

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

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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

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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

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

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																				
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√	√	√	
Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment [2]	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√	√	√	
Writing [3]																				
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment	Regular	CRT						√			√			√		√	√	√	√	
Mathematics																				
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√	√	√	
Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment [2]	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√	√	√	√	
Science [4]																				
Pennsylvania System of School Assessment	Regular	CRT					√				√			√		√	√	√	√	
Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment [2]	Alternate	CRT					√				√			√		√	√	√	√	

- 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.
- The Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) is for the students with severe cognitive disabilities.
- Although Pennsylvania does not have an alternate Writing assessment, schools are required to prepare their own alternate assessment for each child with severe cognitive disabilities. They are to maintain that testing information in the child's file, as it will be checked when schools are monitored.
- The Science PSSA and PASA were field tested in 2006-07 and will be operational in 2007-08.

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	90%	0%	10%	0%	0%
Grade 8 Test	90%	0%	10%	0%	0%

During the 2006–07 academic year:

a. When was the assessment administered?	The testing window for 2006-07 for the PSSA for grades 4 and 8 was March 12-23, 2007.
b. Did any of the assessments measure skills from the previous grade?	No.

Note: 90% of the items are multiple choice, representing 76% of the score. 10% of the items are extended constructed response, representing 24% of the score.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2006–07 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	PSSA and PASA
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	None
Test used for state accountability	PSSA and PASA
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2006-07 assessments	The performance standards in Reading for grades 5, 8, and 11 were validated in 2005 and applied to the 2005 test results; the performance standards for grades 4, 6, and 7 were set in 2006 and applied to the 2006; the performance standards for grade 3 were validated in 2007 and applied to the 2007 test results.
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2006–07 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

<p>Grade 4 Proficient: A student scoring at the Proficient level routinely utilizes a variety of reading strategies to comprehend and interpret grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction: Identifies word meanings, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and word parts; makes inferences and draws conclusions, using textual support; identifies stated and implied main ideas and relevant details; summarizes text; makes within and among text-to-text connections; identifies purpose of text (narrative, informational, poetic); identifies literary elements (character, setting, plot); identifies figurative language (personification, simile, alliteration); identifies fact and opinion and the use of exaggeration (bias) in nonfiction; identifies organizational patterns of text (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast) and the proper sequence of steps in a list of directions; and interprets graphics, charts, and headings. URL: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/Grade_4_Reading_PLDs.pdf</p>	<p>Grade 8 Proficient: A student scoring at the Proficient level routinely utilizes a variety of reading strategies to comprehend and interpret grade-level appropriate fiction and nonfiction: Applies a variety of strategies to determine meanings of words, including synonyms and antonyms, using context clues and word parts; makes inferences, draws conclusions, and generalizes, using textual support; identifies or explains stated and implied main ideas; summarizes text; makes within and among text-to-text connections; interprets and analyzes: purpose of text (e.g., narrative, informational); organizational patterns (e.g., sequencing, comparison/contrast); and relationships among literary elements (character, setting, plot, theme); identifies and explains the effect of figurative language (e.g., simile, metaphor) and point of view; interprets and analyzes the use of facts and opinions in nonfiction; identifies and analyzes bias and propaganda in nonfiction; describes and analyzes the sequence of steps in a list of directions; and interprets and analyzes graphics and charts. URL: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/Grade_8_Reading_PLDs.pdf</p>
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Accommodation Differences between NAEP and the Main State Test

<p>State accommodations not on NAEP</p>	<p>Extended time, directions may be audiotaped, braille edition of tests, multiple choice selections may be answered by sign language, tape record answers for multiple choice only, whisper read to self, read directions to student in their native language, augmentative communication system, listening devices, highlighters (student only on all parts of the test), test administrator may use highlighters or stickers for directions only, simplify directions, hospital or home testing by district staff.</p>
<p>NAEP accommodations not on state assessment</p>	<p>—</p>

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: Regarding “Changed Assessment Items”, the items were changed only to reflect the edits to the Assessment Anchor Content Standards. Regarding “Realigned Assessment to New Content”, the Assessment Anchor Content Standards were edited for 2007. Regarding “Changed Proficiency Standards”, the performance standards for grades 5, 8, and 11 were validated in 2005 and applied to the results of the 2005 assessment, the performance standards for grades 4, 6, and 7 were set in 2006 and applied to the results of the 2006 assessment, and the performance standards for grade 3 were validated in 2007 and applied to the results of the 2007 assessment. Regarding “Changed Test Contractors”, for grade 3 Pennsylvania changed the test contractor from CTB to DRC. DRC was the contractor for grades 4-8 plus 11.

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

Grade 4: No. In 2004-05 Pennsylvania did not have a grade 4 Reading test. The first year for grade 4 in Pennsylvania was 2006.
Grade 8: 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

No significant differences

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	95%	0%	5%	0%	0%
Grade 8 Test	95%	0%	5%	0%	0%

During the 2006–07 academic year:

a. When was the assessment administered?	The testing window for 2006-07 for the PSSA for grades 4 and 8 was March 12-23, 2007.
b. Did any of the assessments measure skills from the previous grade?	No.

Note: 95% of the items are multiple choice, representing 82% of the score. %5 of the items are extended constructed response, representing 18% of the score.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2006–07 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	PSSA and PASA
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	None
Test used for state accountability	PSSA and PASA
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2006-07 assessments	The performance standards in Mathematics for grades 5, 8, and 11 were validated in 2005 and applied to the 2005 test results; the performance levels for grades 4, 6, and 7 were set in 2006 and applied to the 2006 test results; the performance levels for grade 3 were validated in 2007 and applied to the 2007 test results.
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2006–07 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

<p>Grade 4 Proficient: A student performing at the Proficient level solves practical and real-world problems. A student performing at the Proficient level: Locates fractions and decimals on a number line; solves problems involving whole numbers, fractions and decimals; adds/subtracts fractions with like denominators; uses estimation and rounding in problems; uses elapsed time to determine beginning or ending time; estimates measurements of familiar objects; uses mathematical names to classify basic one-, two- and three-dimensional geometric figures; describes the symmetry in figures; plots ordered pairs on a simple grid; identifies rule for numeric or geometric patterns; applies function rules to complete tables or lists; uses informal methods to solve number sentences; matches story situations to expressions or number sentences; describes data shown in displays; translates information from one type of display to another; and makes predictions, including chance, based on data. URL: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/Grade_4_Math_PLDs.pdf</p>	<p>Grade 8 Proficient: A student performing at the Proficient level solves practical and real-world problems. A student performing at the Proficient level: Calculates with complex rational numbers; solves rate and percent problems; uses rounding and estimation in problem settings, including problems involving percent; solves rate problems; Uses formulas to determine number of sides and angle measures of polygons; converts basic measurements of objects and time to two units above or below; calculates surface areas and volumes of rectangular prisms; Matches cones and pyramids with nets; uses properties of angles formed by parallel lines cut by a transversal; uses the Pythagorean Theorem to solve practical problems; plots points on a coordinate plane: Matches or determines the rule (linear function) to describe values in a table; evaluates or simplifies expressions; solves equations or inequalities; matches an algebraic expression to a problem setting; Draws conclusions from graphical representations of data; determines the permutations and combinations of data sets; and makes predictions based on statistical and data displays. URL: http://www.pde.state.pa.us/a_and_t/lib/a_and_t/Grade_8_Math_PLDs.pdf</p>
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Accommodation Differences between NAEP and the Main State Test

<p>State accommodations not on NAEP</p>	<p>Extended time, audio version of the test and directions, Braille edition of tests, respond in sign language for multiple choice, tape-record answers to multiple choice and open-ended questions, Cranmer Abacus, number line if listed in IEP, adaptive calculator, whisper read to self, special paper (large square or graph paper), read directions to student in their native language, word-to-word dictionaries for ELL, augmentative communication system, listening devices, highlighters (student only on all parts of the test), test administrator may use highlighters or stickers for directions only, simplify directions, hospital or home testing by district staff.</p>
<p>NAEP accommodations not on state assessment</p>	<p>—</p>

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: Regarding “Changed Assessment Items”, the items were changed only to reflect the edits to the Assessment Anchor Content Standards. Regarding “Realigned Assessment to New Content”, the Assessment Anchor Content Standards were edited for 2007. Regarding “Changed Proficiency Standards”, the performance standards for grades 5, 8, and 11 were validated in 2005 and applied to the results of the 2005 assessment, the performance standards for grades 4, 6, and 7 were set in 2006 and applied to the results of the 2006 assessment, and the performance standards for grade 3 were validated in 2007 and applied to the results of the 2007 assessment. Regarding “Changed Test Contractors”, for grade 3 Pennsylvania changed the test contractor from CTB to DRC. DRC was the contractor for grades 4-8 plus 11.

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

Grade 4: No. In 2004-05 Pennsylvania did not have a grade 4 Mathematics test. The first year for grade 4 in Pennsylvania was 2006.
 Grade 8: 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

No significant differences