Appendix B: State definitions of proficient*

Alabama
Not available.

Alaska
Reading: A student who scores at the proficient level based on the scale scores, established in state regulation, in reading combined with writing or language arts.

Mathematics: A student who scores at the proficient level based on the scale scores established in state regulation.

Arizona
Meets Standard: This level denotes demonstration of solid academic performance on challenging subject matter reflected by the content standards. This includes knowledge of subject matter, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and content relevant analytical skills. Attainment of at least this level is the expectation for all Arizona students.

Arkansas
Proficient: Proficient students demonstrate solid academic performance for the grade tested and are well-prepared for the next level of schooling. They can use Arkansas’s established reading and writing or mathematics skills and knowledge to solve problems and complete tasks on their own. Students can tie ideas together and explain the ways their ideas are connected.

California
Proficient: In reading-language arts and mathematics in grades 2-8 would be based on the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the California Standards Tests (CSTs). These tests assess how well students are mastering the state’s rigorous academic content standards, which lay out what students should know and be able to do at each grade level.

At the high school level, the definition of “proficient” in reading and math would be tied to scores on the California High School Exit Exam, which is a pass/fail test. “Cut scores” for achieving proficiency at the high school level would be equivalent to achieving proficiency on the California standards-based tests in reading-language arts and math.

Colorado
Proficient: Students understand directions, recognize author’s point of view, explain reactions, define problems or solutions, make predictions and draw conclusions, differentiate among printed materials, discriminate among various media, extract information from complex stimulus, identify character’s reactions or motives, identify sequences, support opinions, classify familiar vocabulary, and interpret poetry in a concrete manner.

Connecticut
Reading: Proficient: Students who score at this level can comprehend most grade-level or below-grade-level textbooks and other materials. They can generally determine the main idea, have an adequate understanding of the author’s purpose and are able to make some judgments about a test’s quality and themes.

Mathematics: Proficient: Students who score at this level demonstrate adequately developed conceptual understanding and computational skills, and adequately developed problem-solving skills.

Delaware
Meets Standard: The performance levels for reading, writing and math at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 and science and social studies grades 4, 6, 8, and 11 were set through a standard setting process detailed in the Report and Recommendations to the Delaware State Board of Education for Establishing Proficiency Levels for the Delaware Student Testing Program in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, August 1999. The DSTP scale scores for reading and math are reported on a developmental scale ranging from 150 to 800. The determination of the DSTP scale scores for grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 has been done using a procedure that involves linking to the Stanford Achievement Test, version 9, (Stanford 9) scores for reading and math. The DSTP in reading and math contains a portion of the Stanford 9. The scaling for grades 4, 6, and 7 is parallel to that at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.

Determination of five levels of performance for reading and math at grades 4, 6, and 7 will be done using a statistical model. For writing, raw scores are used to determine performance levels at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 and the performance levels at grades 4, 6, and 7 can easily replicate those at grades 3, 5, 8, and 10.

District of Columbia
Proficient: Percentage that scored at or above the state proficiency standard. Students who are not tested are included in this computation as being not proficient.

Florida
Level 4: Performance at this level indicates that the student has success with the challenging content of the Sunshine State Standards. A Level 4 student answers most of the questions correctly but may have only some success with questions that reflect the most challenging content.

Georgia
Meets Standard: CRCT: Scores from 300-349 indicate “Meets Standard,” which represents the “Proficient” student achievement level.

Hawaii
Meets Proficiency: Assessment results indicate that the student has demonstrated the knowledge and skills required to meet the content standards for this grade. The student is ready to work on higher levels of this content area.

*Please visit each state’s Web site for additional information.
Idaho
Proficient: Student demonstrates thorough knowledge and mastery of skills that allows him or her to function independently on all major concepts related to his or her current educational level.

Illinois
Meets Standards: Student work demonstrates proficient knowledge and skills in the subject. Students effectively apply knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Indiana
Pass: Solid academic performance for each grade assessed. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.

Iowa
Grade 4 Reading: Intermediate: Understands some factual information; sometimes can draw conclusions and make inferences about the motives and feelings of the characters; and is beginning to be able to identify the main idea, evaluate the style and structure of the text, and interpret nonliteral language.
Grade 4 Mathematics: Intermediate: Is beginning to develop an understanding of most math concepts and to develop the ability to solve complex word problems, use a variety of estimation methods, and interpret data from graphs and tables.
Grade 8 Reading: Intermediate: Understands some factual information; sometimes can draw conclusions; makes inferences about the motives and feelings of characters; and applies what has been read to new situations; and sometimes can identify the main idea, evaluate the style and structure of the text, and interpret nonliteral language.
Grade 8 Mathematics: Intermediate: Is beginning to develop an understanding of most math concepts and to develop the ability to solve complex word problems, use a variety of estimation methods, and interpret data from graphs and tables.
Grade 11 Reading: Intermediate: Understands some factual information; sometimes can make inferences about the characters; identify the main idea, and identifies author viewpoint and style; occasionally can interpret nonliteral language and judge the validity of conclusion.
Grade 11 Mathematics: Intermediate: Is beginning to develop the ability to apply a variety of math concepts and procedures, make inferences about qualitative information, and solve a variety of novel, quantitative reasoning problems.

Kansas
Proficient: Mastery of core skills is apparent. Knowledge and skills can be applied in most contexts. Ability to apply learned rules to most situations is evident. Adequate command of difficult or challenging content and applications is competently demonstrated. There is evidence of solid performance.

Kentucky
Proficient: Proficient as defined in Kentucky has been demonstrated to be a very high standard for student achievement, especially in comparison to standards typically set by other states. In Kentucky, Proficiency requires students to know content beyond basic knowledge and to apply their knowledge to solve problems. Students performing at the Proficient level are able to: * demonstrate broad content knowledge and apply it; * communicate in an accurate, clear, and organized way with relevant details and evidence; * use appropriate strategies to solve problems and make decisions; * demonstrate effective use of critical thinking skills.

Louisiana
Basic: These standards have been shown to be high; for example, equipercentile equating of the standards has shown that Louisiana’s “Basic” is somewhat more rigorous than NAEP’s “Basic.” In addition, representatives from Louisiana’s business community and higher education have validated the use of “Basic” as the state’s proficiency goal.

Maine
Meets the standard: The student’s work demonstrates consistent accomplishment of content knowledge, analysis, problem-solving, and communication skills.

Maryland
Proficient: Achieved the cut score on the assessment, as determined by the state.

Massachusetts
Proficient: Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.

Michigan
Proficient: A realistic and rigorous level of achievement indicating proficiency in meeting the needs of students.

Minnesota
Level 3: A score at or above Level 3 (scale score 1,420-1,499) represents state expectations for achievement of all students. Students who score at Level 3 are working successfully on grade-level material. This level corresponds to a “proficient” level of achievement for NCLB.

Mississippi
Mississippi Curriculum Test, Proficient: Students at the proficient level demonstrate solid academic performance and mastery of the content area knowledge and skills required for
success at the next grade. Students who perform at this level are well prepared to begin work on even more challenging material that is required at the next grade.

Algebra I and English II Test, Proficient: Students at the proficient level demonstrate solid academic performance and mastery of the knowledge and skills required for success in a more advanced course in the content area.

Missouri
Communication Arts: Proficient: In reading, students compare and contrast; interpret and use textual elements; predict; draw inferences and conclusions; determine word meaning; identify synonyms and antonyms; identify main idea and details. In writing, they use some details and organization; write complete sentences; generally follow rules of standard English.

Grade 4 Mathematics: Proficient: Students communicate math processes; add and subtract common fractions and decimals (money only); use standard units of measurement; identify attributes of planes and solid figures; create and interpret data from graphs; recognize, extend, and describe pictorial or numeric patterns; apply strategies to solve multi-step and logic problems.

Grade 8 Mathematics: Proficient: Students communicate math processes; recognize transformations; solve problems using units of measurement; interpret data from multiple representations; extend and describe patterns and relationships using algebraic expressions; develop and apply number theory concepts; use inductive and deductive reasoning to solve problems.

Grade 10 Mathematics: Proficient: Students communicate math processes; usually analyze and evaluate information; estimate; recognize reasonableness; identify needed information; make predictions; find probability; identify various representations of data; represent situations algebraically; apply properties of real numbers; use multiple strategies to solve problems.

Montana
Proficient: A student demonstrates competency including subject matter knowledge, the application of subject knowledge to real world situations, and the analytical skills appropriate to this subject.

Nebraska
Proficient: In the STARS (School-based Teacher-led Assessment and Reporting System) assessment system, student performance achievement levels are determined for each classroom assessment according to criteria established under the quality indicators. This process must be conducted in a technically appropriate manner and is reviewed by the external assessment reviewers.

Nevada
Not available.
ment, and probability and statistics. They identify and use appropriate information to solve problems. They provide supporting evidence for inferences and solutions. They communicate mathematical ideas effectively, with sufficient substance and detail to convey understanding.

New Jersey
Proficient: Proficient means a score achieved by a student at or above the cut score which demarks a solid understanding of the math content measured by an individual section on any state assessment.

New Mexico
Not available.

New York
Proficiency: The state has defined proficiency as the performance of a student who scores Level 3 on the grade 4 or 8 English language arts assessment, shows Level 3 growth on the NYSESLAT, scores between 65 and 84 on a Regents examination, or passes an approved alternative to a Regents examination.

North Carolina
Level III: Students performing at this level consistently demonstrate mastery of grade level subject matter and course subject matter and skills and are well prepared for the next grade or course level work.

North Dakota
Proficient: The definition of proficiency was established in narrative form by the state content and achievement standards drafting committees in 1999. These narratives guided the state standards-setting committees who established the state's achievement cut-scores for the North Dakota State Assessment in 2001-02. The standards-setting committees drafted supporting narrative that aligned to the final cut-scores and became the operative definition for all reports.

Ohio
Not available.

Oklahoma
Not available.

Oregon
Meets Standard: Specific cut score on state multiple-choice math test plus specific cut score (composite of five trait scores) on math problem solving assessment.

Pennsylvania
Proficient: Satisfactory academic performance. Proficient work indicates a solid understanding and adequate display of the skills included in the Pennsylvania Academic Content Standards.

Puerto Rico
Not available.

Rhode Island
Achieved Standard: Students demonstrate the ability to apply concepts and processes effectively and accurately. Students communicate ideas in clear and effective ways.

South Carolina
Proficient: Proficient: A student who performs at the proficient level on the PACT has met expectations for student performance based on the curriculum standards approved by the state board of education. The student is well prepared for work at the next grade. The proficient level represents the long-term goal for student performance in South Carolina.

South Dakota
Not available.

Tennessee
Proficient: Student performs at or above the cut scores set by the state.

Texas
Met the Standard: Student performed at a level that was at or somewhat above the state passing standard. Performance showed a sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills tested at grade level.

Utah
Sufficient: A student scoring at this level is proficient on the measured standards and objectives of the Core Curriculum in this subject. The student’s performance indicates sufficient understanding and application of key curriculum concepts.

Vermont
Meets Standard: English or Language Arts:
(1) Reading: Basic Understanding: Students must demonstrate the ability to comprehend a variety of materials of varying length and complexity.
(2) Reading: Analysis and Interpretation: Students must demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret what they read in the process of becoming critical readers.
(3) Writing Effectiveness: Students must demonstrate the ability to write effectively in a variety of formats for a variety of purposes, audiences, and contexts.
(4) Writing Conventions: Students must demonstrate control of the conventions (usage, spelling and punctuation) of the English language according to current standards of correctness.

Meets Standards: Mathematics:
(1) Concepts: Showing that the student understands mathematical processes and ideas.
(2) Skills: Showing that the student can perform the mathematical routine or technique correctly.
(3) Problem Solving: Showing that the student can choose and apply appropriate skills and concepts, and reason mathematically. Students solve increasingly complex situations by formulating, implementing and drawing conclusions from the problem solution.

Virginia
Pass/Proficient: Students who attain a scaled score of 399 or below on any of the Standards of Learning tests receive a rating of “fails/does not meet the standards.” Those with a scaled score of 400 to 499 receive a rating of “pass/ proficient”, and those with a scaled score of 500 to 600 receive a rating of “pass/advanced.”

Washington
Meet the Standard: Students performing at this level demonstrate mastery of the Essential Academic Learning Requirements for the subject and grade level.

West Virginia
Mastery: Student demonstrates knowledge, comprehension, and application of skills, which meet the standard.

Wisconsin
Proficient: Demonstrates competency in the academic knowledge and skills tested

Wyoming
Students at the proficient level use concepts and skills to acquire, analyze, and communicate information and ideas.