



# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

## Scoring Statewide Assessments: An Overview

### The Basics

Students in Louisiana annually test in all four core subjects – English language arts, math, science, and social studies.

To ensure comparability of results from year-to-year and to ensure the results are meaningful to parents, students, and educators, students receive (1) an achievement level earned in each subject (e.g., Basic, Mastery, etc.) and (2) a corresponding scaled score (a number between 100 and 500). See below for LEAP achievement levels and cut scores.

LEAP Grade 4				
Achievement Level	English Language Arts Scaled-Score Range	Mathematics Scaled-Score Range	Science Scaled-Score Range	Social Studies Scaled-Score Range
Advanced	408-500	419-500	405-500	399-500
Mastery	354-407	370-418	360-404	353-398
Basic	301-353	315-369	306-359	301-352
Approaching Basic	263-300	282-314	263-305	272-300
Unsatisfactory	100-262	100-281	100-262	100-271

LEAP Grade 8				
Achievement Level	English Language Arts Scaled-Score Range	Mathematics Scaled-Score Range	Science Scaled-Score Range	Social Studies Scaled-Score Range
Advanced	402-500	398-500	400-500	404-500
Mastery	356-401	376-397	345-399	350-403
Basic	315-355	321-375	305-344	297-349
Approaching Basic	269-314	296-320	267-304	263-296
Unsatisfactory	100-268	100-295	100-266	100-262

The scaled scores and cut points for LEAP – what it takes to earn Basic, Mastery, Advanced – were set in 1999 when Louisiana first created the LEAP assessments; the scaled score ranges for iLEAP were set in 2006. To ensure rigorous achievement levels, Louisiana set these cut scores using the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as guidance. Thus, Basic on LEAP roughly equates to Basic on NAEP and Mastery on LEAP roughly equates to Proficient on NAEP.

Louisiana Believes

## What Happens When Test Forms Change?

Since 1999, the performance standards for Basic, Mastery, etc. have remained the same even as forms get updated with new items (e.g., new constructed responses) and new content standards. Maintaining the performance standard for Basic ensures test scores and achievement levels remain valid and comparable year-to-year.

In other words, the scaled score ranges for each achievement level do not change year-to-year; however, the percentage of questions (raw score points) answered correctly to earn a score of "Basic" varies by subject and by year. Sometimes the percentage goes up and sometimes it goes down. This is because different forms are used in different test administrations with varying levels of difficult items. The equating psychometric procedure ensures the meaning of Basic, etc. remains consistent year-to-year – always aligned to those initial, NAEP-based standards.

This is not a Louisiana process. It is a research-based, best practice process used by all legitimate large scale assessments including ACT, SAT, NAEP, etc. Equating is the process that makes scaled scores comparable from year to year, and thus keeps the meaning of achievement levels constant.

### Examples

- Without equating, if a form includes more difficult questions, students would answer fewer correctly and earn lower achievement levels when, in fact, they may know just as much as students in the year prior; they were just given a more difficult test form.
- The reverse is also true. Without equating, if a form has more low-level questions, students would answer more correctly and earn higher achievement score because they answered more correctly; yet, they may know less about the more difficult content of the grade.

### 2013-14 Assessments: Basic Stays the Same

In 2013-14, LEAP and iLEAP were aligned to the Common Core State Standards as Louisiana prepared for its transition to PARCC items in 2014-15. Thus, as with other years, some of the questions changed so as to reflect the new standards.

As with any other year, new forms were created to include new test items. However, no new scaled score cuts were set. Louisiana did not redefine the meaning of Basic. Louisiana did not suddenly change the meaning of proficiency. Instead, the cut score for Basic stayed the same as it had in all other years – aligned to those initial, NAEP-driven expectations.

The chart below outlines the percentage of total raw points that students needed to earn in order to receive an achievement level of Basic over the past three years. As you will see, in some grades and subjects, the percentage went down; in other grades and subjects it went up. **In all cases, the standard for Basic (and the related scaled score) remained steady, as it has since the inception of these tests.**

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**Percentage of Total Raw Score Points Required to Earn “Basic”**

		ELA	Math	Science	Social Studies
4th	2014	44.62%	47.22%	58.93%	53.03%
	2013	51.54%	50%	56.90%	56.06%
	2012	53.85%	52.78%	62.07%	57.58%
8th	2014	58.70%	40.13%	58.93%	50%
	2013	57.97%	48.61%	56.90%	52.63%
	2012	57.97%	55.26%	56.90%	52.63%

**For additional information, please contact [assessment@la.gov](mailto:assessment@la.gov).** NOTE: Full technical reports for all assessments will be available in fall 2014.