



NJDOE News

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2006 Assessments Begin Today

Nearly 90,000 high school juniors taking the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) will start the 2006 spring testing schedule in schools statewide beginning today. During the next three weeks in March and the first two weeks of April, students in grades 3-8 will be tested.

The federal *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* requires that states annually test students in reading and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school. The results of these tests are used to determine whether each school and district has made adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards the law's goal of 100 percent proficiency by 2014.

Here is New Jersey's 2006 testing schedule:

- HSPA: March 7-16
- New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge for grades 3 and 4 (NJASK3 and NJASK4): March 20-31
- Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA): March 13-23
- NJASK 2006 for grades 5 through 7: April 4-13.

Department of Education officials will randomly monitor testing to ensure testing security procedures are properly followed.

The HSPA serves as the state's graduation test. It assesses student knowledge and skills aligned with the state's academic standards, known as the Core Curriculum Content Standards. Students who fail one or both sections of the exam will have additional opportunities to pass in the fall and spring of their senior year.

About 104,000 students will be taking the GEPA, which assesses the skills and knowledge children have attained by the eighth-grade. About 200,000 students will be taking the third- and fourth-grade tests.

This year marks the first time that New Jersey will administer an *NCLB*-required test for students in grades 5-7. Approximately 309,500 students will take the test. The NJASK 2006 is an interim measure.

Acting Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy has appointed a statewide Assessment Advisory Panel to develop a broad policy and vision for a new statewide assessment system that would be more educationally useful for parents, teachers and administrators.

"The state spends millions of dollars on these tests and we need more value from this investment than just a compliance tool for federal reporting requirements," the acting Commissioner said. "Schools should be able to use the results in the future to adjust their instructional practices so that students can achieve at higher levels."

The acting Commissioner said she expects that the new assessment system will be in place for the 2007 testing season.

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