



2005-2006

# ANNUAL REPORT

**Grades 4 and 8 and GEE  
Criterion-Referenced Tests**



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## SECTION 1: THE LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

### INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program (LEAP) and the Graduation Exit Examination (GEE) compose Louisiana's criterion-referenced testing (CRT) program. These tests measure how well a student has mastered the state content standards. LEAP is administered at grades 4 and 8 and the GEE to initial testers at grades 10 and 11.

There are three main differences between the LEAP and GEE tests and the previous state CRT tests. First, the newer tests, by law, are directly aligned with the state content standards. Second, these tests by law must be as rigorous as those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Lastly, students no longer receive a simple pass/fail score; instead, they receive one of the following five achievement ratings:

**Advanced:** A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the level of mastery.

**Mastery:** A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.

**Basic:** A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

**Approaching Basic:** A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

**Unsatisfactory:** A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.

The *Mastery* achievement level was named *Proficient* until spring 2003. Though the name was changed, the achievement level descriptors remain the same.

Beginning in spring 1999, the LEAP tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics were administered to public school students in grades 4 and 8. In spring 2000, LEAP Science and Social Studies tests were added for grades 4 and 8. In spring 2001, the GEE English Language Arts and Mathematics tests were added at grade 10. In spring 2002, the GEE Science and Social Studies tests were added at grade 11.

Louisiana's high-stakes testing policy is an important part of Reaching for Results, an educational reform system designed to improve student achievement. The LEAP tests are designed to ensure that grade 4 and grade 8 students have adequate knowledge and skills before moving on to the next grade. As of spring 2000, no 4th grade or 8th grade student can be promoted if he or she does not achieve *Approaching Basic* or above on both the LEAP English Language Arts and the LEAP Mathematics tests. As of spring 2004, grade 4 students are required to score *Basic* or above on either the English Language Arts or the Mathematics test and *Approaching Basic* or above on the other to progress to grade 5. As of spring 2005, grade 8 students are required to score *Basic* or above on either the English Language Arts or the Mathematics test and *Approaching Basic* or above on the other to progress to grade 9. Intensive summer remediation must be offered to students who do not score at the achievement level required for promotion, and those students have the opportunity to retest after remediation concludes in the summer.

The GEE requires that high school students evidence sufficient knowledge and skills to be eligible for a standard high school diploma. Students who were first-time 10th graders in 2000–2001 are required to score *Approaching Basic* or above on only the English Language Arts and Mathematics tests to be eligible for a standard high school diploma. High school students who were first-time 10th graders in 2001–2002 and thereafter are required to score *Approaching Basic* or

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above on the English Language Arts and Mathematics tests **and** on either the Science or the Social Studies test to be eligible for a standard high school diploma. High School students who do not score at the required achievement level are given retest opportunities in the summer and in the fall.

Note: Due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the State's high-stakes testing policy was suspended for the 2005–2006 school year for 4th and 8th grade students. Eligibility for summer remediation and retest, and promotional decision was determined according to local district policy.

Since no fall 2005 retest took place in Calcasieu, Cameron, Plaquemines, Orleans, and St. Bernard because of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, students who needed to retest from these parishes (Seniors and others) were allowed to test in February 2006.

This report presents student performance results on the LEAP and GEE spring 2006 test; the LEAP and GEE summer 2006 retest; the GEE fall 2005 retest; and the GEE February 2006 Seniors Only retest.

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### HISTORY OF THE LEAP AND GEE

Since 1993, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has been involved in significant reform efforts. As a result of these initiatives, in May 1997 the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) approved content standards in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, and the arts. These standards reflect the essential knowledge and skills that content teams of expert Louisiana educators deemed necessary for students to become good scholars and productive citizens. Common threads that form a base for all content standards are the **foundation skills**, which were also identified as essential competencies needed to meet the demands of the classroom and the world beyond. These foundation skills are:

1. Communication
2. Problem-solving
3. Resource access and utilization
4. Linking and generating knowledge
5. Citizenship

The LDE has initiated criterion-referenced tests to align with the content standards in four of the six content areas: English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. In the 1997 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature, state law was changed to require that criterion-referenced tests be administered in grades 4 and 8 rather than in grades 3, 5, and 7. These grades are consistent with the grades at which the content standards and benchmarks are clustered (K through 4, 5 through 8, and 9 through 12), as well as with the grades assessed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

#### Content Standards Measured by LEAP and GEE

	English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science	Social Studies
<b>Content Standards Measured</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials</li> <li>• Write competently</li> <li>• Use conventions of language</li> <li>• Apply speaking and listening skills (not assessed)</li> <li>• Locate, select, and synthesize information</li> <li>• Read, analyze, and respond to literature</li> <li>• Apply reasoning and problem-solving skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number and number relations</li> <li>• Algebra</li> <li>• Measurement</li> <li>• Geometry</li> <li>• Data analysis, probability, and discrete math</li> <li>• Patterns, relations, and functions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science as Inquiry</li> <li>• Physical Science</li> <li>• Life Science</li> <li>• Earth and Space Science</li> <li>• Science and the Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography: Physical and Cultural Systems</li> <li>• Civics: Citizenship and Government</li> <li>• Economics: Independence and Decision Making</li> <li>• History: Time, Continuity, and Change</li> </ul>

## SECTION 1: THE LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

### TEST DESIGN AND ITEM DEVELOPMENT

In 1997, projects were initiated to develop item specifications and test items for LEAP. The first project called for developing an assessment design that would align with the content standards and benchmarks in each of the content areas to be assessed. Assessment Advisory Committees, composed of educators representing kindergarten through higher education and of assessment specialists, met with the LDE and national consultants to create assessments that would reflect the content and instructional strategies embraced by the new standards.

Using the assessment specifications, testing contractors developed test items for LEAP. After the items were written, the Assessment Advisory Committees critiqued the items based on congruence with the specifications, technical quality, and age-appropriate content validity. An additional review was conducted with a Bias Review Committee, which viewed the items for sensitive or biased material regarding gender, ethnicity, and issues related to special populations of students. The various committees either accepted or rejected the items or made recommendations for revisions to the items based on assigned criteria (e.g., content or bias). Revised items were resubmitted for final approval. The LDE included all acceptable items in the preliminary item bank and prepared them for field testing.

Field testing of grades 4 and 8 English language arts and mathematics items was first conducted in spring 1998. Science and social studies items for grades 4 and 8 were initially field tested in spring 1999. GEE English language arts and mathematics items for grade 10 were first field tested in spring 2000. Science and social studies items for grade 11 were initially field tested in spring 2001. Schools participating in the field tests were randomly selected based on stratification of the state's school subpopulations on the factors of ethnicity, socioeconomic status, school size, and school achievement performance.

Data from the field-tested items were submitted to the Assessment Advisory Committees for a final empirical review. The committees determined which items were of sufficient statistical quality to be retained in the item bank.

### TEST DEVELOPMENT

Once a bank of items was established, the LDE Division of Student Standards, Assessments, and Accountability in collaboration with the testing contractor, began assembling the initial LEAP tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics for grades 4 and 8 according to the test blueprints developed by the Louisiana Assessment Advisory Committees. These tests were implemented in March 1999. These same procedures were followed in creating the LEAP tests in Science and Social Studies, added in March 2000; the GEE grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests, added in March 2001; and the GEE grade 11 Science and Social Studies tests, added in March 2002.

Because the LEAP and GEE tests carry high stakes for students (the LEAP is used for promotion and remediation decisions, GEE for eligibility for a standard high school diploma) and yield valid and reliable longitudinal data, the difficulty level of the tests must be equivalent from year to year. Consistency is maintained by scaling the scores in a process called *test equating*. Scaling allows the use of raw scores to compute students' scaled scores and to establish a common achievement-level standard from test form to test form.

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Each part of the test is described below. More specific information about the content of the test at each grade is provided in the *Teachers Guide to Statewide Assessment* for each grade level.

### MEASURING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

LEAP English Language Arts tests are administered to public school students in grades 4 and 8, and the GEE English Language Arts test is administered to initial testers in grade 10. In addition, students in nonpublic schools and approved home study programs who plan to enroll in Louisiana public schools in grade 5 or 9 must also take these tests and score at the required achievement level to be placed in grade 5 or 9. For each grade, assessment guides with detailed test specifications and sample test questions are provided to teachers so they may align classroom assessment practices with state assessment strategies. This also helps ensure that students are adequately exposed to the test formats prior to test administration.

The LEAP and GEE tests include relatively lengthy reading passages and a variety of item types, including some constructed-response questions (short answer and extended response or essay), which require written responses to what students read on the test. In addition, students are expected to write a composition in response to a writing topic.

The English Language Arts tests also include a session on using information resources. Students are provided various resource materials to use to access information and answer questions.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE TESTS

The English Language Arts tests measure concepts and skills in six of the seven areas that are referred to as content standards. The content standards specify concepts and skills students are expected to know and be able to do. Standard 4, demonstrating competence in speaking

and listening, currently is not incorporated in LEAP or GEE. The LDE is exploring ways to encourage and support assessment of this standard at the local level.

The English Language Arts test for each grade has four parts:

- Writing
- Using Information Resources
- Reading and Responding
- Proofreading

#### WRITING

The Writing session of the test requires students to produce a composition about an assigned writing topic. The particular mode of writing assessed at a given grade (grade 4, narrative and descriptive; grade 8, narrative and expository; grade 10, persuasive and expository) may alternate from one assessment administration to another.

The first part of the test is designed to measure key aspects of standards 2 and 3:

##### Standard 2

Students write competently for a variety of purposes and audiences.

##### Standard 3

Students communicate using standard English grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.

Compositions are scored for focus, content, organization, and other aspects of the writing process, as well as for specific attributes of grammar, usage, and mechanics. Dictionaries and thesauruses are permitted for students' use only during the administration of the Writing session.

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### USING INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Using Information Resources session of the test requires students to complete a specified task designed to measure standard 5:

#### **Standard 5**

Students locate, select, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources to acquire and communicate knowledge.

This session includes excerpts from four to six reference sources, such as articles from encyclopedias, newspapers, and magazines; parts of books; visual aids (maps, graphs, tables, illustrations); and electronic resources, such as a Web page. Students are instructed to skim the reference materials to become familiar with the information available and then to locate the parts they need to answer multiple-choice and short-answer questions.

### READING AND RESPONDING

The Reading and Responding session of the test includes four reading passages (fiction, nonfiction, poetry) and multiple-choice and short-answer items. At grades 8 and 10, an essay question requires students to comprehend and respond to the content of at least two reading passages.

Questions in this session measure key aspects of Standards 1, 6, and 7:

#### **Standard 1**

Students read, comprehend, and respond to a range of materials, using a variety of strategies for different purposes.

#### **Standard 6**

Students read, analyze, and respond to literature as a record of life experiences.

#### **Standard 7**

Students apply reasoning and problem-solving skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing.

Reading passages are grade-appropriate. Selections include the full text of shorter published works, fully developed excerpts from longer published works, or text written specifically for the test.

The length of the reading passages falls within the range specified in the assessment framework for each grade. Selections for a given grade level reflect a balance among passage length, readability level, and interest level of the topic. Moreover, readability and passage length are balanced across the selections in each test.

### PROOFREADING

The Proofreading session of the test requires students to read a text that includes mistakes in grammar, usage, and mechanics, and spelling, and to answer multiple-choice questions that require choosing the best way to correct each mistake. Questions in this session measure key aspects of standard 3, described on page 5.

## MEASURING MATHEMATICS SKILLS

LEAP Mathematics tests are administered to students in grades 4 and 8, and the GEE Mathematics test is administered to initial testers in grade 10. Traditionally, the challenge for students in number and number relations and other strands of mathematics has been translating word problems into algorithms for solution. Now a wider range of problem-solving tasks is required in the mathematics curriculum, including open-ended problems, problems with more than one solution or more than one path to a solution. Accordingly, the state test at each grade contains a broad and challenging range of test items and problem types.

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### OVERVIEW OF THE TESTS

The Mathematics tests at grades 4, 8, and 10 consist of two major parts:

Part A uses a multiple-choice format to assess concepts and skills in all six strands of mathematics. Whenever possible, concepts and skills are assessed in realistic contexts. Part A is divided into two sections, one to be completed without the aid of a calculator and one for which calculator use is permitted.

Part B consists of four relatively complex mathematical tasks for grades 8 and 10 and three tasks for grade 4, all of which involve a number of separate steps and require application of multiple skills. These tasks may be ones for which there is more than one possible solution or more than one path to the solution. Ability to accomplish the mathematical tasks on part B of the test represents a higher level of mathematical literacy and performance. Each task in part B is scored on a 0 to 4 point scale.

Question format for part B is open-ended, requiring numerical answers, short written answers, and other types of constructed responses (e.g., drawing a graph or geometrical pattern). Students may be required to explain in writing how they arrived at their answers or to justify their answers. Students' responses are scored analytically for such traits as accuracy of the answer, proper operations used, and appropriate problem-solving approach or strategy. Partial credit is given and calculators are permitted on part B at all grades.

In the Louisiana mathematics framework, each of six mathematics strands is associated with a single standard. Following is the complete text of the mathematics strands and standards.

**Strand N:** Number and Number Relations.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students demonstrate an understanding of the real number system and communicate the relationships within that system using a variety of techniques and tools.

**Strand A:** Algebra.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students demonstrate an understanding of concepts and processes that allow them to analyze, represent, and describe relationships among variable quantities and to apply algebraic methods to real-world situations.

**Strand M:** Measurement.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students demonstrate an understanding of the concepts, processes, and real-life applications of measurement.

**Strand G:** Geometry.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students demonstrate an understanding of geometric concepts and applications involving one-, two-, and three-dimensional geometry and justify their findings.

**Strand D:** Data Analysis, Probability, and Discrete Math.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students discover trends, formulate conjectures regarding cause-and-effect relationships, and demonstrate critical-thinking skills in order to make informed decisions.

**Strand P:** Patterns, Relations, and Functions.

**Standard:** In problem-solving investigations, students demonstrate an understanding of patterns, relations, and functions that represent and explain real-world situations.

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### MEASURING SCIENCE SKILLS

The LEAP Science test was first administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in March 2000 and the GEE Science test to first-time grade 11 students in March 2002. The LEAP and GEE Science tests require that students use their content knowledge to explain, connect, and apply concepts to new situations. Students must have had a variety of experiences using inquiry-based learning in all science content strands. On the Science tests, students are required to select responses in the multiple-choice section, as well as to generate their own responses in the short-answer and the science task sections.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE TESTS

The Science tests at grades 4, 8, and 11 consist of three parts:

**Session 1** uses a multiple-choice format to assess concepts and skills in all five strands of science.

**Session 2** consists of four short-answer questions that assess four content strands: Physical Science, Life Science, Earth and Space Science, and Science and the Environment. These questions allow students to reflect on an idea, demonstrate their understanding of concepts and processes of science, make meaning of a given set of data, and critique the information. The wording of the questions is direct and specific and focuses on the quality of the students' knowledge.

**Session 3** consists of a comprehensive science task. At grade 4, students are required to observe, utilize, and react to materials in an investigation and to draw conclusions based on their experiences. At grades 8 and 11, students respond to a written scenario that requires scientific investigation. The task/scenario integrates the Science as Inquiry strand with at least one other content strand—at grade 11, Physical Science and Life Science only. Questions in a variety of formats (data tables, graphs, diagrams) throughout the activity set the stage and focus students on the topics and ideas to be covered, provide

opportunities for students to record data and observations, and provide additional data about students' understanding of concepts and processes related to the task/scenario. This structure creates a timely check for understanding and ensures that students who are unable to succeed at the beginning are not prevented from succeeding with latter portions of the activity. The activity includes three Science as Inquiry short-answer questions that allow students to interpret their results, react to their findings, and make decisions based on the information worked with throughout the activity. This activity also includes one essay question related to the content of the task/scenario.

According to the Louisiana Science Framework, five strands are measured throughout the test. Each of the five science strands is associated with a single standard. Following is the complete text of the strands and standards.

**Science as Inquiry:** Students will **do** science by engaging in partial and full inquiries that are within their developmental capabilities.

**Physical Science:** Students will develop an understanding of the characteristics and interrelationships of matter and energy in the physical world.

**Life Science:** Students will become aware of the characteristics and life cycles of organisms and understand their relationships to each other and to their environment.

**Earth and Space Science:** Students will develop an understanding of the properties of Earth materials, the structure of the Earth system, Earth's history, and Earth's place in the universe.

**Science and the Environment:** In learning environmental science, students will develop an appreciation of the natural environment, learn the importance of environmental quality, and acquire a sense of stewardship. As consumers and citizens, they will be able to recognize how our personal, professional, and political actions affect the natural world.

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### MEASURING SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The LEAP Social Studies test was first administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in March 2000, and the GEE Social Studies test was first administered to first-time grade 11 students in March 2002. The LEAP and GEE assessments challenge students to expand their thinking in social studies and to become accomplished problem solvers and informed decision makers. Accordingly, the state tests at grades 4, 8, and 11 contain a broad and challenging range of test items, including constructed-response questions.

#### OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

The Social Studies tests at grades 4, 8, and 11 consist of two major parts:

Part A consists of fifty multiple-choice test items for grade 4 and sixty multiple-choice items for grade 8 and 11 that assess knowledge, conceptual understanding, and application of skills in all four social studies strands (Geography, Civics, Economics, and History). Items in part A are intermingled across strands, not arranged into separate sections by strand.

Part B consists of four open-ended questions (or tasks) calling for a constructed response and requiring higher-order thinking in a social studies context (grasping a concept, analyzing information, evaluating a principle, or applying a skill). Students may be required to construct or interpret a chart, graph, map, timeline, or other graphic representation; to supply a short written answer; or to produce a longer piece of writing in response to a social studies issue or problem. Each of the four constructed-response items represents one for the four social studies strands. Each task in part B is scored on a 0 to 4 point scale.

Each of the four social studies strands is associated with a single standard describing what students should know and be able to do. Following is the complete text of the social studies strands and standards.

**Strand G:** Geography: Physical and Cultural Systems

**Standard:** Students develop a spatial understanding of Earth's surface and the processes that shape it, the connections between people and places, and the relationship between man and his environment.

**Strand C:** Civics: Citizenship and Government

**Standard:** Students develop an understanding of the structure and purposes of government, the foundations of the American democratic system, and the role of the United States in the world, while learning about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

**Strand E:** Economics: Interdependence and Decision Making

**Standard:** Students develop an understanding of fundamental economic concepts as they apply to the interdependence and decision making of individuals, households, businesses, and governments in the United States and the world.

**Strand H:** History: Time, Continuity, and Change

**Standard:** Students develop a sense of historical time and historical perspective as they study the history of their community, state, nation, and world.

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### SETTING THE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

For the LEAP and GEE tests, achievement levels are the basis for reporting results. In September 1997, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education recommended that LEAP and GEE adopt performance standards consistent with the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP). Since NAEP standards were not available for all achievement levels and subject areas that are part of LEAP and GEE, further work was carried out to adapt the NAEP standards to make them appropriate for Louisiana.

In 1997, committees of Louisiana educators met to review the English language arts and mathematics achievement-level definitions and to select samples of student work that best matched each level's description. For multiple-choice sections of the tests, the committees employed a bookmark method, which involved reviewing a collection of multiple-choice questions, sorted by difficulty, and finding the location at which the questions began to require skills not expected of a student scoring at a lower achievement level. Because the easiest items were first, a reviewer might have decided that the skills were so fundamental that even a student scoring at the *Unsatisfactory* level should be able to answer the questions correctly. As the questions became more difficult, reviewers reached a point where they believed that students would have to score at the *Approaching Basic* level to have a reasonable probability of answering the item correctly. At that point, they placed a bookmark for *Approaching Basic*. The same process was used to place bookmarks for the *Basic*, *Mastery*, and *Advanced* levels.

For the constructed-response sections of the English Language Arts and Mathematics tests, reviewers were shown samples of student work and asked to place each sample into one of the five achievement levels.

Standards were set by determining the average scores of students in each level and selecting cut points that were between the scores for the two adjacent groups.

In 1999, separate committees of educators met to set the performance standards for science and social studies for grades 4 and 8. The bookmark method again was used for both multiple-choice and constructed-response items. The committees reviewed test items sorted by difficulty, samples of student work, and achievement-level definitions and placed the bookmark for each achievement level.

Grade 10 standard setting for English Language Arts and mathematics completed in October 2000. Using a bookmark procedure, the multiple-choice and constructed-response questions were sorted by difficulty, and the committee members marked the location where the questions began to require skills expected of a student scoring at each achievement level. For the Writing session of the English Language Arts test, reviewers examined student work. Cut scores for the English Language Arts test were derived by combining the cut points from the written composition with those for the multiple-choice and constructed-response questions.

In 2001, similar procedures were used to establish performance standards for the grade 11 science and social studies tests.

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The performance standards for English language arts, mathematics at grades 4, 8, and 10 and for science, and social studies at grades 4, 8, and 11 are finalized in scaled score form. LEAP and GEE scaled scores range between 100 and 500 for all grades and content areas. The scaled scores

are not comparable across grade levels or content areas. The tables below show the scaled score range for each of the five achievement levels.

Achievement Level	English Language Arts			Mathematics			Science			Social Studies		
	Scaled Score Range			Scaled Score Range			Scaled Score Range			Scaled Score Range		
	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE
Advanced	408–500	402–500	398–500	419–500	398–500	377–500	405–500	400–500	396–500	399–500	404–500	386–500
Mastery	354–407	356–401	347–397	370–418	376–397	346–376	360–404	345–399	349–395	353–398	350–403	344–385
Basic	301–353	315–355	299–346	315–369	321–375	305–345	306–359	305–344	301–348	301–352	297–349	297–343
Approaching Basic	263–300	269–314	270–298	282–314	296–320	286–304	263–305	267–304	267–300	272–300	263–296	275–296
Unsatisfactory	100–262	100–268	100–269	100–281	100–295	100–285	100–262	100–266	100–266	100–271	100–262	100–274

**NOTE:** The achievement level *Mastery* was named *Proficient* until the spring 2003 test administration, when the language of the federal No Child Left Behind Act necessitated such a change. Though the name changed, the scaled score ranges remain the same, as does the achievement level definition. Most tables in this report will use the name *Mastery* for this achievement level. In addition, tables in this report show data titled GEE rather than by grades 10 and 11 as they were in former years. The figures for spring represent initial testers—first-time grade 10 students for English Language Arts and Mathematics and first-time grade 11 students for Science and Social Studies. Summer, fall, and February figures primarily represent retesters.

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### TEST ACCOMMODATIONS FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Until 2003, all special education students except those who participated in the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 1 (LAA 1), formerly LAA, or LAA-B or high school students who participated in the Options (PreGED/Skills) Program were required to participate in and meet the requirements of LEAP or GEE testing at grades 4, 8, 10, and 11. LAA-B was discontinued in fall 2003. In 2005–2006, the LEAP Alternate Assessment, Level 2 (LAA 2), was introduced in grades 4, 8, 10, and 11 for students with persistent academic disabilities. The LAA 2 policy, based on modified academic achievement standards, allows students with persistent academic disabilities who are served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) to participate in academic assessments that are sensitive to measuring progress in their learning.

Exceptions to standard test administration procedures, however, may be made for special education students provided they are addressed in a student's IEP and used in classroom instruction and assessment.

The following test accommodations may be used as appropriate for special education and Section 504 students.

**Braille.** Braille test booklets are available for students requiring them. Generally, all test items in the standard print edition of the test booklet and answer document are included in the braille test booklet. If an item is omitted from the braille test, students receive credit for it.

**Large Print.** Large-print test booklets are available for students requiring them. The large-print edition is essentially an enlarged version of the standard print edition of the test.

**Answers Recorded.** If a student is unable to write due to his or her disability, the test must be administered individually to allow the student to dictate his or her responses to the test administrator.

**Assistive Technology.** Assistive technology may include but is not limited to a computer, tape recorder, calculator, abacus, grip for a pencil, visual magnification device, communication device, mask or marker to maintain place, speech synthesizer, or an electronic reader or spellchecker and/or dictionary.

**Extended Time.** Every student must be given sufficient time to respond to every test item. Time may also be adjusted for certain students, such as those who have short attention spans or who may be unable to concentrate for long periods of time on a given task. The test administration time may have to be altered considerably to allow for intermittent short breaks during the testing period, or it may be determined appropriate to administer the test in a number of short sessions. The time of day the test is administered may be adjusted to a time more beneficial to the student.

**Communication Assistance.** A test administrator who is fluent in the signing or cuing modality routinely used by the student should be available to repeat or clarify directions and sign portions of the test if warranted by the student's reading level as documented on the IEP. The passages, questions, and answer options on the Reading and Responding session of the English Language Arts test cannot be signed or cued.

**Transferred Answers.** If a student recorded answers in the test booklet or on a separate sheet of paper or used braille, large-print, or other technological assistive devices documented on the student's IEP, the test administrator must transfer the student's responses onto a scorable answer document exactly as the student wrote them.

**Individual/Small Group Administration.** Tests may be administered to an individual or a small group of students (maximum, eight) who require more attention than can be provided in a larger classroom.

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**Tests Read Aloud.** Students receiving this accommodation must have been provided it in classroom assessment. These students may have portions of the tests read to them with the exception of the Reading and Responding session of the English Language Arts tests, which cannot be read aloud.

**Other.** Any necessary accommodations may be used, but must be determined by the IEP team and documented on the student's IEP and must not breach test security or invalidate the meaning of the test score or the purpose of the test.

### **STUDENTS WITH ONE OR MORE DISABILITIES ACCORDING TO SECTION 504**

All students with one or more disabilities according to Section 504 are required to be tested. Test accommodations are permitted if they are routinely provided in the students' regular instructional and assessment program and if the other conditions specified in the administrative guidelines for Students with Disabilities according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are met. Accommodations provided to Section 504 students are the same as those provided to special education students.

### **LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT (LEP) STUDENTS**

As of 2003, all LEP students are required to be tested, but accommodations are permitted in the administration of the LEAP and GEE to LEP students provided they are used in the students' classroom instruction and assessment. Some of the accommodations for LEP students are the same as those for special education students. Explanations of those that are the same can be found above.

- **Extended Time**
- **Individual/Small Group Administration**
- **Provision of English/Native Language Word-to-Word Dictionary (No Definitions).** LEP students may use either a standard or an electronic English/native language word-to-word dictionary (no definitions) on all sessions of the tests.
- **Test Administered by English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher or Individual Providing Language Services.** Familiarity with the speech patterns of the ESL teacher or the individual providing language services may help the student understand the test directions or the portions of the test that are read aloud if the student receives the accommodation *Tests Read Aloud*.
- **Tests Read Aloud**

See *Bulletin 118* (<http://www.state.la.us/osr/lac//28v111.pdf>) for complete explanations of all accommodations.