A Profile of State Assessment Programs 2009

Since 2003, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has supported research that compares the proficiency standards of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) with those of individual states. State assessments are placed onto a common scale defined by NAEP, which allows states' proficiency standards to be compared not only to NAEP, but also to each other.[1] While the mapped NAEP equivalent scores of state standards are useful in determining the relative rigor of states' 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 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) standards, and the standard-setting process.

In 2007, in collaboration with the Education Information Management Advisory Consortium (EIMAC)—Task Force on Assessment of the Council of Chief State School Officers—NCES conducted a survey of state assessment programs to gain contextual information about the states' assessment programs in 2006–07 and to note changes in their assessments between the 2004–05 and 2006–07 school years that could affect the interpretation of the mapping results. The NAEP State Coordinator in every state was asked to provide information about the state's testing program through an online survey. After this information was verified and confirmed by the NAEP State Coordinator of each state, it was summarized in individual state profiles.[2] These profiles were designed in collaboration with a panel of NAEP State Coordinators.

In support of the 2009 Mapping Study, NAEP State Coordinators were asked by NCES to update the information collected on their state assessment program in 2007. Following similar verification steps, the information was summarized into profiles to provide a concise snapshot of all state assessment programs in the 2008–09 school year. Each profile presents information on the grades and subjects tested during the 2008–09 year, state performance levels and performance level descriptors, the composition of main state assessments, and changes to the state assessments between 2006–07 and 2008–09.

A sample profile is shown below. Information on the state assessment programs is presented in nine blocks. The first block combines all subjects. The remaining blocks (2–9) are presented twice, once for Reading/Language Arts and then for Mathematics. The example that follows is for Reading/Language Arts only. Some answers may have been edited for consistency or for space limitations; however, the substance of all answers is unchanged from what states provided to the NAEP State Coordinators. All web addresses in these profiles were verified on May 15, 2011. In any block, the symbol "—" indicates that a state's information was either not provided (for example, if there is no information on performance level descriptors of an alternate assessment for meeting AYP) or not applicable (for example, if the information relates to the proportion of the test score from short constructed response items, but the test does not use short constructed response items).

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[1] Documents that discuss the research on NAEP and state proficiency standards are available at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/.

[2] The 2007 State Profiles are available at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/profile_standards_2007.asp.

Block 1 summarizes information about each state's testing program: the name of the program, the different tests, the type and format of each test, the grades and subjects tested, and the tests' purpose. States were asked to enter up to four tests in Mathematics, English Language Arts, Reading, and Science. Response options for test type were: regular, alternate, modified, and portfolio assessments.[3] Response options for test format were: criterion-referenced (CRT), norm-referenced (NRT), combination CRT/NRT, and other formats. Response options for test purpose were: instructional, student accountability, school accountability, staff accountability, and other. Additional information provided by NAEP State Coordinators summarizing their states' tests and test purposes is included at the end of the block. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block1.asp.

Example State

State Assessment and Accountability Program (SAAP)

Block 1

	Test		Grades Tested													Test Purpose [1]				
Component	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																				
Comprehensive Assessments of State Students (CASS)	Regular	CRT		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√		√		
CASS - Alternate (CASS-Alt)	Alternate	CRT	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√		√		
Mathematics																				
CASS	Regular	CRT		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√		√		
CASS-Alt	Alternate	CRT	√			√	√	√	√	√	√		√			√		√		
Science																				
CASS	Regular	CRT						√		√				√		√		√		
CASS-Alt	Alternate	CRT						√		√				√		√		√		

[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.

[3] For reference, definitions of different types of assessments are available at the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) website, at: http://www.cehd.umn.edu/NCEO/TopicAreas/AlternateAssessments/altAssessTopic.htm.

Block 2 summarizes information about the composition of the main state assessments in 2008–09 for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. It shows the number of items for each type of question and each type's respective weight in the final score. If the state indicated that an item type was not used, the type's weight is indicated by "—." An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block2.asp .

Block 3 includes additional information about the timing of the assessments and whether assessments measured skills acquired only in prior grades. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block3.asp.

Block 4 summarizes information about the assessments and performance levels used by the state in 2008–09 for state accountability for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics, as well as the assessments and performance levels used to determine AYP. The symbol "—" indicates that the information was not provided (e.g., if the state did not provide additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year). An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block4.asp.

Example State **Reading/Language Arts**

Block 2

Composition of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other	
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score
Grade 4	24	50%	0	—	3	50%	0	—	0	—
Grade 8	24	50%	0	—	3	50%	0	—	0	—

Block 3

Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall 2008?	No.

Block 4

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	Comprehensive Assessments of State Students (CASS)
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	CASS-Alt assessments are used in AYP determination.
Test used for state accountability	CASS
Performance level used for state accountability	Proficient
First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments	2005–06 school year
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year	—

Block 5 provides the performance level descriptors used for meeting AYP in 2008–09 assessments for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The descriptors correspond to the proficient performance level as it is defined by each state. A web address is included if the state provided a link. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block5.asp.

Block 6 lists the performance level descriptors used for meeting AYP in 2008–09 alternate assessments for grades 4 and 8 in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics. The descriptors correspond to the proficient performance level as it is defined by each state. A "—" indicates that the state did not provide performance level descriptors. A web address is included if the state provided a link. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block6.asp.

Example State — **Reading/Language Arts**

Block 5

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4	Grade 8
Grade 4: Students performing at the Proficient level demonstrate a fundamental understanding of what they read by applying various strategies when reading textual/informational, functional, and literary/recreational materials. To some degree these students use various skills and strategies, including demonstrating a knowledge of sentence structure, making inferences, and distinguishing fiction from nonfiction. They recognize some literary elements and devices including characters, similes, and important details as they read literary/recreational text. As a part of understanding informational/textual and functional materials, students at this level are beginning to locate information, identify important details, use sentence structure, and distinguish fact from fiction. Their vocabulary knowledge includes recognition of some antonyms, synonyms, and some use of structural analysis skills. Performance level descriptors are available online at" http://www.STDOE.st.gov/pdf/AchievementLevelsGrade4.pdf	**Grade 8**: Students performing at the Proficient level utilize strategies to make inferences to determine bias or theme and use specific context clues to determine some word meanings. They can distinguish among characteristics of some types of poetry such as ballads, epics, haikus, limericks, and lyrics. They often identify literary elements and can describe their impact on setting, mood, characterization, or theme. These students also are able to identify the elements of plot.

Block 6

Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4	Grade 8
Grade 4: A fourth-grade student performing at the Proficient level on the Example State Extended Standards in Reading demonstrates fundamental knowledge that meets the extended standards in mutiple phoneme words, reading simple sentences, synonyms, literary elements (main characters and details), and letter blends. This knowledge might be demonstrated at different complexity levels and with varying degrees of assistance. Performance level descriptors are available online at: http://www.STDOE.st.gov/pdf/AchievementLevels.pdf	**Grade 8**: —

Block 7 presents changes to the main state assessment in Reading/Language Arts and Mathematics between the 2006–07 and 2008–09 school years. Each state self-reported whether the changes to its assessment were signficant or not. For many states, additional information about the changes is included in a note below the block. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block7.asp.

Block 8 provides information about the comparability of the state assessments between 2006–07 and 2008–09. Specifically, it is the answer given to the survey question "*Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 Reading or Mathematics directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?*" Each state self-reported whether its 2006–07 and 2008–09 assessments were comparable or not. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block8.asp.

Block 9 provides additional information about changes to the state assessment, inclusion policies, or administration of the state assessment between 2006–07 and 2008–09 that would have an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time. An accessible table containing the information in this block can be found at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/studies/statemapping/block9.asp.

Example State — **Reading/Language Arts**

Block 7

Changes to State Assessments Between 2006–07 and 2008–09

	No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Ccores	Changed The Period 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	Other Changes
Grade 4	√									•	
Grade 8	√									•	

Block 8

Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?

Yes, they can be compared. The testing contractors changed but the test and scales did not change.

Block 9

Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?

None.

Source

U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2009 Survey of State Assessment Program Characteristics.

Glossary

AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress
CRT	Criterion-Referenced Test
ECA	End-of-Course Assessments
ELA	English Language Arts
ELP	English Language Proficiency
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/10	Stanford Achievement Test – Tenth Edition
SEA	State Education Agency

Wyoming

Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS)

	Test		Grades Tested													Test Purpose [1]				
Component	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 Wyoming Students (PAWS)	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
PAWS Alternate (PAWS-ALT)	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Mathematics																				
Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS)	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
PAWS Alternate (PAWS-ALT)	Alternate	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
Science																				
Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS)	Regular	CRT				√	√	√	√	√	√			√		√		√		[2]
PAWS Alternate (PAWS-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. LEAs are required to include state assessments results as input to their district assessment systems for accreditation.

Composition of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other	
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score
Grade 4	43	78%	4	15%	1	7%	0	—	0	—
Grade 8	40	72%	4	14%	2	14%	0	—	0	—

Administration of the Main Reading/Language Arts Test in 2008–09

Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall of 2008?	No.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	PAW and PAWS-ALT
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	—
Test used for state accountability	—
Performance level used for state accountability	—
First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments	2006
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: 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 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**: 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; explain how story elements are utilized in text; predict outcomes; and cite 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.

Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: Students performing at a proficient level meet the standard of understanding grade-appropriate literary and informational texts including: identify story elements, sequence key ideas in texts, apply clues to understand meaning of unfamiliar words, and locate information in text. Students perform in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.	**Grade 8**: Students performing at a proficient level meet the standard of understanding a variety of grade-appropriate literary and informational texts including: identify author purpose, predict outcomes, and summarize main ideas, features of different genres, how different texts are organized, identifying and comparing story elements, sequence key ideas in texts, make connections among texts or ideas and themselves, apply clues and prior knowledge to understand meaning of unfamiliar words, and locate information in text. Students perform in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.

Changes to State Assessments Between 2007 and 2009

	No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Scores	Changed The Period 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	Other Changes
Grade 4	√		√						√	√	
Grade 8	√		√						√	√	

Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?

Yes.

Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?

None.

Composition of the Main Mathematics Test in 2008–09

	Multiple Choice		Short Constructed Response		Extended Constructed Response		Performance Tasks		Other	
	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score	Number of Items	Proportion of Score
Grade 4	55	85%	5	15%	0	—	0	—	0	—
Grade 8	60	86%	5	14%	0	—	0	—	0	—

Administration of the Main Mathematics Test in 2008–09

Were any of the 2008–09 assessments used for AYP reporting for grades 4 or 8 administered in the fall of 2008?	No.

Performance Levels and AYP

Performance levels used during the 2008–09 year	Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced
Test used for AYP determination	PAW and PAWS-ALT
Performance level used for AYP	Proficient
Other tests used for AYP determination	—
Test used for state accountability	—
Performance level used for state accountability	—
First implementation of performance standards for the 2008–09 assessments	2006
Additional information about performance levels used during the 2008–09 academic year	—

Performance Level Descriptors for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: Students know basic addition, subtraction, and multiplication facts; add and subtract four-digit numbers and multiply hundreds by single digit; recognize relations among coins and bills; use U.S. customary units in measurement; measure elapsed time; and read information from charts and graphs. Further, students performing at a proficient level meet the acceptable standard for the fourth grade by demonstrating solid performance or understanding of problem solving including: completing tasks involving more than a single processing step; combining different pieces of information; interpreting different representations; recognizing which elements are important and how they relate to one another; working with given mathematical representations; and carrying out a sequence of processing steps to produce a solution.	**Grade 8**: Students operate with factors, multiples and powers up to 5 of a given whole number; represent and apply numbers in a variety of equivalent forms (such as changing from percent to decimal to fractions); solve one-step linear equations using variables (i.e. unknown quantity, letter, or symbol); estimate and convert U.S. customary and metric units in measurement; calculate perimeter, area, circumference, surface area, and volume; classify and measure lines and angles; make decisions based on information drawn from data within a variety of displays (graphs, tables, diagrams); and use logical reasoning to solve problems. Further, students performing at a proficient level meet the acceptable standard for the eighth grade by demonstrating solid performance or understanding of problem solving including: completing tasks involving more than a single processing step; combining different pieces of information; interpreting different representations; recognizing which elements are important and how they relate to one another; working with given mathematical representations and carrying out a sequence of processing steps to produce a solution.

Performance Level Descriptors of Alternate Assessment for Meeting Adequate Yearly Progress

Grade 4: The student performing at a proficient level demonstrates solid performance or understanding of Mathematics problem solving including: place value, estimation, describing and comparing different geometric objects, describing area and perimeter, recognizing and extending patterns, organizing and representing data and predicting reasonable outcomes using concepts from probability. Students select and use appropriate methods to solve problems in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.	**Grade 8**: The student performing at a proficient level demonstrates solid performance or understanding of Mathematics problem solving including: place value, estimation, identifying, describing and comparing similar and congruent geometric objects, use units in measurement, calculate area and perimeter, recognizing and using algebraic expressions, organizing and representing data and predicting reasonable outcomes using concepts from probability. Students select and use appropriate methods to solve problems in several familiar learning situations with some assistance.

Changes to State Assessments Between 2007 and 2009

	No Significant Changes	Changed Cut Scores	Changed The Period 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	Other Changes
Grade 4	√		√						√	√	
Grade 8	√		√						√	√	

Are the reported 2008–09 state assessment results for grades 4 and 8 directly comparable with the 2006–07 reported results?

Yes.

Are there differences in the administration of assessments or in the reporting of outcomes between 2006–07 and 2008–09 due to policy or legislative changes having an impact on the ability to compare outcomes over time?

None.