

**FINAL REPORT OF THE NJSBA
AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT
OF
NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT
STANDARDS
BY
PETER J. CALVO
DR. LOUISE MURRAY-HOFFMAN
CO-CHAIRPERSONS**

Prepared for the New Jersey School Boards Association

Board of Directors Meeting

January 7, 2000

**AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT
FINAL REPORT**

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**AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON ASSESSMENT
OF
NEW JERSEY CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS
January 7, 2000**

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Dr. Louis Murray-Hoffman, Co-Chair	Morris School District/Morris
Lorraine Aklonis	Clark/Union
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SYNOPSIS OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of our study, the ad-hoc assessment committee offers the following recommendations for further refinements that will promote the best possible education for the students of New Jersey. Our recommendations are broken down into the following four major elements:

- A. Assessment Instruments
- B. Test Administration
- C. Evaluation
- D. Policy

A. Assessment Instruments

Recommendation #1: The State Department of Education should identify and utilize a nationally recognized, state approved, commercially available standardized test which is closely aligned with the NJCCCS to measure students' abilities in language arts literacy (reading and writing), math, and science components during the 4th grade. The administration of this test should be spread over two-years (an idea already being discussed by the State Department of Education) in order to administer assessments of the social studies, visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education and world language components during the fifth grade.

Recommendation #2: The State Department of Education must ensure that the State Assessments (ESPA, GEPA and HSPA) are both valid and reliable and that they are an accurate measure of whether or not a student has mastered the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at their respective grade levels.

Recommendation #3: The State Department of Education should form a committee, representative of both subject area specialists and grade level specialists (specifically teachers and supervisors) to re-examine the relevancy and the appropriateness of the assessments and to establish validity, alignment and articulation between these assessments the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

B. Test Administration

Recommendation #4: The Department of Education is urged to limit the extent of the annual assessment at each grade level mentioned in NJAC 6A: 6-4 to no more than two hours per day and 10 hours per grade level, exclusive of breaks and directions. All assessments of the NJCCCS would be done within that time frame of 10 hours, no matter how many content areas are assessed.

Recommendation #5: The Department of Education is urged to ensure that test results returned to the districts include assessment mapping and item analysis for each grade and subject and that these results be furnished to districts within 8 weeks of the test, but no later than June 1.

Recommendation #6: The Department of Education should ensure they fulfill their promise to provide complete practice tests, with all accompanying scoring material, for each component of the assessment at each grade level assessed. Practice tests should include directions, manipulatives, and instructions or methods for tabulating test results.

Recommendation #7: The State Department of Education is urged to align and/or otherwise incorporate the provisions of the new continuing professional development requirements as a vehicle to meet the needs of incorporating the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the improvement needed to increase student mastery of these Standards through the redevelopment of Academies in regions throughout New Jersey.

Recommendation #8: The State Department of Education must ensure that every school district has the financial resources necessary to fully implement the requirements of Title 6A: 6-4.

C. Evaluation

Recommendation #9: The State Department of Education is urged to eliminate the absolute standard (85% proficiency within the district) and replace it with a model based on improved annual progress in each proficiency level at each grade level in which statewide assessments are administered.

Recommendation #10: The State Department of Education is urged to modify its annual reporting methods to show progress of individual districts against state median scores at each grade level for the current and prior years. The report should include a district's progress using the baseline data obtained in the previous academic year in lieu of the absolute standard and provide for additional disaggregation of scores (e.g., mobility rates, students with Limited English Proficiency, students with Individual Educational Plans).

D. Policy

The ad-hoc assessment committee encourages the Board of Directors of the New Jersey School Boards Association to adopt the revisions outlined **Policy 2255 and Policy 6147** that incorporate the committee recommendations. Those policy revisions are attached at the end of this report.

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**Prepared for the Board of Directors Meeting
January 7, 2000**

Committee Charge

In order to address the critical problem areas identified by the Standards and Assessment Task Force (relative to New Jersey Statutes Annotated 6A: 6-4) as well as concerns regarding the state testing program expressed in correspondence from the Franklin Township Board of Education (Somerset County) and the related resolution submitted by the Sayreville Board of Education (Middlesex County) for the November 1999 Delegates Assembly, NJSBA President Charles V. Reilly announced at the September 1999 Board of Directors Meeting that he has created an Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment of New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS).

The committee was charged to develop recommendations for a comprehensive policy on the assessment of student achievement of the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards. The Committee shall review the Statewide Assessment position paper adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 26, 1999 meeting, examine relevant Association policy, research district experience with recent statewide testing, and review issues raised by the Franklin Township (Somerset County) correspondence and the Sayreville (Middlesex County) resolution.

Although the committee was charged with investigating the issues raised by the boards in Franklin (Somerset) and Sayreville (Middlesex), Sayreville decided to go forward with its resolution to the Delegates' Assembly on November 20, 1999. Subsequently, the Delegates voted to refer the Sayreville resolution to the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment.

General Committee Activities

During its organization meeting on October 9, 1999, the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment decided to focus on two particular areas of study:

- The immediate impact on local districts as they deal with the new assessment and,
- The recent positions taken by recognized state educational associations as to the broader impact of the Assessments

Additionally, during the organization meeting, the committee felt strongly about balancing problem identification with positive outcomes of the current assessment model. This theme was reiterated throughout the process to ensure the committee focused on recommending solutions that promoted the best practices and positive outcomes realized in the current assessment model.

The committee discussed possible ways to gather information related to the charge. To carry out its work more efficiently, two sub-committees were formed, one comprised of representatives from the southern part of the state working with Dr. Virgil Johnson, and one from the more northern counties, working with Carole Larsen. It was decided that the southern sub-committee would solicit information from a representative sampling of school districts on the direct impact of the new assessment on their districts, their students and their staff. The northern sub-committee would then reach out to several educational associations (New Jersey Educational Association, New Jersey Association of School Administrators, New Jersey Principal and Supervisors Association, Urban Superintendents' Association, the Garden State Coalition, New Jersey Administrators of Federal Programs, New Jersey Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, etc.) and analyzed information from these organizations to extract common concerns within the code.

The group conducted meetings of the full committee on October 9, 1999, October 27, 1999, November 13, 1999, and December 11, 1999. Sub-committees held interim meetings as they continued their work. All meetings of the full committee and those of the sub-committees were memorialized with detailed minutes that were distributed to the entire Ad Hoc Assessment Committee and discussed in detail at subsequent meetings.

At the November 13th meeting, the committee heard a presentation on the assessment issues as seen from the perspective of the Holmdel (Monmouth County) Board of Education. Mr. Arthur Frank, Board President, and Ms. Maureen Lally, Director of Curriculum, presented a statistical analysis of test scores showing the correlation (or lack of correlation) between normative, standardized tests given in the district and the ESPA and the GEPA. Holmdel has been active in the issues surrounding the Standards and Assessments, and the committee agreed that this discussion was appropriate.

At the December 11th meeting, which followed the Delegate Assembly action to refer the Sayreville resolution regarding the Assessments to the Ad Hoc Committee, Kevin Ciak, the president of the Sayreville Board of Education addressed the group on the genesis of his board's resolution. We explored several options related to the action requested by Sayreville and were able to discuss with Mr. Ciak the various scenarios that might occur depending on the recommendations offered by the committee.

An Interim Report from the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment was prepared and presented to the New Jersey School Boards Association's Board of Directors at its meeting on November 19, 1999. [Attachment 1]

Sub-committees held meetings to compare information gathered through their work against the NJSBA Position Paper on Statewide Assessment adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 26, 1999 meeting and examined relevant New Jersey School Boards Association policy. The results of all the sub-committee meetings were brought

to the full committee on December 11, 1999, for discussion and preparation for the final report.

The committee has been advised that a yearlong series of academic discussions on Assessment will begin in January 2000, sponsored by the League for Educational Excellence (LEE – comprised of all the educational associations in New Jersey). Hopefully this will lead to a joint position paper/policy statement from these sponsoring educational associations. While this will follow our report to the Board of Directors, the committee hopes to play a role in these discussions.

Southern Sub-Committee Activities

The sub-committee created a list of 25 boards from all areas of the state representing a wide variety of configurations, socio-economics and district factor groupings. Letters and invitations were sent inviting districts to submit comments and/or concerns (both pro and con) of the State Assessments. Several responses were received and reviewed at the October 21, 1999 meeting. The meeting was also attended by representatives from Pemberton Township and Eastern Camden Regional school districts. During the discussion, it was obvious that the positive aspects and the challenges presented by the districts mirrored those of the full committee. While some respondents provided bulleted lists of items, others provided detailed descriptions of the challenges and their recommendations for corrective action. Almost all of the respondents indicated they supported assessment and appreciate the efforts put forth by the Department of Education. Additionally, all indicated they were dissatisfied with the current process.

On December 6, 1999, the sub-committee gathered to review current NJSBA policy on the Assessment of Student Achievement of the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards, the Statewide Assessment Position Paper adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 26, 1999 meeting, the proposed changes to New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6A: 6-4 and relevant Association policy. The sub-committee developed recommended changes to language of NJSBA policy that would allow the Association to seek revisions to NJAC 6A: 6-4. These recommended changes were presented to the full committee at its December 11, 1999 meeting in preparation for formulating the recommendations contained in this final report.

The sub-committee met again on December 18, 1999 to consolidate recommendations, review proposed changes to NJSBA policy, and develop a draft of the final report. The committee also reviewed Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) and Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) Parent Guides published by the Department of Education (December 1999) to explain the new State Assessment Program. [Attachment 2]

Northern Sub-Committee Activities

The northern sub-committee met on October 22, 1999 to analyze data from several educational associations as outlined in the charge; two NJASA members also worked with the sub-committee at this meeting. Data reviewed in the NJSBA's Internal Task Force, NJASA, NJPSA, and NJEA allowed this sub-committee to develop a list of

commonly held questions, concerns and recommendations. These concerns were shared with the entire committee. [Attachment 3]

On November 2, 1999, the northern sub-committee met with representatives of NJPSA to address the actual impact of the Assessments on their schools, their students, and their staff members. Several administrators representing diverse districts in the northern part of the state participated in this meeting. [Administrators and Districts are included as Attachment 4] Feedback obtained was summarized and shared with the entire committee.

On December 7, 1999, the sub-committee gathered to review current NJSBA policy on the Assessment of Student Achievement of the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards, the Statewide Assessment Position Paper adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 26, 1999 meeting, the proposed changes to New Jersey Administrative Code Title 6A: 6-4 and relevant Association policy. From input received from the various educational associations and the testimony received from contributing districts, the sub-committee developed a working matrix outlining issues identified, recommendations and comments relative to the State Assessment. The matrix was presented to the full committee at its December 11, 1999 meeting in order to assist in formulating recommendations for the final report.

On December 16, 1999, the committee co-chair, Dr. Louise Murray Hoffman, and Lorraine Aklonis, met with Willa Spicer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum in the South Brunswick School District, to review the key recommendations coming from this committee. The discussion at this meeting centered on the Parent Guides just released by the Department of Education with Mrs. Spicer interpreting the relevance of the scores for parents and the district, the 85% benchmark for the mastery of the Standards, the time necessary to administer the tests, the reporting mechanism to be used by the state in transmitting the results to the districts, and need to prioritize the Standards as a way to focus on better student achievement of the Standards.

Elaine Kille, Senior Association Director of Policy with New Jersey School Boards Association, reviewed the draft policy changes for language, intent and clarity; Elaine met with Carole Larsen in the Manalapan Field Office on December 16, 1999 to assist writing the revised policy language for Policy 2255 and Policy 6147.

Convention Activities

The committee took the opportunity to schedule a meeting on October 27, 1999 during WorkShop '99 in Atlantic City. The meeting provided the committee the opportunity to review progress and determine additional action. Both sub-committees shared their lists of common concerns regarding the current assessment model and suggestions for improvement.

During the convention, a number of the committee members had the opportunity to attend the presentation provided by Clyde Reese and Jay Doolan on the State Assessments. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation and handouts were made available to all committee members.

Committee members also took the opportunity to informally discuss the State Assessments with board members and administrators from other districts in attendance at Workshop and asked those individuals to forward their comments to the Ad Hoc Assessment Committee for review.

State Department of Education

On November 13, 1999, the committee met with Clyde Reese, DOE, at the Manalapan Field Office. Mr. Reese provided the committee with a history of the current assessment, status of implementation, and provided glimpses into improvements being made. Mr. Reese was provided with copies of the committee's notes and came prepared to answer questions developed by the sub-committees or comment on recommendations.

[Attachment 5].

The committee and Mr. Reese agreed that improved communication and increased staff development were key in ensuring a smooth and successful implementation of the Assessments. Mr. Reese volunteered to be an ex-facto member of the committee and offered his continued support toward ensuring that the state develops an assessment that is valid and reliable.

On December 9, 1999, members of the northern sub-committee attended a Standards and Assessment Regional Forum, held at the Somerset County Office of Education in Somerville. Clyde Reese, Ellen Schechter (Assistant Commissioner), and Jay Doolan participated in a panel discussion with administrators from Somerset, Hunterdon and Morris Counties. Minutes of the meeting were provided to the full committee for review.

Recommendations

The members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment reviewed the NJSBA Position Paper on Statewide Assessment adopted by the Board of Directors at its March 26, 1999 meeting. We examined existing relevant Association policy, researched school district experiences with recent statewide testing, reviewed recommendations from other educational associations and met with representatives from the State Department of Education on the Standards and Assessment Code.

Based on our research, the committee agrees that the NJSBA should "strongly support statewide curriculum standards that express what we expect our students to know and be able to do when they graduate," as stated by Edwina M. Lee, Executive Director of NJSBA, in her September 21, 1999 press release.

We also understand the importance of another statement made by Mrs. Lee in that document: "While NJSBA recognizes the need to assess students' progress toward meeting the standard, we will continue to seek ideal methodology for measuring students' progress toward the new goals."

As a result of our study, the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment offers the following recommendations for further refinements that will promote the best possible education

for the students of New Jersey. Our recommendations are broken down into the following four major elements:

- E. Assessment Instruments
- F. Test Administration
- G. Evaluation
- H. Policy

Background information, rationale and comments regarding each of the above recommendations are outlined below. Additionally, within each recommendation, the committee has included a number of positive aspects resulting from implementation of the Statewide Assessment System.

B. Assessment Instruments

The New Jersey Department of Education recently released two new publications entitled “Parent Guides” [Attachment 2] that contain timely and pertinent information about the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA) and the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA). These publications were sent to New Jersey Public Schools to explain the 4th and 8th grade tests to parents, including information on how the assessments were developed and their importance to the future of all students. In his November 18, 1999 news release, Commissioner David Hespe indicated, “As long as the diagnostic value of the tests are not compromised, we will seriously consider and pursue all suggestions we receive from parents and educators about how the assessment can be made even better.” The Committee understands that the State Department of Education has repeatedly attempted to respond to concerns of educational associations regarding the new tests and have sent department staff to participate in discussions about improving the system. The Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment applauds the efforts of the Department and hopes they will continue to remain open to suggestions in the future.

Throughout our research it was clear that everyone supports “raising the standards” in education. The Core Curriculum Content Standards, adopted in 1996, prepare our students for the challenges that await them in college and in the workplace. The Standards and their associated tests have prompted districts to examine existing curriculum in detail in order to align the district curriculum with the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and has forced increased focus on professional development. These positive outcomes are directly linked to the support for higher educational standards.

As we continued our work over the past three months, the committee heard from school districts who stated that they could identify additional positives stemming from the NJCCCS, including significant improvement in communication at all grade levels within individual districts, between sending and receiving districts, as well as the development of innovative cross content course offerings that demonstrate practical applications for students to apply their basic skills knowledge.

Collectively, the new tests, used properly, can improve teaching, learning, and equality of educational opportunities throughout New Jersey. The *growing pains* associated with implementation should not discourage policy makers, administrators, teachers and parents. Rather, dealing proactively with this change in our educational system, should

motivate action to ensure continued review, recommendation and implementation of improvements to benefit our students.

Recommendation #1: The State Department of Education should identify and utilize a nationally recognized, state approved, commercially available standardized test which is closely aligned with the NJCCCS to measure students' abilities in language arts literacy (reading and writing), math, and science components during the 4th grade. The administration of this test should be spread over two-years (an idea already being discussed by the State Department of Education) in order to administer assessments of the social studies, visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education and world language components during the fifth grade.

The current ESPA measures what students know and can do in language arts literacy, math and science. This test is a hybrid criterion/standards-referenced instrument to determine whether student performance on a set of content standards is *below, at, or above* state established levels of expected performance. While these terms *partially proficient, proficient, and advanced proficient* may be specified in federal law and may eventually become nationally accepted, they are now only linked to the concepts of competence held by those who established the absolute levels of proficiency, with little communication with or consideration of the expectations of those who developed the test, or vice versa.

The results of the May 1999 test in language arts literacy revealed that, across the state, 41% of the 4th grade tested proficient while less than 1% tested as advanced proficient against an absolute standard of 85%. Based on these results, the committee discussed if it were possible to conclude that:

- a) There are major weaknesses in our educational system;
- b) The test is not age appropriate;
- c) The Standards are set too high; or
- d) All or a combination of the above.

Conversely, we might argue that our previous outcomes on the Early Warning Test exceeded rational expectations when compared to nationally and internationally normed groupings and that these new scores are disappointing because New Jersey students are now being measured against a higher standard for the first time. Either way, the testimony received by the committee indicated that the test does not give educators the information needed to assess individual student performance in order to place students in programs necessary to ensure that the students' educational needs are being met.

By the amount and format of information provided, previous standardized achievement tests yielded a large amount of information about individual student performance. New Jersey school districts have come to expect assessments that are valid, reliable and provide useful information for measuring and improving student achievement. On September 21, 1999, Commissioner Hespe released the following statement, "These test are, first and foremost, a diagnostic tool to help teachers pinpoint students' individual needs so that they can help them to higher levels of achievement." Unfortunately, due to the lack of an item analysis and the delayed return of test results, school districts, parents

and students are not now receiving adequate or timely feedback to pinpoint individual needs nor determine the best methods for students to make real progress.

A balance between a nationally norm-referenced standardized test and the New Jersey Assessment Instrument would provide quick, valid and reliable information to help teachers pinpoint students' individual needs critical for success at the elementary level, while still measuring students' proficiency in the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. It would also allow districts, parents and members of the public to compare our students' achievement nationally and globally.

Recommendation #2: The State Department of Education must ensure that the State Assessments (ESPA, GEPA and HSPA) are both valid and reliable and that they are an accurate measure of whether or not a student has mastered the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards at their respective grade levels.

According to information provided by the State Department of Education, "Using the best national model available, educational experts formulated and then validated the tests." We have no reason to doubt that the tests rely heavily on the Core Curriculum Content Standards as a basis for *content validity*. However, during the various sub-committee meetings, the committee repeatedly received input from professional educators who were very concerned about what they considered to be little evidence to support whether or not the current tests are *a valid measure* at the benchmark grade levels 4, 8, and 11-12 to accurately evaluate student achievement at those levels.

Validity of the tests would imply a study of:

- 1) Content;
- 2) Relative success in a battery of field tests;
- 3) Previous achievement in individual tests; and
- 4) The test developers' opinion of what students should know, or better yet, what they would desire them to know, at those benchmark grade levels.

Reliability is more associated with how dependable the assessments are or how much confidence can be placed on students' test scores. Reliability denotes consistency. Statistical analysis, plotted across time, assists educators in determining the degree of confidence or *reliability coefficient* of a given test. Standardized test publishers provide a reliability coefficient of their products and detail the methods used to determine their rating.

Considering the State Department of Education's stated willingness to continually make improvements to the tests, we ask that they develop and communicate to all school districts, the process used and the future process to be employed to ensure that the Assessments are and continue to be valid and reliable in accordance with testing procedures that are proven and established.

Recommendation #3: The State Department of Education should form a committee, representative of both subject area specialists and grade level specialists (specifically teachers and supervisors) to re-examine the relevancy and the appropriateness of the Assessments and to establish validity, alignment and articulation between these assessments and the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The State Department of Education is concerned about districts aligning their curriculum to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards. Clyde Reese, Director of Assessment for the State Department of Education informed the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment on November 13, 1999, that “By triangulation, if the standards are incorporated into the curriculum, and the standards are measured by the assessment, then the curriculum will be aligned with the assessment.” This theory rests heavily on the hope that the assessment is aligned to the standards.

Mr. Reese also informed the committee that the tests were developed by a group of 30 grade-relevant teachers. Yet another group of professionals in those grade levels developed the definitions of *partially proficient*, *proficient*, and *advanced proficient*. When the teachers who created the tests saw the original scores on the field tests, Mr. Reese related that they were appalled, but refused to lower the standards. However, Mr. Reese gave us no indication as to whether or not these teachers (who created the original assessments) and these professionals (who created the benchmarked levels) worked cooperatively to compare the levels of proficiency against the actual assessments.

The committee also heard and discussed numerous concerns about the age appropriateness of the test and/or the scoring rubrics used to determine the appropriate proficiency level for each of the tests. Statewide the discrepancies in performance on the various areas of the ESPA were, and remain, troubling to the committee. Poor performance in general on the Language Arts-Literacy portion in comparison to relatively high performance on the Science portion raises concerns for not only the committee but also for district educators who can not reconcile the discrepancies.

By requesting that a separate committee be formed to review the alignment of the assessments and the levels of proficiency, we are not trying to second-guess the efforts of the test developers, rather, we want concrete assurances through this double-check that the entire testing program is indeed an early warning test. At the very least, a second study by a representative committee of educators as suggested in this report, would begin to answer questions raised so widely about the appropriateness of the proficiency levels set, the articulation between the Standards, the age-appropriateness of the assessment instruments and their alignment to the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards.

B. Test Administration

We recognize that school districts, teachers, students, and parents all play a role in ensuring mastery of the Core Curriculum Content Standards as assessed on the ESPA, GEPA and HSPA, and are pleased that the Department of Education has stated that they have given serious consideration to all suggestions received from educators. We have

been told that they are in the process of preparing and distributing practice tests, reducing the ESPA by one hour, looking into revising methods for tabulating and returning the results to school districts, and are emphasizing the need for professional development.

We can expect to see substantial increases in performance outcomes when the promised improvements on the state level occur. This coupled with more opportunities to administer, take, and grade the tests, and as well as teaching techniques which are modified to better deliver the curriculum, will lead to higher assessment scores. But in order for this to be possible, both the teacher and their students, as well as the local districts and their communities, need time to adjust and assess their own performance before they can adequately reconfigure the delivery of instruction to meet the challenges of the new assessments. The recommendations outlined below will assist in developing a climate necessary for that growth and change.

Recommendation #4: The Department of Education is urged to limit the extent of the annual assessment at each grade level mentioned in NJAC 6A: 6-4 to no more than two hours per day and 10 hours per grade level, exclusive of breaks and directions. All assessments of the NJCCCS would be done within that time frame of 10 hours, no matter how many content areas are assessed.

Shortening the test can be achieved in a variety of ways, including the use of a standardized test mentioned in Recommendation # 1, by developing assessments that are cross-aligned to measure multiple areas within the Standards, as well as by reducing the number of the Standards within a content area that will be assessed.

The committee feels that, in order to focus on the foundation skills within the Core Curriculum Content Standards that young children should master by the 4th grade, and in order to limit the amount of time that is consumed by assessing these Standards, the state must prioritize the Standards, focusing on the assessment of only those skills most pertinent to the success of younger students. Full assessment of all of the Standards can take place at the 8th and 11th grade levels.

When considering this recommendation, the committee discussed the concern expressed by principals and curriculum directors that when the full assessment schedule is in effect, the time away from actual instruction may amount to 7% of the standard school year. Repeatedly, we heard concerns that the length of the tests themselves could be detrimental to young students. Since the current assessments exceed the SAT, PSAT, or even most professional licensing exams (e.g., State Bar or CPA exams) in total testing time, and since the committee did not feel that endurance is a skill requirement of the NJCCCS's, we urge the test developers to be sensitive to the relative attention span of the students at their respective developmental stages.

The State Department of Education indicated the longest period of testing time without a break is 45 minutes and on any given day, total student testing time (excluding directions and breaks) is no more than two hours. In his December 16, 1999 press release announcing the test results, Commissioner Hespe gave a total test administration time of 40 hours over the span of a student's public school education, which is probably true in only the literal sense of the time on the test. During sub-committee meetings our group

heard direct testimony from districts that disputed the Department's claim of minimal impact on the life of the school. They noted first hand, the ripple effect of the administration of the assessments on other scheduling within the school (e.g. classes that were either shortened or shuffled, the impact on the services and availability of other teachers needed for coverage or scoring of the assessments, and the reduced availability of resource room or Basic Skills Instruction services. Based on these first hand reports, the committee feels strongly about the need to limit testing to 10 hours per grade level, regardless of the number of subject areas in the NJCCCS that are assessed.

Recommendation #5: The Department of Education is urged to ensure that test results returned to the districts include assessment mapping and item analysis for each grade and subject and that these results be furnished to districts within 8 weeks of the test, but no later than June 1. This will allow for earlier and more meaningful remediation for the students, better scheduling of fall classes with more appropriate placement of the students, as well as opportunities during the summer for professional development for staff in improved instructional strategies.

Information learned from the test will help districts and teachers provide children with a better educational program tailored to meet his or her specific needs. Unless districts receive timely and detailed test results, they cannot incorporate the results of this assessment instrument and either rely solely on teacher's evaluation of mastery and performance in the classroom or invest in supplementing the State Assessments with the use of a standardized achievement test. Administering two sets of tests in the same grade level does not appear to be a thorough or efficient approach to education, and even the DOE has stated that it discourages the use of other testing during these grade levels.

As previously noted, on September 21, 1999, Commissioner Hespe released the following statement, "These test are, first and foremost, a diagnostic tool to help teachers pinpoint students' individual needs so that can help them to higher levels of achievement." Title 6A: 6-4 however, implies the assessments are to be used to evaluate district achievement on the Core Curriculum Content Standard, without specific regard for individual student performance, and the current results returned to the districts focus on district performance more than they do on student performance. As all New Jersey students are mandated to receive a thorough and efficient education, the committee feels that the best way to ensure that we are meeting our 120 year old mandate is to focus on the individual student, not the individual district, by delivering detailed item analysis, skills mapping and timely reports.

Recommendation #6: The Department of Education should ensure they fulfill their promise to provide complete practice tests, with all accompanying scoring material, for each component of the assessment at each grade level assessed. Practice tests should include directions, manipulatives, and instructions or methods for tabulating test results.

The following message appeared in the Department of Education's news release of November 18, 1999:

In response to concerns raised by members of the educational community, the Department will provide practice versions of the ESPA and GEPA to schools in the coming months so teachers can gain a better understanding of what the tests are like. "Complete practice tests, with all accompanying scoring material, will be provided to every teacher in the state," Commissioner Hespe said, "We will get ESPA and GEPA practice tests in language arts literacy to the schools in early to mid-January. Practice tests in mathematics and science will soon follow."

The Department will also add a website that will contain the practice tests and demonstrate the holistic method used to tabulate the results. "Teachers and parents will be able to see how open-ended questions are scored and review for themselves the rigorous procedures used during the process," the commissioner said.

In testimony received by the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment, professional educators felt that the administration of practice tests would increase the comfort level of students with the new assessment format and would provide opportunity for much needed staff development and practical training in the administration and scoring of the tests.

It is extremely encouraging that the State Department of Education has quickly responded to concerns of the educational community. However, it is important that NJSBA, along with other educational groups in the state, be prepared to monitor the actions taken by the DOE in turning these promises into actions.

Recommendation #7: The State Department of Education is urged to align and/or otherwise incorporate the provisions of the new continuing professional development requirements as a vehicle to meet the needs of incorporating the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and the improvement needed to increase student mastery of these Standards through the redevelopment of Academies in regions throughout New Jersey.

The greatest effect on student performance comes not from raising the bar with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, or assessing results of the ESPA, the GEPA or the HSPA, but rather through the effectiveness of the individual classroom teacher. The standards and assessment code elevates the expectations held for both the student and the teacher. Teachers are charged with aligning district curriculum with the NJCCCS and presenting material in such a way as to encourage the higher level of thinking and skills mastery that are required in the NJCCCS.

The State Department of Education, as part of the professional development requirement of 100 hours in five years, must approve teacher training and should require districts to detail how this professional development will serve to meet the demands for increased student achievement of the tougher criteria. The committee sees a strong relationship between the standards and assessments, the professional development code and the revitalization of these regional academies. Educators (whether in local districts or at the state level) must look outside the "box" when it comes to how best to deliver the new curriculum standards.

The revitalization of the regional academies would allow the development and sharing of innovative teaching methods on a statewide basis in direct response to the needs of students as identified in the new assessment model. It also has the potential of addressing critical areas of need beyond that evident in the assessment issues. Various studies have pointed out the need for teachers to focus on math and science, to adopt new strategies for improving the progress of minority students, to sharing advances in work-based learning and to assist alternate route or provisional teachers.

It is important to note that NJSBA, in its Policy Position on Continuing Education Requirement (File Code 4131), already calls for continued monitoring of the professional development process. We concur with the requested NJSBA Action to appoint an ad hoc committee to examine districts' experience at the end of the first 12 months of the continuing education initiative. Specifically, we feel that this new committee should be charged to examine

- how districts are incorporating the issues related to the NJCCCS
- how they are structuring staff development intended to improved student achievement on the assessments.

Recommendation #8: The State Department of Education must ensure that every school district has the financial resources necessary to fully implement the requirements of Title 6A: 6-4.

Current NJSBA Policy (File Code 3220) is forthright in its statement that New Jersey's school finance system should:

- a. Define the elements of a thorough and efficient education and recognize that such definition is only a first step in ensuring a thorough and efficient education;
- b. Provide funds to support and guarantee a thorough and efficient level of education to all public school children of the state;

Additionally, the NJSBA believes that a thorough and efficient education will provide programs for the achievement of each child's greatest potential so that he/she might assume a productive role in society as a responsible citizen, and has long held the belief that the Legislature, with public input, should define the resources necessary to provide such an education.

The NJSBA policies also support the Plaintiff in the Abbott v. Burke court case, which seeks to gain fiscal equity for urban children. The committee agrees that the Core Curriculum Content Standards and the state assessments have the potential to increase equity of educational opportunities by dramatically reducing the inequities that result from varied curriculum offered by districts across the state. Districts, no matter what their size or composition, location or District Factor Group, will be forced to focus on the NJ Core Curriculum Content Standards and will be held accountable for the progress that their students are making in mastering the Standards.

The State Department of Education must create and support an environment that enables districts to implement this reform. Investments in remediation, early childhood

education, new materials and methods, new assessments, technology, staff development, reduced class size, and improved facilities are essential for success. As such, the State Department of Education needs to be a partner with the districts in supplying the resources needed for that success.

We see the Academies as having the potential for the State Department of Education and local districts to experience long-term cost savings through collaboration and sharing ideas on the implementation of the NJCCCS and the Assessment Code. Combined purchasing efforts with other districts for supplies, course materials, and staff development will provide for a more efficient utilization of scarce financial resources.

E. Evaluation

Effective communication is paramount to the success of the New Jersey Standards and Assessment Initiative. The State Department of Education has been proactive in developing strategies to provide assistance to parents to better understand how to help their children achieve high standards. ESPA and GEPA Parent Guides explain the new assessment program and endeavor to help parents understand the information contained on their child's Individual Student Report.

As part of Commissioner Hesse's 9-part plan to assist local districts in implementing the new curriculum and assessment program, he is launching a statewide alliance of business community, educators and community-based organizations called New Jersey United for Higher School Standards. Its purpose is to better communicate understanding of the new tests and their role in building better schools and to assist parents in accessing programs that will help their children reach higher levels of proficiency. To meet this goal, a task force of business and government leaders was created to help promote the Standards and the test, with the state putting up \$100,000 in seed money.

While communication to parents, businesses, educators and the community has been lengthy, we must ensure that districts are also allowed to communicate their successes. Recommendations listed below provide for a means to eliminate the need to continually defend questionable results because of higher standards and place renewed focus on celebrating students' accomplishments in improving their knowledge of the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

These recommendations also allow our administrators, teachers and students to focus on individual gains, while providing the public with a way to measure relative improvement within a district, statewide, and nationally.

Recommendation #9: The State Department of Education is urged to eliminate the absolute standard (85% proficiency within the district) and replace it with a model based on improved annual progress in each proficiency level at each grade level in which statewide assessments are administered.

Absolute district scores (applied in relation to the 85% benchmark) do not appropriately focus on the achievement of individual students or take into account prior achievement of students in the earlier years in school. The continued use of the 85% benchmark will

prove to be increasingly difficult for districts that already have low achievement and distorts the actual performance level in districts with a high mobility rate. While the committee agrees that districts should be held accountable for improving the achievement level of all students, the 85% benchmark is raising the bar too high, too fast.

Evaluating schools based on the percentage of students who score at or above a certain level could be seen to encourage schools to focus their efforts on those students who perform just below the standard – a focus of effort designed to raise the reported score, not the achievement of all students at all levels. The committee feels that schools might find it easy to justify neglecting students who have already met the standard or abandoning those who are so far below it that there is little chance for success. In this model, instead of raising the bar, we may be actually lowering it so more people can jump over (i.e., the reported, but as yet unexamined, increased use of the SRA for high school graduation).

An improvement-based approach could take into account such factors as gender, race, fluency in English, and number of students qualifying for free and/or reduced lunch. At the school level, it could include such things as student mobility, ratio of students/square foot / school overcrowding, and family education levels. Additionally, the improvement-based approach reduces unfair comparisons between districts without regard to their district factor groupings. An improvement-based model specifically encourages districts and teachers to maximize the potential of every student.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment repeatedly heard from educators at the sub-committee meetings and in the written testimony it received from districts indicating that they want to see the absolute standard reduced from 85% to 75%. Ultimately, we would all like to see 100% of our students proficient in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. We must first define where we are, where we want to be (100%), identify ways to improve, and measure our progress along the way – focusing on how far districts have come, not how far they need to go.

Fortunately, Title 6A: 6-4 already incorporates a progress standard as part of the Annual Review and Evaluation of School Districts and Charter Schools. The standard should be modified to replace the initial absolute standard with an improvement-based approach, with annual review, in order to ensure continued improvement of all students.

Recommendation #10: The State Department of Education is urged to modify its annual reporting methods to show progress of individual districts against State median scores at each grade level for the current and prior years. The report should include a district’s progress using the baseline data obtained in the previous academic year in lieu of the absolute standard and provide for additional disaggregation of scores (e.g., mobility rates, students with Limited English Proficiency, students with Individual Educational Plans).

In the January 2000 edition of American School Board Journal, Nina Hurwitz and Sol Hurwitz write, “School rankings draw attention to weakest schools and can be used to drive decisions regarding school reform, reorganization, or closure. School officials have an obligation to interpret test results to the public consistently and accurately and to be

forthright about problems in the system.” This statement speaks clearly about the current dilemma facing New Jersey.

The Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment recommends adding the following information when publishing and distributing the department’s annual New Jersey Report Card:

- Summary data by subject area and grade level
- A district’s improvement-based standard using base-line data from the previous year (the district’s goal) for each subject area and grade level
- Progress toward achieving the prior year goals for each subject area
- Disaggregation by factors of ethnicity, mobility rate, special student needs

The same information should also be published on the New Jersey Department of Education’s Assessment Internet search engine.

The proposed reporting format provides assistance to district boards of education in reporting annually at a public meeting the achievements of all students documented by the State Assessments. This allows for the public to recognize specific areas of improvement against the progress standards outlined in Title 6A: 6-4. Disaggregation of test results, particularly the progress made by those in the lowest levels of proficiency and by subject area forces districts to be more accountable in addressing the needs of students who may otherwise have been ignored.

Measuring progress in meeting the new Standards requires patience. Success takes time and requires some experimentation, and occasional failure. We all have to be ready to adapt, adjust, and compromise in order to achieve long-term success.

F. Policy

The Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment encourages the Board of Directors of the New Jersey School Boards Association to adopt the revisions outlined in policy 2255 and 6147 that incorporate the committee recommendations. Those policy revisions are attached immediately following our conclusion. NOTE: Suggested changes to the policies **are bolded** in the drafts; deletions are printed with ~~strike-throughs~~.

CONCLUSION

The Ad Hoc Committee on Assessment thanks Charles V. Reilly, President of New Jersey School Boards Association, Edwina L. Lee, the Executive Director of NJSBA, and the Board of Directors for the opportunity to study this critical issue and to make recommendations based on that study.

We would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by the leadership from the New Jersey Association of School Administrators and from the New Jersey Principals

and Supervisors Association, as well as the many individual staff members with whom we met during our work. They were generous with their time and deliberate with their contributions; they also were extremely helpful to the Committee as we wrestled with definitions and terminology as well as with the intricacies of not only the Assessments but also of the Standards themselves.

We applaud the fact that all of the educational associations in New Jersey are studying the impact of the Assessments in order to better understand their ramifications, make the best use of the current model and offer suggestions to the Department of Education that will improve the entire assessment process. We look forward to NJSBA working with these other associations cooperatively through the League for Educational Excellence, and hope that this report will be useful in furthering that cooperation and influencing the shape, scope, format of results and the ultimate usefulness of the assessments given to our students throughout the state.

We must advise the Board of Directors that the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessments focused most of our time, energy and initiative on the issues surrounding the ESPA and the GEPA, as these were the areas where the most comments and critical concerns were expressed by school districts in New Jersey. We understand that while these concerns seemed critical to us, issues are emerging about the HSPA (High School Proficiency Assessment) as well. There are also minor policy changes (language) for NJSBA relating to the change from the HSPT (High School Proficiency Test) to the HSPA which will need modification. We suggest that our Committee or a new committee be delegated to continue this study on the HSPA.

NJSBA 12 28 99 Assessment Final Report

DRAFT CHANGES TO POLICY: AD-HOC ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
21 January, 2000

NJSBA POSITIONS AND POLICIES ON EDUCATION
Action Planning for T&E Certification

FILE CODE: 2255

NJSBA POLICY POSITION

State and Local responsibility for T&E

The Association believes that the Legislature intended the State to determine the broad goals of education; to require local districts to set their own goals, consistent with State goals and with maximum public participation and to monitor and evaluate local districts to determine whether they are making sufficient progress. While the State must set the standard to be attained and must assess district progress toward attaining that standard for all pupils, the means by which these goals will be achieved are left to the local district.

The Association supports a division of labor between the State and local districts in which the State sets broad goals which are applicable to all pupils, requires the development of local goals and holds districts accountable for moving towards these goals. The means by which such progress is made (e.g. curriculum, teaching staff, budget allocation, etc.) should be determined at the local level. Only if progress is insufficient should the State become involved in how a district is education its children.

State-level goals must be very broad if they are to be applied to the varied population of New Jersey's public schools. The test to be applied is whether the goal is commonly considered essential for all students in order for them to function in our society.

~~Given the diversity of our State's population and its conflicting values and viewpoints, it is not surprising that there are few goals which are commonly considered essential for all students. Only minimum proficiency in the basic communications and computational skills appears to meet this test.~~

State specification of actions to be taken by local board in pursuit of state-level goals should also meet the test of being commonly considered essential for all students to receive and "educational opportunity which will prepare them to function politically, socially and economically in a democratic society." It is the responsibility of the State to see that the resources necessary to achieve goals are available and used efficiently. If a district abdicates its responsibility to its students, the State should follow the provisions of law and direct that district action be taken. If a district does not take action, the State is empowered to utilize the enforcement provisions of applicable law in the best interest of that district's students.

Authority: DA 10/78-CR
Reaffirmed: DA 12/91-CR QEA

State Intervention in Local Districts **NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME**

While the NJSBA opposes the extension of State authority beyond the scope necessary to fulfill the constitutional mandate for a thorough and efficient system of free public schools, the Association acknowledges that the State Department of Education has the right to intervene in the management of a local school district under certain grounds, and only after certain due process procedures have been followed.

The statutory grounds are failure to show sufficient progress toward the goals, guidelines, objectives, and standards established under T&E. The due process procedures include:

- A. An opportunity for the local board to submit a remedial plan of its own, in lieu of formal intervention by the State; and
- B. A plenary hearing at which the State has the burden of proof in establishing the need for State intervention.

The Executive Director shall be responsible for authorizing study of any such intervention in order to recommend to the Board of Directors what role, if any, the NJSBA should play in a particular instance.

Authority: BD 1/81

T&E Planning and Implementation Guide **NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME**

The NJSBA believes any state monitoring of T&E or other related compliance should be implemented by a clear, detailed guide which:

- A. Consists of both an understandable description and an itemized and reasonable timetable for State Department of Education responsibilities;
- B. Includes, but is not limited to, all of those requirements made of local districts under the applicable statute or code; and
- C. Are completed sufficiently prior to enforcement to allow effective district planning.

Authority: DA6/77-Policy Rec. 2
Revised: 6/83
Amended: DA 6/93-SR

NJSBA ACTION

T&E Administrative Code

NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME

The NJSBA seeks removal from the T&E Administrative Code and related directives of any requirements which:

- A. Exceed the intent of the law;
- B. Create additional unnecessary paperwork; or
- C. Are too vague for compliance.

The NJSBA believes that no guidelines or other directives for implementing T&E, which are binding on boards of education, should be promulgated without full public review and approval by the State Board of Education and that any such guidelines of directions should be minimal.

Authority: DA 6/77-Policy Rec. 1

DA 1/79-15 (Deleted as 7100-Master Plans-DA6/93-GO/8700)

Cross Reference: 2240 Research, evaluation and planning

Reaffirmed: DA 6/93

Reaffirmed with Changes: DA 5/97-CR (School Finance)

DRAFT CHANGES TO POLICY: AD-HOC ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE
21 January, 2000

NJSBA POSITIONS AND POLICIES ON EDUCATION
Standards of Proficiency

FILE CODE: 6147

NJSBA POLICY POSITION

Performance Indicators

NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME

The Association believes that local boards of education should adopt policy defining a set of performance indicators to be used to monitor the quality of each school. The Association also believes that it is important for the State Department of Education to annually collect information from each district that provides the community with a profile of each school's performance on significant indicators. These data are put into a form that permits local boards of education and school officials to compare the performance of their schools to similar schools across the state or in selected districts.

Authority: DA 12/82-CR (Urban Education)

Statewide Testing Program

The Association believes that a uniform statewide test or an alternative method of measurement should be used as the basic method of assessing whether students have met the State's standards. The statewide testing program should include an 11th grade high school graduation test with ~~an~~ early warning tests at **4th and 8th** grades.

The purpose of these tests should be to certify the student's credentials, identify the need for remedial intervention, and identify the opportunity for advanced or accelerated work.

This assessment system should be designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity, assistance and incentives to meet the state's academic standards.

The Association believes that local school districts should adopt policy directing timely study of and response to test results. It is essential that there be a timely return to local boards of statewide test results to enable an accurate and meaningful interpretation and application of these results.

Authority: DA 10/78-CR (Graduation Requirements)
DA 12/83-1

Statewide Graduation Standards

~~The NJSBA believes that the State Board of Education should set statewide, uniform~~

~~standards of proficiency as a requirement for graduation. The State should not mandate any additional course requirements. The State should, however, require distinct boards of education to establish requirements and proficiency standards for graduation from high school in areas deemed appropriate by the district board. The State should also establish requirements for classified special education students essentially that the student has met the goals for his/her individual educational program (IEP).~~

~~A uniform statewide test should be used as the basic method of assessing whether students have met the State's standards. The test should assess skills appropriate for graduation, that is, those skills commonly considered essential for functioning as an adult in American society.~~

~~A district diploma should be awarded to students who meet district and state requirements. The same diploma should be awarded to special education students who meet a state requirement that they accomplish their locally determined Individual Educational Program (IEP).~~

The NJSBA supports the administrative code requirements for graduation with a state endorsed diploma, including any additional district board requirements. The State should continue to require that each special education student and each student of limited English proficiency fulfill all requirements of his/her individual education program (IEP) and/or LEP plan in order to graduate.

NJSBA endorses the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) as the basic method of assessing whether students have acquired skills appropriate for graduation, that is, those skills commonly considered essential for functioning as an adult in American society as reflected in the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

All students who meet district and state requirements should be granted a state-endorsed diploma, including special education students and students of limited English proficiency. Boards of education in accordance with code and an individual student's IEP may determine when it is appropriate to allow a student with disabilities to pass the Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA).

Authority: DA 10/78-CR (Graduation Requirements)
DA 1/80-A
DA 12/83-4
DA 12/89-CR (HSPT/Differentiated Diplomas) (Reaffirmed)

Uniform Statewide Standards

The NJSBA supports the concept of uniform statewide standards as set out in the Core Curriculum Content Standards adopted by the State Board of Education in May, 1996. The State standards should:

A. Require the provision of remedial programs and appropriate evaluations for students

failing to meet the standards.

- B. Not cause undue hardship to students unable to meet them immediately; and
- C. Be accompanied by State provision for the cost of **both** effective remediation **and the professional development needed for improving the instruction necessary for that remediation.**

Authority: DA 5/76-18

Reaffirmed: DA 6/93-SR

Early Childhood Assessment

Change is in Code citation only.

NJSBA believes that early childhood programs should be developmentally appropriate and that young children should not be subjected to standardized testing prior to the fourth grade.

Goal achieved by the elimination of third grade basic skills testing and requirement for standardized testing at the third grad level. Achieved by N.J.A.C 6:8-4.6-2.6

Monitoring of Test Administration Procedures

NJSBA believes it is important to monitor the implementation of ~~the 11th grade HSPT and 8th grade early warning test~~ **all statewide tests** to assure that the impact on school districts is a positive one on both curriculum and educational gains of students. **To this end the State should:**

- A. Ensure effective implementation of assessments that are both statistically valid and reliable in accordance with testing procedures that are proven and established.
- B. Ensure timely release of useful assessment information so that there can be meaningful **remediation for students and appropriate professional development for the instructional strategies.**
- C. Require the provision of appropriate remedial re-evaluations for students failing to meet the standards.
- D. Limit testing so as not to provide undue hardship to students or their instructional program.

Authority: DA 12/85-1

DA 12/89-CR (HSPT/Differentiate Diplomas)

School to Work /Career Education

NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME

The NJSBA believes that the proposed Administrative CODE 6:a:6 effects a systemic change in the delivery of public education in the State of New Jersey and believes that such sweeping reform be subject, at least, to legislative review to determine the

appropriateness and need for such reform.

The NJSBA opposes any Administrative Code that would remove local control over graduation requirements, mandates a structured learning experience including, but not limited to, career counseling in kindergarten and job shadowing in middle school.

Authority: DA 5/99-1a & b

NJSBA ACTION

~~High School Proficiency Test~~ **New Jersey State Assessment Program**

In order to ~~minimize the negative~~ **maximize the positive** effect that the ~~High School Proficiency Test~~ **Elementary School Proficiency Assessment, the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment, and the High School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA, GEPA, HSPA)** ~~may~~**will** have on children and school districts, the NJSBA:

- A. Urges the State Department of Education (SDOE) to make available a resource list of appropriate instructional materials to districts upon request;
- B. Seeks legislation providing state funding for intensive instruction during the summer for students who are at risk;
- C. Seeks legislation that would provide state aid for after-school homework assistance programs;
- D. Seeks legislation that would require school districts to offer, to students who fail the ~~High School Proficiency Test (H.S.P.T.)~~ **High School Proficiency Assessment (H.S.P.A)** twice, the option of having an Individual Student Plan developed that will lead to marketable job skills. Students who successfully complete the program would receive state endorsed certificates that delineate the students' training. Students who fail to demonstrate the state-required level of basic skills would not receive a high school diploma;
- E. Urges the State Department of Education to ~~establish Minimum Levels of Proficiency (MLPs) for all grades aligned with the 8th grade early warning test and the 11th grade HSPT for the guidance of local school districts, and make available to district a comparison of the skills measured by the major standardized tests with the MLPs for each grade.~~ **ensure that the State Assessments are both valid and reliable and that it they are an accurate measure of whether or not the student has mastered the NJCCCS.**
- F. ~~Recommends that the basic skills assessed by the 11th grade HSPT should be those skills that are widely considered to be essential for all students to take their place as citizens and workers in a modern democratic society. These skills should be appropriate for students who plan to enter the workforce immediately upon graduation from high school. The HSPT should not be a college entrance level examination;~~

Substitute F: Urges the State Department of Education to report annually to the State Board, local boards, and the public on progress of all students in meeting the

Core Curriculum Content Standards as measured by the statewide assessment system, in each subject area assessed, using the baseline data obtained in the previous academic year in lieu of an absolute standard. ~~in its annual review of individual district performance on the statewide assessments to base the review on the percentage of improvements made by the district over the scores achieved and the number of students reaching proficiency levels in the previous year's assessment.~~

- G. Urges the State Department of Education to provide sufficient additional technical and financial assistance and staff training to enable districts to prepare their students for the higher level **HSPT assessments**.

Authority: DA 6/85-CR (Proficiency Test)
DA 12/89 (HSPT/Differentiated Diplomas)

Alternatives to Standardized Tests

NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME

The NJSBA shall seek legislation and/or appropriate amendments to current code to allow for the development and implementation of an alternative system of student achievement assessments which considers and utilizes appropriate methods for weighing multiple student performance indicators including, but no limited to, the evaluation of student portfolios, samples of students' actual work, teacher observation of students' classroom performance, as well as standardized test results.

Authority: DA 6/91-2

School-to Work/Career Education

NO CHANGES AT THIS TIME

The NJSBA shall seek revisions to the proposed Administrative Code 6A:6, regarding "Standards and Assessment for Student Achievement" specifically to eliminate selection of a "career major" and participation in a "structured learning experience" for both students and school districts; and, that districts be allowed to address career awareness and education to their own needs.

The NJSBA seeks the further revision that Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards be revised and that their implementation and its resultant Employer/Industry Certificate be postponed until such time as the new Core Curriculum Content Standards and Assessments in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Languages, Performing Arts and Health and Physical Education are proven to be achievable, valid and reliable.

Authority: DA 5/99-1 a & b

Financial Assistance for Standards Implementation **NO CHANGES**

The NJSBA supports the core curriculum content standards and proficiency-testing program, but believes that multi-year financial assistance is needed to assist school districts in paying for the added costs associated with the successful implementation of these standards and shall seek legislation to secure that financial assistance.

Authority: DA 5/99-6 and 6A

Cross References:	1430	State and national units
	6146	Graduation requirements
	6146	Summer Schools
	6171.1	Remedial Instruction
	6142.2	English as a Second Language, Bilingual/Bicultural