

Dear Parents:

Please find the excerpt below from the NJ Dept. of Education providing and explanation of expectations for proficiency on standardized testing. This summer the NJDOE reclassified levels of proficiency for the NJASK state assessment grades 5-8.

The state will continue to update both school and parents about these changes.

SUBJECT: New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge (NJ ASK) Score Reports and Proficiency Standards. The following is an excerpt from a recent letter from the NJ Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy

The NJ ASK grade 5 - 8 score reports which districts will be receiving will reflect new, higher proficiency standards. Printed individual student reports will arrive in your districts the second to third week of September.

When the State Board of Education adopted these new proficiency standards on July 16, 2008, board members understood very clearly that they were not simply accepting the results of a psychometric process, but rather endorsing raising the bar for student achievement in New Jersey. We believe that elevating expectations for achievement in elementary and middle grades is critical for preparing students for postsecondary education and the 21st century workforce. Raising standards at these grades will increase the likelihood that students receive the assistance and intervention they need to succeed in high school *before* they enter ninth grade.

Since raising expectations for student learning may result in an increase in the rate of partially proficient students, parents may have questions and concerns about the meaning and purpose of these new standards. The new NJ ASK scores, like other test scores generated by the Department of Education, should be used with other measures of achievement to align the curriculum, review instructional practices, and provide information for discussions by parents, teachers and students.