

Addendum to NJSLA Executive Summary

Addendum Overview

In accordance with New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) guidelines, all public school districts participate in administering the New Jersey State Learning Assessments–NJSLA (formerly known as PARCC). At the time of the original district Achievement Report published November 18, 2019, the NJSLA Science (NJSLA-S) reports for grades 5, 8, and 11 were not yet available. The following addendum and [NJSLA Science Results: Spring 2019 Administrations](#) provide both the results and an analysis of student performance on the NJSLA-S.

The NJSLA–S measures student proficiency in the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science. One of the primary purposes of the NJSLA–S is to identify areas of curricular strength and weakness by examining the extent to which students meet the established performance expectations in science. The first administration of the NJSLA–S was in the 2018–19 school year following a 2018 field test. The spring 2019 operational administration was the assessment’s baseline year. The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments are part of an ongoing system of activities that provide evidence related to student learning. Data from the NJSLA–S and from students’ daily interactions with teachers as well as from their performance on teacher and district-developed assessments combine to provide a complete picture of student achievement in science (*Score Interpretation Guide for Educators*, 2019).

The NJSLA–S assesses students on their understanding and explanations of scientific phenomena and scenarios. It comprises two parts—the performance-based assessment (PBA) and the machine scorable assessment (MSA). The PBA contains one open-ended, constructed-response item and between two and four technology-enhanced items (TEI) (*Score Interpretation Guide for Educators*, 2019). Students were tested on the following domains:

- Earth & Space Science
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Investigating Practices
- Sensemaking Practices
- Critiquing Practices

Target Audience

This Addendum to the Executive Summary is intended for the Hopewell Valley Regional School District Board of Education and the communities it serves. This addendum is also intended to

accompany the following companion slide deck presentation [NJSLA Science Results: Spring 2019 Administrations](#).

Purpose of Addendum

This addendum to executive summary will provide an overview of the baseline performance of students on the NJSLA-S assessments in grades 5, 8, and 11. Additionally, this addendum provides a summary of where students have met or surpassed grade level learning objects in Science and it identifies specific areas where there are opportunities for growth as well as curricular implications.

Successes and Opportunities

In accordance with the Hopewell Valley School District's mission statement and policies regarding Equity in Education Programs and Services (N.J.A.C. 6:4-1 et seq., 2018):

The District is committed to identifying and removing institutional barriers, and creating access and opportunities to foster the success of our students. "Achieving equity" means students' identities will not predict nor predetermine their success in school.

Educational equity is based on the principles of fairness and justice in allocating resources, opportunity, and treatment to foster success for each student.

Educational equity promotes equality of educational opportunities and reduces the disparity of results between diverse groups of students. Equity strategies are intentional, systematic and focused on the core of the teaching and learning process.

As stated in the original Executive Summary, to achieve access for all students, The Hopewell Valley Regional School District, via this policy, will:

1. Systematically use district and individual school level data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, national origin, language, special education, sex, socioeconomic status and mobility to inform district decision making.
2. Annually review and revise curricula to ensure that it is written in a manner that addresses issues of equity in our classroom and provides a balanced, bias-free presentation of content.
3. Review policies and practices to ensure that access to classes is not limited solely by achievement-based criteria, but also considers student motivation and interest in the subject matter.
4. Work to raise the achievement of all students and narrow any achievement gaps between disaggregated student groups (i.e students who share similar characteristics).

5. Work to identify and eliminate disparities and/or systemic barriers that may exist which predict or predetermine a student's achievement in all aspects of education and its administration.

To fulfill the obligations of the district toward both our mission and aforementioned policies, the Department of Curriculum and Instruction utilizes student performance data on high stakes assessments such as the NJSLA English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science in addition to other district measures (e.g. benchmark assessments, AP, SAT, and ACT exam data) to determine how best to meet the curricular and professional development needs and to ensure the academic success of all of our learners.

District Performance in Science: Overall, Hopewell students outperformed their peers in the state of New Jersey in Science. In grade 5, 68% of Hopewell students scored Proficient/Advanced Proficient on the NJSLA-S (State percentage score was 29% Proficient/Advanced Proficient). In grade 8, 32% of Hopewell students scored Proficient/Advanced Proficient (State percentage score was 20% Proficient/Advanced Proficient). In grade 11, 51% of Hopewell students scored Proficient/Advanced Proficient (State percentage score was 27% Proficient/Advanced Proficient).

The following subgroups continue to lag behind the academic performance of their peers on the NJSLA-S:

- Students receiving Free or Reduced Lunch (27% meeting or exceeding expectations)
- 504 students (49% meeting or exceeding expectations)
- Special Education students (31% meeting or exceeding)
- Black students (9% meeting or exceeding)
- Hispanic students (34% meeting or exceeding)
- Female students (46% meeting or exceeding) while 54% of male students meet or exceeded expectations.

General Education students meet or exceed expectations at 56% on the NJSLA-S. All subgroups performed better in grade 5 than in grade 8 and 11 (see slides 7-9 from the [NJSLA Science Results: Spring 2019 Administrations](#) slide deck). The district must continue to examine how we target certain subgroups and work to close the performance gaps for these populations of students.

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

While this administration of NJSLA--S is only intended to provide a baseline, there is some interesting information that can be gleaned from the data. Because it is a baseline year, the Office of Curriculum and Instruction suggests refraining from drawing conclusions from this initial data. There are some questions that the district will examine as we plan for curriculum revision and professional development for the 20-21 and 21-22 school years. The guiding questions are as follows:

1. Is there something happening instructionally or curricularly in grade 5 that is not in grades 8, and 11?
2. The district instituted STEM facilitators during the 18-19 school year. Can we attribute the performance in grade 5 (68% meeting/exceeding expectations) to creation of the STEM facilitator position or specifically the work they are doing in project design?
3. What are the curricular implications for students in grades 5-11?

4. What professional development might we need for Science teachers moving forward?

The office of curriculum instruction will work to answer these questions over the course of the next 3 years. Finally, it is recommended that the district continues to introduce programming to help close the performance gaps amongst populations of students.