0.49	1.38
	4	0.05	0.82	0.27	0.37	2.16
	6	0.18	1.60	0.91	3.25	10.81
	8	0.61	2.02	1.32	6.02	43.75

The final frequency table is for complexity and performance, displayed in Table 5, which is based on an n-count of 81,648. The most frequently paired values for complexity and performance are (2, 8), (0, 0), (3, 8), (4, 8), and (2, 6) at about 23%, 20%, 17%, 13%, and 10% respectively (these five values account for approximately 83% of all combinations). There is one value (2,8) which appears to potentially raise concern. However, due to the larger magnitude of performance in this pairing, if complexity were raised to three or four and performance were reduced one value to six, there would be no increase (or possibly a small decrease) in the combined values. Therefore, there is not a significant outlier for this pairing.

**Table 5. Overall Frequency Table Percentages for Complexity and Performance Scores**

		Performance (%)				
		0	2	4	6	8
Complexity (%)	0	19.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	1	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.14	0.44
	2	1.24	2.36	2.49	9.69	23.23
	3	0.88	0.70	0.80	4.77	17.17
	4	0.70	0.35	0.35	2.17	12.88

When all three frequency tables are computed for each of the three different subject matters, LAL, mathematics, and science, they are all roughly similar in terms of frequency percentages with a slightly different order of frequency for complexity and independence and for complexity and performance, but not substantially different. When all three frequency tables are computed for each grade level, 3<sup>rd</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>, they are roughly similar in terms of frequency percentages for 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. At 11<sup>th</sup> grade there are slightly different values and a slightly different order of frequency for complexity by independence, but not substantially different. At 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade there are a limited number of students that take the NJ APA, so there are a few percentage values that are very different.

The stepwise regression analysis results indicate that performance subtotal accounts for approximately 93.5% of the variance of the subject subtotal. This is roughly consistent over all three subject areas and over all grade levels, except for 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade due to their low examinee totals. Independence subtotal accounts for approximately 4.4% of the variance of the subject subtotal and complexity subtotal account for approximately 2.1% of the subject subtotal variance. These values are based on a forward selection model that selects the largest value first. To determine whether complexity subtotal or independence subtotal might account for the variance of subject subtotal in a comparable way, a stepwise regression forcing each variable first before looking at the remaining variables. When complexity subtotal was forced first, it accounted for approximately 71.5% of the variance of the subject subtotal, a steep decline from the 93.5% of performance subtotal when the model is not constricted. The second variable chosen, when complexity subtotal is first, is performance

subtotal, which accounts for approximately 25.5% of the variance of the subject subtotal. When independence subtotal was forced first, it accounted for approximately 80.8% of the variance of the subject subtotal, also a decline from the 93.5% of performance subtotal when the model is not constricted. The second variable chosen, when independence subtotal is first, is performance subtotal, which account for approximately 17.2% of the variance of the subject subtotal.

### **Discussion**

The correlation results in this report indicate that the performance subtotal, which has a .967 correlation with subject total, is most responsible for explaining variance of the subject total. Because of the exceptionally high correlation, performance subtotal is virtually identical to subject total. A strong argument could be made that complexity subtotal and independence subtotal do not bring any new information to subject total when the stepwise regression analysis is included. Next, looking at the correlations among the subtotals, the lowest correlation is between complexity subtotal and independence subtotal. The correlation between complexity subtotal and performance subtotal is comparable in magnitude, so the frequency tables for both pairs should be examined.

The frequency table for complexity and independence shows that (2, 4) is the most frequently occurring combination. This raises the potential issue of improving the subject total by increasing complexity while only slightly decreasing independence. However, looking at the frequency table for complexity and performance in conjunction with complexity and independence, the most frequently occurring combination is (2, 8). This indicates that trying to increase complexity could have the potential to affect not only independence but also performance. Because independence and performance are both at their maximum values for these pairings, it would appear that an attempt to increase complexity to achieve a higher subject total should not be attempted.

Looking at the results of the stepwise regression analysis, it becomes evident that performance subtotal accounts for the most variance in the subject total scores for NJ APA examinees. Given that

performance subtotal has twice the value possible of both independence subtotal and complexity subtotal, a larger influence for performance subtotal would be expected. However, this is quite a bit larger influence than would be expected if each dimension brought comparable unique information to subject total. This shows that students are obtaining comparable scores for complexity subtotal and independence subtotal, but that there is a much wider variance within performance subtotal, which is what is influencing subject total. Performance subtotal is the one dimension that NJ APA teachers have less explicit control over. NJ APA teachers decide the levels of complexity and independence, which determine the complexity subtotal and independence subtotal values. The NJ APA teachers do not have as much control over the examinees' performance subtotal, which is the examinees' actual performance on the task.

### **Conclusions**

The scoring patterns analysis showed several interesting results regarding the relative importance of the three dimensions, complexity, performance, and independence. The scoring patterns analysis showed that almost all NJ APA teachers are choosing appropriate levels of complexity and independence for their students to maximize their students' performance and proficiency level. Additionally, through the regression analyses, the dimensions of complexity and independence appear to be somewhat superfluous in ordering a NJ APA examinees' subject total compared to their peers. These results show that the NJ APA subject total results are primarily based on examinees' performance subtotals and not on the complexity or independence subtotals. The NJ APA examinees' subject total results then directly feed into an examinees' proficiency level. Therefore, NJ APA teachers are successfully choosing the complexity and independence levels for their students to maximize subject total. In addition to that, because performance subtotal accounts for the greatest amount of variance in subject total, which determines proficiency level, based on these analyses the NJ

APA is primarily a performance based instrument. Even though 50% of the subject total consists of complexity and independence measures, performance is what is dictating the change in subject total.

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