

A Profile of State Assessment Programs

Since 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has been sponsoring research which focuses on comparing the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and state proficiency standards. Documents which discuss the research on NAEP and state proficiency standards are available at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping.asp>. As part of this research, NCES developed methodology to show where states' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards fit on the NAEP scale. This methodology offers an approximate, but credible, indication of the relative stringency of the states' AYP standards. While the mapped NAEP equivalent scores are useful in determining the relative rigor of state proficiency standards, the results of the studies should be interpreted with caution. Variations among states can be due to many factors, including differences in assessment frameworks, test specifications, the psychometric properties of the tests, the definition of AYP standards, and the standard-setting process.

In collaboration with the Education Information Management Advisory Consortium (EIMAC)—Task Force on Assessment, of the Council of Chief State School Officers, and in conjunction with the release of the 2007 results of the mapping study, NCES conducted a survey of state assessment programs to provide contextual information to document general state assessment program information. The NAEP State Coordinator in every state was asked to gather information from relevant sources about the state's unique testing program and to input this information into an online system for analysis and summary. Information regarding the grades and subjects tested during the 2006-07 year, state performance levels and performance level descriptors, the composition of main state assessments, and changes to the state assessments between 2004-05 and 2006-07 was compiled. After this information was verified and confirmed by the NAEP State Coordinator of each state, it was summarized in individual state profiles and tabulated in the eight-block format described below. The first block combines all subjects. The remaining blocks (2-8) are presented twice, first for Reading/Language Arts and then for Mathematics. The example that follows is for Reading/Language Arts only.

Block 1 summarizes information about each state’s testing program: the name of the program, the different assessments, the type and format of each assessment, the grades and subjects tested, and the purpose of each assessment. With regard to the assessment purpose, response options were: instructional, student accountability, school accountability, staff accountability, and other. Additional information provided by NAEP State Coordinators summarizing their states’ testing programs and the purposes of the assessments is included at the end of the block.

State

Proficiency Assessments for State Students

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Component	Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
	Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Reading																				
Proficiency Assessments for State Students (PASS)	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Proficiency Assessments for State Students- Alternate (PASS-Alt)	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Writing																				
PASS	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
PASS-Alt	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Mathematics																				
PASS	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
PASS-Alt	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Science																				
PASS	Regular	CRT					√							√		√				[2]
PASS-Alt	Alternate	CRT					√							√		√				[2]

1 Example purposes: Instructional: student diagnosis, student placement, instructional planning, program evaluation, improvement of instruction for groups of students, etc.
 Student Accountability: student awards/recognition, honors diploma, student promotion/retention, required remediation, exit requirement, etc.
 School Accountability: monetary awards/penalties, school accreditation, school performance reporting, high school skills guarantee, school improvement plans, etc.
 Staff Accountability: staff awards/recognition, salary increases, staff dismissal, staff evaluation or certification, staff monetary penalties, etc.

2 LEAs have the option and discretion on whether or not to include state assessment results as input to their secondary level body of evidence systems, diploma endorsements, etc.

Block 2 summarizes information about the composition of the main state assessments in 2006-07 for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The percentages displayed are based on the types of items, unless otherwise noted. Additional information about the timing of the assessments and whether assessments measured skills acquired only in prior grades is included in this section.

Block 3 summarizes information about the assessment(s) and performance levels used by the state in 2006-07 for state accountability in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics in grades 4 and 8, as well as the assessment(s) and performance levels used to determine Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

State

Reading/Language Arts

2

Composition and Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2006-07

	Multiple Choice	Short Constructed Response	Extended Constructed Response	Performance Tasks	Other
Grade 4 Test	85%	10%	5%	0%	0%
Grade 8 Test	85%	10%	5%	0%	0%
During the 2006-07 academic year:					
a. When was the assessment administered?		Spring 2007			
b. Did any of the assessments measure skills from the previous grade?		No.			

3

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2006-07 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	State CRTs (PASS and PASS-Alt)
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	PASS-Alt results. The Proficient performance level is determined by alternate achievement standards.
Test used for state accountability	State CRTs (PASS and PASS-Alt)
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2006-07 assessments	July 2003
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2006-07 academic year	—

Block 4 provides the performance level descriptors used for meeting AYP in 2006-07 for the main Reading and Mathematics assessments in grades 4 and 8. The descriptors correspond to the *proficient* performance level as it is defined by each state.

Block 5 summarizes differences in testing accommodations between the state’s assessment and NAEP during the 2006-07 testing year. The first section of this block lists accommodations allowed on the state assessment but not on NAEP, and the second section lists accommodations allowed on NAEP which were not allowed on the state assessment.

Block 6 presents changes to the main state assessment in Reading and Mathematics between the 2004-05 and 2006-07 school years. For many states, additional information about these changes is included in a note below the block.

State **Reading/Language Arts**

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

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Grade 4 Proficient: Students at the proficient level read a variety of grade-appropriate texts; make relevant connections within texts; cite appropriate evidence for inferences; and demonstrate the ability to extend connections beyond the obvious. Students read a variety of grade-appropriate text; show an accurate understanding of the text; explain the relevance of ideas and details to commonly understood concepts; explain the relevance of literary elements to a story’s plot; select sufficient examples to support claims about main idea; select sufficient examples to support claims about a story’s use of literary elements; explain a conclusion with a sufficient amount of information drawn from the text.

Grade 8 Proficient: Students at the proficient level read a variety of texts; demonstrate understanding of organization; make complex connections between the text and themselves, the text and the world, and between other sources; provide explanations regarding an author’s purpose; explains how story elements are utilized in text; predict outcomes; and cites appropriate evidence as it relates to consequences. Students read a variety of grade-appropriate text; demonstrate an accurate understanding of the text; explain author’s purpose; explain the relevance of ideas and details to the text’s organization; explain the relevance of ideas and details to commonly understood concepts; explain the relevance of literary elements to a story’s plot and theme; select sufficient examples to support claims about the relevance and importance of information; select sufficient examples to support claims about main idea and organization; select sufficient examples to support claims about a story’s use of literary elements and structure; explain a conclusion with a sufficient amount of information drawn from the text.

Accommodation Differences between NAEP and the Main State Test

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State accommodations not on NAEP	Student uses color overlays to reduce glare or enhance text. Student uses a computer monitor screen cover. Student uses tactile graphics. Student uses audio amplification devices including and/or in addition to hearing aids to increase clarity. Student uses speech-to-text conversion or voice recognition during the Reading, Mathematics, or Science subtests. Student uses a tape recorder to record test responses rather than writing on a paper during the Reading, Mathematics, or Science subtests. Student takes the tests at the time of day when he or she is most likely to demonstrate peak performance. A subtest must be completed in single testing session. URL: http://www.k12.ss.us/PASS/docs/AccommodationsManual.pdf
NAEP accommodations not on state assessment	—

Changes to State Assessments between 2005 and 2007

6

Added grades	Eliminated grades	Changed cut scores	Changed the time of administration	Changed assessment items	Used entirely different assessment	Realigned to new content standards	Changed proficiency standards	Changed accommodation policy	Changed re-test policy	Changed test contractors	No significant changes
√		√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	

Block 7 provides information about the comparability of the state assessments between 2004-05 and 2006-07. Specifically, it is the answer given to the survey question “Are the reported 2006-07 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 Reading or Mathematics directly comparable with the 2004-05 reported results?”

Block 8 provides additional information about changes to the state assessment, inclusion policies, or administration of the state assessment between 2004-05 and 2006-07 that would have an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time.

State	Reading/Language Arts
7	Are the reported 2006–07 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2004–05 reported results?
	No, because the 2004-05 test was a matrix sampling design and the 2006-07 test was a single core-form design administered to each student.
8	Differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2004–05 and 2006–07 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time
	The state assessments changed significantly between the 2004-05 and 2006-07 administrations. The 2004-05 assessment employed a matrix sampling scheme to assess students for school accountability decisions and produce school, district and state results. However, individual student results were not comparable to each other. In contrast, the PASS 2006-07 administration forms were each built to the same specifications, ensuring the comparability of individual student scores. The single core-form design was an intentional design to facilitate the technical work (psychometrics) necessary to generate results that can be compared from year to year.

A panel of NAEP State Coordinators, under the guidance of NCES and in collaboration with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), developed the format and content of these profiles, which were then revised in collaboration with state assessment directors and NAEP State Coordinators from each state. Some answers may have been edited for consistency or for space limitations. All web addresses in these profiles were verified on July 1, 2008.

Source

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2007 Survey of State Assessment Program Characteristics.

Glossary

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Test
CTBS/5	Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills – Fifth Edition
ECA	End-of-Course Assessments
ELA	English Language Arts
EOC	End-of-Course exams
EOG	End-of-Grade exams
IEP	Individualized Education Program
LEA	Local Education Agency
LEP	Limited English Proficiency
NAEP	National Assessment of Educational Progress
NCLB	No Child Left Behind
NRT	Norm-Referenced Test
PLD	Performance Level Descriptor
SAT/9	Stanford Achievement Test – Ninth Edition
SAT/10	Stanford Achievement Test – Tenth Edition
SEA	State Education Agency

Arkansas

Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP)

Component	Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
	Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Language Arts																				
ACTAAP Benchmark Examinations	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		
Grade 11 Literacy Examination	Regular	CRT												√			√	√		
Alternate Portfolio Assessment System	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√				√		
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)	Regular	NRT	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					[2]	√		
Mathematics																				
Benchmark Examination	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√						√	√		
End of Course Tests [3]	Regular	CRT									√	√	√	√	√		√	√		
Alternate Portfolio Assessment System	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√	√						√		
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)	Regular	NRT	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√					[2]	√		

(Continued)

Arkansas

Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment, and Accountability Program (ACTAAP)

Component	Test		Grades Tested												Test Purpose ¹					
	Type	Format	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Instructional	Student Accountability	School Accountability	Staff Accountability	Other
Science [4]																				
ACTAAP Benchmark Examinations	Regular	CRT						√		√										[5]
Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS)	Regular	NRT				√	√	√	√	√	√	√						√		

- 1 Example purposes: Instructional: student diagnosis, student placement, instructional planning, program evaluation, improvement of instruction for groups of students, etc.
 Student Accountability: student awards/recognition, honors diploma, student promotion/retention, required remediation, exit requirement, etc.
 School Accountability: monetary awards/penalties, school accreditation, school performance reporting, high school skills guarantee, school improvement plans, etc.
 Staff Accountability: staff awards/recognition, salary increases, staff dismissal, staff evaluation or certification, staff monetary penalties, etc.
- 2 For grades K, 1, and 2 only
- 3 These end-of-course tests are taken when the course is completed. Students could (feasibly) take this course in grades 8 through 12. Not often taken in earlier grades, by state law, it is possible to take the Mathematics course in grades 5-8.
- 4 EOC Biology was field tested in 2007 and will be operational in 2008. The grade 10 Science Alternate Portfolio for Students with Disabilities will be in place in 2008.
- 5 2007 was the first year this test was operational, but performance standards will not be set until summer 2008, therefore 2007 students only received raw scores and this will not be factored into AYP or student accountability.

Composition and Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2006–07

	Multiple Choice	Short Constructed Response	Extended Constructed Response	Performance Tasks	Other
Grade 4 Test	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Grade 8 Test	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

During the 2006–07 academic year:

a. When was the assessment administered?	Grades 4 and 8 Reading were administered April 2007.
b. Did any of the assessments measure skills from the previous grade?	No.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2006–07 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	All CRTs
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	Alternate Portfolio Assessment System for Students with Disabilities is a CRT. Independent and Functional Independent levels can count as Proficient.
Test used for state accountability	All CRTs
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2006-07 assessments	Literacy (Reading and Writing) performance standards for grades 3-8 were reset in 2005.
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2006–07 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

<p>Grade 4 Proficient: In the area of Reading, fourth-grade students performing at the Proficient level demonstrate an overall understanding of the text, providing inferential, as well as literal, information. When reading text appropriate to fourth grade, they are able to extend ideas in the text by making inferences, drawing conclusions, and making connections to their own experience. The connections between the text and what the students infer are clear. Specifically, when reading literary text, Proficient-level fourth-graders summarize the story; draw conclusions about the characters or plot; and recognize relationships such as cause and effect. When reading informational text, Proficient-level students summarize the information and identify the author’s intent or purpose; draw reasonable conclusions from the text, recognize relationships such as cause and effect or similarities and differences; and identify the meaning of the selection’s key concepts. In the area of Writing, fourth-grade students performing at the Proficient level demonstrate reasonable control over the features in the five Writing domains.</p>	<p>Grade 8 Proficient: Eighth-grade students performing at the Proficient level show an overall understanding of the text, including inferential, as well as literal, information. When reading text appropriate to eighth grade, they extend the ideas in the text by making clear inferences from it, by drawing conclusions, and by making connections to their own experiences, including other reading experiences. Proficient eighth graders identify some of the devices authors use in composing text. In the area of Reading, eighth-grade students performing at the Proficient level show an overall understanding of the text, including inferential, as well as literal, information; extend the ideas in the text by making clear inferences, by drawing conclusions, and by making connections to their own experiences, including other reading experiences; analyze some of the devices authors use in composing text; and select and analyze a variety of information from various sources.</p>
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Accommodation Differences between NAEP and the Main State Test

State accommodations not on NAEP	—
NAEP accommodations not on state assessment	Students signing their responses require accommodation approval of the Arkansas Department of Education. Use of cutouts, overlays or bilingual booklets.

Changes to State Assessments between 2005 and 2007

Added grades	Eliminated grades	Changed cut scores	Changed the time of administration	Changed assessment items	Used entirely different assessment	Realigned to new content standards	Changed proficiency standards	Changed accommodation policy	Changed re-test policy	Changed test contractors	No significant changes
				√				√			

Note: Changed assessment items: 100% are released items every administration. Changed accommodation policy: Added LEP accommodation, word to word dictionary; the alternate portfolio for LEP students in place during 2005 was no longer available.

Are the reported 2006–07 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2004–05 reported results?

Yes.

Differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2004–05 and 2006–07 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time

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Composition and Administration of the Main Mathematics Test in 2006–07

	Multiple Choice	Short Constructed Response	Extended Constructed Response	Performance Tasks	Other
Grade 4 Test	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%
Grade 8 Test	50%	0%	50%	0%	0%

During the 2006–07 academic year:

a. When was the assessment administered?	Grades 4 and 8 Mathematics were administered April 2007.
b. Did any of the assessments measure skills from the previous grade?	No.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2006–07 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	All CRTs
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	Alternate Portfolio Assessment System for Students with Disabilities is a CRT. Independent and Functional Independent levels can count as Proficient.
Test used for state accountability	All CRTs
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2006-07 assessments	Mathematics performance standards for grades 3-8 were reset in 2005.
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2006–07 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4 Proficient: Fourth-grade students performing at the Proficient level consistently apply integrated procedural knowledge and conceptual understanding to problem-solving in the five Mathematics content strands. Fourth-grade students performing at this level use whole numbers to estimate, compute, and determine whether results are reasonable; have a conceptual understanding of fractions, decimals, and percents and their relationships; are able to solve real-world problems in all the Mathematics content strands; when directed to do so, accurately use four-function calculators, rulers, geometric shapes, and other technologies; employ problem-solving strategies, such as identifying and using appropriate information; and organize and present written solutions with both supporting information and explanations of how they were achieved.

Grade 8 Proficient: Eighth-grade students performing at the Proficient level apply mathematical concepts and procedures consistently to complex problems in the five Mathematics content strands. Eighth-grade students performing at this level can conjecture and defend their ideas and give supporting examples; understand the connections between fractions, percents, decimals, and other mathematical topics, such as algebra and functions; have a thorough understanding of basic-level arithmetic operations and an understanding sufficient for problem solving in practical situations; are familiar with quantity and spatial relationships in problem solving and reasoning; convey underlying reasoning skills beyond the level of arithmetic; compare and contrast mathematical ideas and generate their own examples; make inferences from data and graphs; apply properties of informal geometry; accurately use the tools of technology; and understand the process of gathering and organizing data and are able to calculate, evaluate, and communicate results within the domain of statistics and probability.

Accommodation Differences between NAEP and the Main State Test

State accommodations not on NAEP	—
NAEP accommodations not on state assessment	Sign some or all of the test questions or answer choices. Students signing their responses require accommodations approval by the Arkansas Department of Education. Use of cutouts, overlays, or bilingual booklet.

Changes to State Assessments between 2005 and 2007

Added grades	Eliminated grades	Changed cut scores	Changed the time of administration	Changed assessment items	Used entirely different assessment	Realigned to new content standards	Changed proficiency standards	Changed accommodation policy	Changed re-test policy	Changed test contractors	No significant changes
				√				√			

Note: Changed assessment items: 100% are released items every administration. Changed accommodation policy: Added LEP accommodation, word to word dictionary; the alternate portfolio for LEP students in place during 2005 was no longer available.

Are the reported 2006–07 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2004–05 reported results?

Yes.

Differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2004–05 and 2006–07 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time

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