



NJDOE News

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Third- and Fourth-Grade Students Prepare for Second Administration of NJ ASK Exam

NJ ASK (New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge) will be administered to third- and fourth-grade public school students beginning on Tuesday, March 16, 2004. This week marks the second administration of the exam, which was created to respond to state and federal priorities to measure student performance in the early grades.

NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4 will be administered in two content areas: language arts literacy and mathematics. NJ ASK 4 will also contain a field test for science. Approximately 105,000 third grade students will take the test on March 16, 17, and 18. An equal number of fourth graders will take the test on March 16, 17, 18, and 19. Students who are unable to take the test on any of these scheduled days will have opportunities to take make-up exams from March 22-25. In addition, a science field test for fourth-grade students only will be administered March 26, 2004.

The tests are designed to assess how well students are learning the knowledge and skills called for by the state's academic standards, the Core Curriculum Content Standards. They were first proposed by Commissioner of Education William L. Librera in response to the need to develop a test for third graders as part of the Early Literacy Initiative started by Gov. James E. McGreevey. The initiative has set the goal of having all students reading at grade level by the end of third grade. The initiative is based on a body of educational research indicating that students enjoy greater success throughout their lives if they can read at grade level by the end of the third grade.

In addition to meeting state Early Literacy goals, NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4 will serve as part of New Jersey's response to the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which requires all states to administer exams in reading and math to public schools students from grades 3 through 8. In February, Commissioner Librera announced that 2004 would be a "benchmarking" year for NJ ASK3: that is, grade 3 scores would be reported in the same manner as grade 4 scores, including proficiency levels; however, grade 3 results would not be used for computing the federally required Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations until the 2005 NJ ASK administration.

In 2003, NJ ASK 4 replaced the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) as the state's test for fourth graders. The federal Department of Education has approved NJ ASK 4 as the replacement test for ESPA.

NJ ASK testing begins on March 16 in the area of language arts literacy for third and fourth graders. Test administration time will be approximately 75 minutes each for third graders and fourth graders.

Testing continues on March 17 in language arts literacy for both grades. Test administration time will be 100 minutes for each grade.

Testing concludes on March 18 for third graders in the area of mathematics. Test administration time will be 83 minutes. Testing continues for fourth graders in the area of mathematics. Test administration time will be 62 minutes.

Testing continues on March 19 for fourth graders in the area of mathematics. Test administration time will be 52 minutes.

The science field-test for fourth-graders will be administered on Friday March 26. Test time is approximately 36 minutes.

The tests for both grades will consist of a variety of multiple choice items, open-ended items, and writing tasks.

The Department of Education has prepared helpful information regarding NJ ASK 3 and NJ ASK 4. To view the information on the DOE's Web site, click on the link below:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/assessment/>

ETS also maintains a Web site with information about NJ ASK:

www.ets.org/njask

For more information, please contact the Department of Education Public Information Office at (609) 292-1126.