



NJDOE News

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ESPA Testing for Fourth Graders Begins Today

More than 100,000 fourth-grade students throughout New Jersey are participating this week in the fourth official administration of the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA). The test is designed to measure the skills and knowledge required by the state's academic standards.

The ESPA will be administered over four consecutive days, beginning today. Make-up testing will be held next week, beginning May 6.

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera advised fourth grade students and their parents that it is important for the students to do as well as they can on the ESPA.

"This year, we will use the ESPA to continue our yearly responsibility to measure student progress at benchmark grades," Commissioner Librera said. "Although we are planning to have a new state-approved test for third grade students in language arts and mathematics and possibly a new fourth-grade test for next year, that should not detract from this year's administration of the ESPA.

"I wish our fourth-graders well on the test and I encourage them to do their best work because it's important for them to do their best each and every time they are evaluated," Dr. Librera said.

ESPA testing will begin with the mathematics portion. Mathematics will be tested one day one for 1 hour 7 minutes and on day two for 57 minutes. The language arts literacy portion will be administered on day three for 1 hour, 20 minutes and on day four for 1 hour, 50 minutes.

The ESPA math assessment consists of 38 multiple choice and 7 open-ended items; and the language arts literacy assessment consists of 11 multiple choice and 3 open-ended items; 2 writing tasks and a field test component. The field test will vary from form to form.

The ESPA is not designed to promote students from one grade to the next. It is a diagnostic tool that tells teachers and parents if students are progressing adequately towards obtaining the skills and knowledge they will need as 11th graders to pass the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). Passing the HSPA is a requirement for receiving a high school diploma.

Student scores will place them in one of three categories: advanced proficient, proficient and partially proficient. Students in the advanced proficient range will not need remedial help. Students in the partially proficient range must receive special instruction to improve identified areas of weakness, and students in the proficient range may or may not need remedial help.

All public school students are required to take the ESPA, except for certain special education students and limited English proficient students whose learning disabilities or lack of fluency exempt them from the exam.

The Department of Education has developed guides for parents about the ESPA. The guides, along with sample test items, are available from the department's web site:

www.state.nj.us/education