



NJDOE News

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For Release: May 14, 2003

New Jersey Department of Education Conducts Training; Distributes Booklets on NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4

The New Jersey Department of Education has held special training sessions and produced publications to help educators, parents and students prepare for the two newest state tests, NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4. The new assessment will be administered to third- and fourth-grade students throughout New Jersey beginning on Tuesday, May 20.

The new tests have been developed to meet state and national initiatives to measure the achievement of elementary school students in the public schools. NJ ASK, which stands for the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge, will be given in language arts literacy and mathematics.

"Our New Jersey ASK tests for third and fourth graders will provide local educators with valuable information about student performance," said Commissioner of Education William L. Librera. "Schools will be able to review the results and determine the types of adjustments they should make in their curricula to help students gain the knowledge and skills they are expected to learn under the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The results will also be used to help identify students who may need remedial assistance."

In early April, the department conducted seven regional training sessions for more than 2,200 educators who will be responsible for administering the tests. The sessions were held to review the role and responsibilities local officials have in the testing process, from the day they receive the materials at their schools to the day they mail completed test booklets to the test contractor, Educational Testing Service, for scoring.

Late last week, the department mailed a parent, student, and teacher information manual for NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4 to school districts. The manual, published in English and Spanish, describes the test, contains suggestions for preparing students to take the test, and includes sample test items for parents and students to review.

ETS has also established a Web site with information about NJ ASK:

www.ets.org/njask

Sample test items are attached.

NJ ASK 3 will be administered to approximately 105,000 third-grade students from May 20-22. A similar number of students will take NJ ASK 4 for four days (May 20-23).

The new tests respond to a need on both the state and federal levels to assess the knowledge and skills of elementary and middle school students. At the state level, Governor James E. McGreevey's 21-point plan for educational excellence has a special focus on programs to support and enhance early literacy. Through the Early Literacy Initiative, the state has set a goal to have every child reading at grade level by the end of the third grade. The new NJ ASK 3 will help measure how well students are achieving this goal.

At the federal level, the No Child Left Behind Act calls for annual testing of all public school students in grades three through eight, inclusive, in the content areas of reading and mathematics. NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4 are the beginning of New Jersey's response to this requirement, with future assessments for students in grades five, six, and seven to be developed over the next several years. New Jersey already has a state test for eighth graders, the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment, which measures skills and knowledge for language arts literacy, mathematics, and science.