

SECTION 1: THE LOUISIANA EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Louisiana Educational Assessment Program for the 21st Century (LEAP 21) and the Graduation Exit Examination for the 21st Century (GEE 21) constitute Louisiana's criterion-referenced testing (CRT) program. These tests measure how well a student has mastered the state content standards. The LEAP 21 is administered at grades 4 and 8 and the GEE 21 to initial testers at grades 10 and 11.

There are three main differences between the LEAP 21 and GEE 21 and previous state CRT tests. First, these tests are directly aligned with the state's content standards. Second, by law these tests must be as rigorous as those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). And third, 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 proficient 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 remains the same.

Beginning in spring 1999, the LEAP 21 tests for English Language Arts and Mathematics were administered to public school students in grades 4 and 8. In spring 2000, LEAP 21 Science and Social Studies tests were added for grades 4 and 8. In spring 2001, the GEE 21 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests were added at grade 10. In spring 2002, the GEE 21 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 21 tests are designed to ensure that grade 4 and grade 8 students have adequate knowledge and skills before moving on to the next grade. Beginning in spring 2000, no 4th-grade or 8th-grade student could be promoted if he or she did not achieve *Approaching Basic* or above on both the LEAP 21 English Language Arts and the LEAP 21 Mathematics test. Beginning in spring 2004, grade 4 students will be 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. Required achievement levels for grade 8 students will remain the same—they must achieve *Approaching Basic* or above on both the English Language Arts and the Mathematics test—until 2006, when grade 8 students will be 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 for 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 21 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. Students who were first-time 10th graders in 2001–2002 and thereafter are required to score *Approaching Basic* or 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. GEE 21 students

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who do not score at the required achievement level are given retest opportunities in the summer and in the fall.

This report presents student performance results on the spring 2003 tests for grades 4 and 8 and high school (grade 10 initial testers and retesters) English Language Arts and Mathematics; grades 4 and 8, and high school (grade 11 initial testers and retesters) Science and Social Studies; the summer 2003 retest for grades 4 and 8 and high school English Language Arts and Mathematics and high school Science and Social Studies; and the fall 2001 and 2002 retests for high school English Language Arts and Mathematics.

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HISTORY OF THE LEAP 21 AND GEE 21

Since 1993, the Louisiana Department of Education has been involved in significant reform efforts. As a result of these initiatives, in May 1997 the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education 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–4, 5–8, and 9–12), as well as with the grades assessed by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Content Standards Measured by LEAP 21 and GEE 21

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

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TEST DESIGN AND ITEM DEVELOPMENT

In 1997, projects were initiated to develop item specifications and test items for LEAP 21. 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 Louisiana Department of Education (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 21. 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 the spring of 1998. Science and social studies items for grades 4 and 8 were initially field tested in spring 1999. GEE 21 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.

The data from the field-tested items were submitted to the Assessment Advisory Committees and the Bias Review Committee 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 the final bank of items was established, the LDE Division of Student Standards and Assessments, in collaboration with the testing contractor, began assembling the initial LEAP 21 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 21 tests in Science and Social Studies, added in March 2000; the GEE 21 grade 10 English Language Arts and Mathematics tests, added in March 2001; and the GEE 21 grade 11 Science and Social Studies tests, added in March 2002.

Because the LEAP 21 and GEE 21 tests carry high stakes for students (the LEAP 21 is used for promotion and remediation decisions, GEE 21 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.

MEASURING ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

LEAP 21 English Language Arts tests are administered to public school students in grades 4 and 8, and the GEE 21 English Language Arts test is administered to initial testers in grade 10. In addition, students in nonpublic schools and home schooling programs who plan to enroll in Louisiana public schools in grade 5 or 9 must also take

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these tests and score at the required achievement level to be placed in grade 5 or 9. For each grade, detailed specifications for the test 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.

Earlier state criterion-referenced tests in English Language Arts concentrated on multiple-choice test questions based on relatively short reading passages. The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 tests demand more of students by including longer reading passages and a greater variety of item types, including some open-ended questions that require written responses to what students read on the test. In addition, students at each grade are expected to write a composition in response to a writing topic.

The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 English Language Arts tests also include a section about using information resources. Students are provided a set of resource materials and are requested to use them to access information.

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, is not currently assessed in LEAP 21 or GEE 21. 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

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.

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 or descriptive; grade 8, narrative or expository; grade 10, persuasive or 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, defined below.

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.

USING INFORMATION RESOURCES

The Using Information session of the test requires students to complete a specified task designed to measure standard 5, defined on the following page.

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Standard 5

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

The Using Information Resources session requires students to locate, evaluate, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources. This section 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 a variety of item types, including multiple choice and short answer. At grades 8 and 10, one essay question requires students to comprehend and react to the content of at least two reading passages.

Questions in this session measure key aspects of Standards 1, 6, and 7, defined below.

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 to choose the best way to correct each mistake from the options offered in a multiple-choice format. Items in this session measure key aspects of Standard 3, described on page 5.

MEASURING MATHEMATICS SKILLS

LEAP 21 Mathematics tests are administered to students in grades 4 and 8, and the GEE 21 Mathematics test is administered to initial testers in grade 10. Traditionally, the challenge for students in number and number relations and in 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 test for each grade consists 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, including numerical answers, short written answers, and other types of constructed responses (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' products 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.

STRANDS AND STANDARDS ASSESSED

In the Louisiana Mathematics Framework, each of six mathematics strands is associated with a single standard. In effect, the strand name serves as a label that refers to the full text of its associated standard. Below 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 21 Science test was first administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in March 2000 and the GEE 21 Science test to first-time grade 11 students in March 2002. Characteristically, statewide assessments in science had been in multiple-choice format, with questions limited to basic science content and facts. The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 Science tests require that students use their content knowledge of science 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 sessions.

OVERVIEW OF THE TESTS

The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 Science tests consist of three parts:

Session 1 assesses concepts and skills in all five strands of science in a multiple-choice format.

Session 2 consists of four short-answer questions that assess the 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 high school, students respond to a written scenario that requires scientific investigation. The task or scenario integrates the Science as Inquiry content strand with at least one other content strand—at high school, Physical Science and Life Science only.

Questions in a variety of formats (constructed response, data tables, short answer) 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 or scenario. This structure creates a timely check for understanding as well as 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 acquired throughout the activity. This activity also includes one 4-point constructed-response question related to the content of the task or scenario.

According to the Louisiana Science Framework, five strands are measured throughout all three sessions of the test. Each of the five science strands is associated with a single standard. Below is the complete text of the strands/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.

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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.

MEASURING SOCIAL STUDIES SKILLS

The LEAP 21 Social Studies test was first administered to students in grades 4 and 8 in March 2000 and the GEE 21 Social Studies test to first-time grade 11 students in March 2002. Traditionally, large-scale assessment in social studies relied exclusively on multiple-choice test items measuring more narrow learning objectives. The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 assessments challenge students to expand their thinking in social studies and to become accomplished problem solvers and informed decision makers. Accordingly, the state tests for grades 4 and 8 and high school contain a broad challenging range of test items, including constructed-response items that require students to demonstrate what they have learned through written expression and other self-generated responses.

OVERVIEW OF THE SOCIAL STUDIES TEST

The LEAP 21 and GEE 21 Social Studies tests 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 high school 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 task in part B is scored on a 0 to 4 point scale.

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

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

At its September 1997 meeting, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (SBESE) recommended that LEAP 21 and GEE 21 adopt performance standards consistent with the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Since NAEP standards were not available for all achievement levels and subject areas that are part of LEAP 21 and GEE 21, further work was done to adapt NAEP standards for Louisiana.

During the late summer and early fall of 1997, committees of Louisiana educators met to review the English language arts and mathematics achievement-level definitions and select samples of student work that best matched the description of each level for grades 4 and 8. For the multiple-choice sections of the LEAP 21 tests, the committees employed a bookmark method. This involved reviewing a collection of multiple-choice questions, sorted by difficulty, and finding the location where 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 located a point at which they believed students would have to score at the *Approaching Basic* level to have a reasonable probability of answering the item correctly. At the beginning of that section, reviewers placed a bookmark for *Approaching Basic*. The reviewers then proceeded through the multiple-choice questions until they found the point at which students scoring at the *Approaching Basic* level would not have attained the skills necessary to answer the question but students scoring at the *Basic* level would. At that point, reviewers placed a bookmark for *Basic*. The same process was used to place bookmarks for the *Proficient* (now called *Mastery*) and *Advanced* levels.

For the constructed-response sections of the LEAP 21 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 August and September of 1999, separate committees of educators met to set performance standards for LEAP 21 science and social studies. 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 a bookmark for each achievement level.

Standard setting for GEE 21 (grade 10) English Language Arts and Mathematics tests was completed in October 2000. The process was similar to that used for grades 4 and 8. Using a bookmark procedure, multiple-choice and constructed-response questions were sorted by difficulty, and the committee members marked each location where the questions began to require skills expected of a student scoring at a higher achievement level. For the writing session of the GEE 21 English Language Arts test, a separate booklet containing samples of student work was prepared for the committee. Cut scores for the English Language Arts test were then 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 GEE 21 (grade 11) Science and Social Studies tests.

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Performance standards for LEAP 21 and GEE 21 English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies tests are finalized in scaled-score form. LEAP 21 and GEE 21 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

because of differences in test content and difficulty. The following tables 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 21 (Grade 10)	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE 21 (Grade 10)	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE 21 (Grade 11)	Grade 4	Grade 8	GEE 21 (Grade 11)
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 21 rather than by grades 10 and 11 as they were in former years. This is because, other than for the first administration, the figures in most instances include both initial testers—first-time grade 10 students for English Language Arts and Mathematics and first-time grade 11 students for Science and Social Studies—and retesters. Summer and fall figures represent primarily 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 Louisiana Alternate Assessment (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 21 or GEE 21 testing. As of the 2003–2004 school year, LAA-B was discontinued; all students except those who participate in LAA or in the Options (PreGED)Skills Program are required to participate in LEAP 21 or GEE 21 testing. 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. All test items in the regular-print test are included.

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

Answers Recorded. If a student is unable to write because of his or her disability, provisions must be made for the test administrator to record the student's answers on the scorable answer document.

Assistive Technology. Assistive technology can include but is not limited to a computer, tape recorder, calculator, abacus, grip for a pencil, visual magnification device, communication device, mark or marker to maintain place, speech synthesizer, or electronic reader.

Extended Time. Every student must be given sufficient time to respond to every test item. Time may be adjusted for students 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. These sessions, however, must be completed within the allotted test dates, including makeup dates.

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 or Section 504 plan and Verification of Section 504 form. The passages, questions, and distractors on the Reading and Responding session of the English Language Arts test, may **not** be signed or cued.

Transferred Answers. If a student recorded answers in the test booklet or used large-print, braille, or other technological assistive devices documented on the student's IEP or Section 504 plan, 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 a small group (maximum, eight students) or to an individual requiring more attention than can be provided in a larger classroom.

Tests Read Aloud. Students receiving this accommodation must have been provided this accommodation in classroom assessment. These students may be allowed to have **portions** of the test read to them, with the exception of the Reading and Responding session of the English Language Arts test.

Other. Any necessary accommodations may be used, but they must be determined by the IEP Team or Section 504 Committee and

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documented on the student's IEP or Section 504 plan and Verification of Section 504 form and must not breach security or invalidate the meaning of the test score or the purpose of the test. Examples of other accommodations include highlighting the task or verbs in the directions on the test or assisting the student in tracking the test items.

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 21 and GEE 21 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 on page 12.

- **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 sections 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 assist the student in understanding 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**

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 provided they are used in the students' classroom instruction and assessment, provided the other conditions specified in the Administrative Guidelines for Students with Disabilities According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are met, and provided the required forms are properly submitted. Accommodations provided to Section 504 students are the same as those provided to special education students.