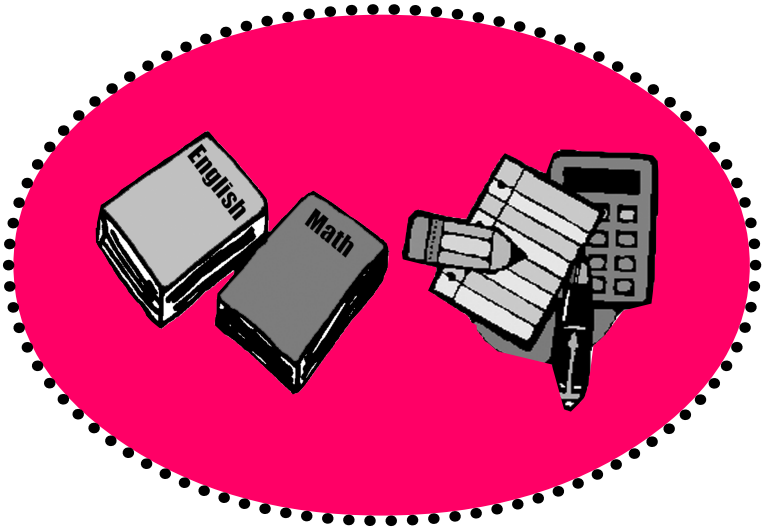
Reaching for Results

LEAP 21

GRADE 8



Cecil J. Picard, Superintendent
Louisiana Department of Education

January 2001

reaching for results

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Introduction

- Louisiana is transforming public education with the ***Reaching for Results*** reform initiative.
- ***Reaching for Results*** includes higher standards for what students should know and be able to do, school and district accountability, increased resources for schools and students, and a new testing program: LEAP 21.
- During the week of March 12—16, 2001, 4th- and 8th-grade public school students will take the LEAP 21 tests.
- The test is divided into four parts: English Language Arts, Math, Science and Social Studies.
- Students will receive scores in one of five achievement levels: Unsatisfactory, Approaching Basic, Basic, Proficient and Advanced. (See page 4.)
- Part of Louisiana's reform program is the reduction of "social promotion," the practice of passing students to the next grade even if they do not have the skills needed to succeed.
- ***Reaching for Results*** ensures that students have some understanding of 4th-grade material before moving to the 5th grade and some understanding of 8th-grade material before moving to the 9th grade.
- Students must "pass" the LEAP 21 tests by scoring at the Approaching Basic level or higher in English Language Arts and Math to move to the next grade. (See pages 23—26 for more information about Louisiana's high-stakes testing policy.)
- This booklet contains some sample test questions. (See pages 5—22.) The questions are arranged from least difficult (Approaching Basic) to most difficult (Advanced). On the actual test, however, questions will not be organized by difficulty level.
- Louisiana's ***Reaching for Results*** is working. There are now more 3rd-grade students reading on grade level. Our students' scores have improved on college entrance tests, national 4th-grade reading tests, and at all grade levels on The Iowa Tests and LEAP 21 tests.
- For more information, call the Louisiana Department of Education's toll-free helpline at **1-877-4-LEAP 21 (1-877-453-2721)** or visit the Department's website at **www.louisianaschools.net**.

reaching for results

Table of Contents

LEAP 21 Achievement Levels

LEAP 21 has five achievement levels.

Achievement Level	Definition	Estimated Percent of Points Needed*
Advanced	A student at this level has demonstrated superior performance beyond the proficient level of mastery.	about 85-100%
Proficient	A student at this level has demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter and is well prepared for the next level of schooling.	about 70-84%
Basic *Louisiana's 10-year goal*	A student at this level has demonstrated only the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.	about 50-69%
Approaching Basic *"Minimum" to proceed to next grade*	A student at this level has only partially demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.	about 40-49%
Unsatisfactory *"Failing" grade*	A student at this level has not demonstrated the fundamental knowledge and skills needed for the next level of schooling.	about 39% and below

* The percentage of points needed for each level varies, depending on the test (English Language Arts or math). These percentages are based on the 2000 LEAP 21 test results.

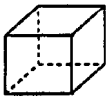
Take the Test

Listed below are sample questions from each LEAP 21 achievement level. The questions are arranged from least difficult to most difficult. On the actual test, questions will not be organized by difficulty level.
NOTE: Students are provided a Math Reference Sheet to use during testing. This sheet provides a ruler, formulas, and other information. Calculators are not allowed unless noted.

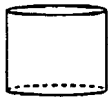
Grade 8 Mathematics

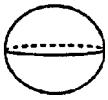
Students that score at the *Approaching Basic* level use mathematical skills to solve simple problems involving basic computation, obvious patterns, basic geometric figures, and graphs or charts.

1. A straight line segment could ***not*** be drawn on the surface of which of the following solids?

A. 

B. 

C. 

D. 

This item requires students to determine which three-dimensional figure does not have a flat surface.

2. The 7th- and 8th-grade classes each have 120 students. If $\frac{3}{4}$ of the 7th-grade class and $\frac{2}{3}$ of the 8th-grade class went to the pep rally, how many more 7th graders than 8th graders went to the rally?

A. 10
B. 80
C. 90
D. 170

This item requires students to multiply a whole number by a fraction and compare the numbers of seventh-and eighth-grade students attending the pep rally.

3. Donna took 3 baseball cards to school on Monday. Every day that week she took twice as many baseball cards as the day before. How many baseball cards did Donna take to school on Friday?

A. 15
B. 24
C. 30
D. 48

This item requires students to use multiplication to double the number of baseball cards Donna brought to school each day.

4. Rhonda has a bag containing 5 green marbles, 7 blue marbles, and 4 white marbles. How many white marbles must she add to the bag so that the probability of her drawing a white marble is $\frac{1}{2}$?

A. 20
B. 16
C. 12
D. 8

This item requires students to determine how adding white marbles will affect the probability and calculate how many must be added to make the probability $\frac{1}{2}$.

5. Mei's bank balance was $42.67. Her deposits and withdrawals since then can be represented as +$50, -$15, -$21, +$16.25, +25. What is her bank balance now?

A. $ 55.25
B. $ 97.92
C. $107.42
D. $127.25

This item requires students to add positive and negative numbers. A calculator would be allowed for this item.

(Correct answers: 1. D; 2. A; 3. D; 4. D; 5. B)

Students that score at the *Basic* level use fundamental concepts from arithmetic, geometry and algebra to solve routine, real-world problems.

6. What number goes in the box in the following sequence?

5, 11, 23, ☐, 95, 191

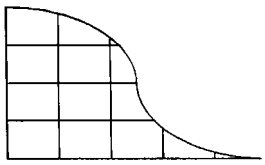
A. 58
B. 47
C. 46
D. 41

This item requires students to identify the pattern (double the previous number and add one) and calculate the value of the fourth term in the sequence.

7. The temperature in Chicago is measured at 6 a.m. each day. On February 20th, it was 15°C below zero (-15°C). The temperature rose 8°on February 21st and dropped 2°on February 22nd. What was the temperature on February 22nd?

A. 21°C
B. 5°C
C. -5°C
D. -9°C

This item requires students to add and subtract positive and negative numbers.



8. What is the approximate area of the figure above?

A. 8 square units
B. 10 square units
C. 12 square units
D. 20 square units

This item requires students to use estimation skills and strategies to determine the area of the figure shown.

Use the following table to answer question 9.

**Math Test Results -
Mrs. Washington's Class**

Time to Complete Test (in minutes)	Number of Students
38	7
36	3
34	1
32	6
30	10

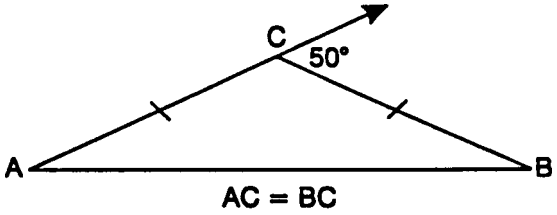
9. What is the probability that a student in Ms. Washington's class completed the test in 30 minutes?

A. $\frac{1}{20}$
B. $\frac{10}{17}$
C. $\frac{10}{27}$
D. $\frac{10}{30}$

This item requires students to understand probability. They need to identify the number of students who completed the test in 30 minutes as well as the total number of students in the class.

(Correct answers: 6. B; 7. D; 8. B; 9. C)

Students that score at the *Proficient* level solve non-routine problems requiring higher level reasoning skills and a more thorough understanding of arithmetic, algebra, and geometry concepts.



10. In $\triangle ABC$, the measure of $\angle A$ is

A. 25°
B. 40°
C. 45°
D. 50°

This item requires students to understand and use the properties of an isosceles triangle and supplementary angles to find the measure of angle A.

Use the following boxes to answer question 11.

☐ x ☐ = ☐

11. The same number is to be placed in each of the three boxes above. Which of these numbers would make a true statement?

A. 0, 1, or -1
B. 0 or -1
C. 0 or 1
D. 1 only

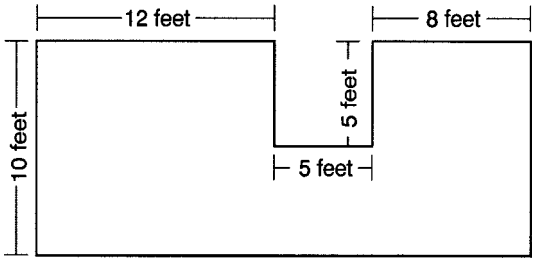
This item requires students to understand the rules for multiplying integers and determine which numbers solve the equation.

12. An electronic device beeps every 21 seconds. Another beeps every 28 seconds. If they both start beeping at the same time, how many seconds will it be before the next time they beep together?

A. 588 seconds
B. 196 seconds
C. 84 seconds
D. 49 seconds

This item requires students to find the least common multiple of 21 and 28. A calculator would be allowed for this item.

13. Mary plans to put carpeting in her house. The floor plan shows the part of her house that will be carpeted. How many square feet of carpet does she need?



A. 175 square feet
B. 200 square feet
C. 225 square feet
D. 250 square feet

This item requires students to calculate the area of the floor shown in the diagram. They can solve the problem by dividing the figure into sections and adding the areas of each section or by subtracting the area of the small section (25 square feet) from the area of the large rectangle. A calculator would be allowed for this item.

(Correct answers: 10. A; 11. C; 12. C; 13. C)

Students who score at the *Advanced* level demonstrate abstract thinking and creative strategies in applying mathematical concepts to complex real-world problems.

14. A square tile measures 6 inches by 6 inches. What is the least number of tiles needed to cover a rectangular floor area of 9 feet by 12 feet?

A. 3 tiles
B. 108 tiles
C. 216 tiles
D. 432 tiles

This item requires students to convert all measurements to either inches or feet before dividing the area of the floor by the area of one tile to determine how many tiles are needed to cover the floor. A calculator would be allowed for this item.

15. A restaurant has small tables (s) and large tables (l). Small tables seat four people each, and large tables seat eight people each. Which inequality shows the maximum number of people (p) that can be seated at the restaurant?

A. $p \geq 8l + 4s$
B. $p \leq 8l + 4s$
C. $p > 8l + 4s$
D. $p < 8l + 4s$

This item requires students to apply what they know about inequalities and identify the correct inequality using the information from the text. Students who score at the lower levels of achievement may not understand how to represent the "maximum" number using inequality symbols.

(Correct answers: 14. D; 15. B)

The following pages present examples of student work at each score point for a Mathematics constructed-response item. The original item is shown below.

Grade 8 Mathematics Constructed Response

Use the figures below to answer question 1.

figure 1 figure 2 figure 3

1. The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. Complete the chart below.

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	
4	
5	

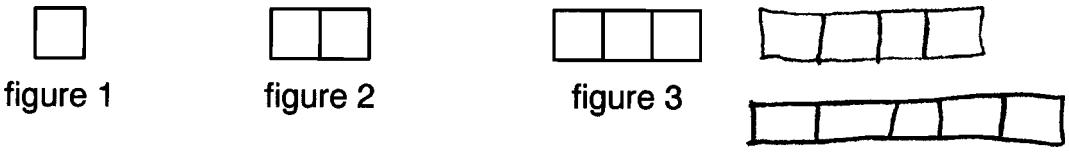
B. What is the perimeter of a figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.

C. Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.

Grade 8
Mathematics
Constructed Response

Score Point 4 (This student received 4 out of 4 points.)

Use the figures below to answer question 1.



1. **The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.**

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. **Complete the chart below.**

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	12

B. **What is the perimeter of a figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.**

100·2+2=
200+2=202

The perimeter of a figure with 100 squares is 202 because you have to take the top & the bottom numbers and add them together or multiply by 2 then add 2 for the sides.

C. **Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.**

$2n+2=$ perimeter

This response demonstrates the student's math skills, as well as his or her ability to explain how to get the answer for part B. The student gives correct answers to all parts of the question.

Grade 8
Mathematics
Constructed Response

Score Point 3 (This student received 3 out of 4 points.)

Use the figures below to answer question 1.

1. **The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.**

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. **Complete the chart below.**

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	12

B. **What is the perimeter of a figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.**

It would come out to be 202. I got this by looking at the chart. The pattern is figure multiplied by 2 then adding 2, so, 100 X 2 = 200 + 2 = 202.

C. **Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.**

To get the perimeter of a figure with n squares, you know that all sides will be the same. So n X 4 = ? will give you the right answer.

This response is typical of a student who demonstrates the math skills required to answer most of the question correctly, as well as the ability to explain and show how to get the answer for part B. The student shows the correct answers to parts A and B, and gives a correct and complete explanation for part B. However, the student is unable to provide a correct mathematical sentence for part C.

Grade 8
Mathematics
Constructed Response

Score Point 2 (This student received 2 out of 4 points.)

Use the figures below to answer question 1.

figure 1 figure 2 figure 3

1. The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. Complete the chart below.

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	
4	
5	

B. What is the perimeter of a figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.

The perimeter is 202. I added 100, 100, 1, and 1 together and got 202

C. Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.

To get the perimeter of n squares, add the width and the height.

This response is typical of a student who demonstrates the math skills required to solve only one part of the question correctly. The student correctly answers part B, with a complete and correct explanation of how to get the answer. The student does not attempt part A and does not provide a correct mathematical sentence for part C.

Grade 8
Mathematics
Constructed Response

Score Point 1 (This student received 1 out of 4 points.)

Use the figures below to answer question 1.

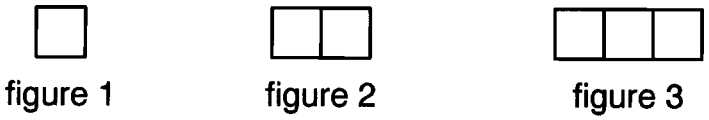


figure 1 figure 2 figure 3

1. **The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.**

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. **Complete the chart below.**

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	8
4	10
5	12

B. **What is the perimeter of the figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.**

200 I took a guess and multiplied 2 x 100.

C. **Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.**

n x 2

This response demonstrates a minimal understanding of the pattern. The student correctly answers part A by finding the perimeter for figures containing a small number of squares but is unable to find the perimeter for a large number or undetermined number of squares.

Grade 8
Mathematics
Constructed Response

Score Point 0 (This student received 0 out of 4 points.)

Use the figures below to answer question 1.

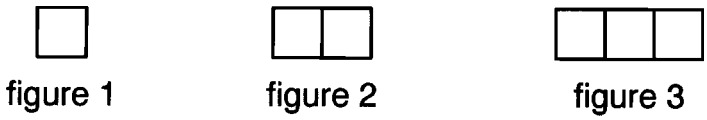


figure 1 figure 2 figure 3

1. **The figures above are formed by placing squares side by side.**

Each side of the squares is 1 unit in length.

A. **Complete the chart below.**

Figure	Perimeter
1	4
2	6
3	12
4	16
5	24

B. **What is the perimeter of a figure with 100 squares? Explain your reasoning.**

400 I multiplied four by a hundred

C. **Write a mathematical sentence that shows how to calculate the perimeter of a figure with *n* squares.**

The response demonstrates no understanding of the math skills required to solve any part of the question. The student's answers to parts A and B are incorrect, and there is no attempt to answer part C. The response does not demonstrate an understanding of the pattern.

Below are samples of students' responses at each achievement level from the Spring 2000 LEAP 21 test. **THESE ARE EXCERPTS OF STUDENTS' COMPOSITIONS.**

Grade 8 English Language Arts Writing Samples

Read the topic in the box below, and write a well-organized composition of at least 150-200 words. Be sure to use the suggestions that follow.

Writing Topic

Your social studies teacher has asked you to write a composition explaining your response to the following:

Who do you consider to be an everyday hero— someone who does things that may or may not make the headlines but who makes other people's lives better? Why do you think this person is an everyday hero?

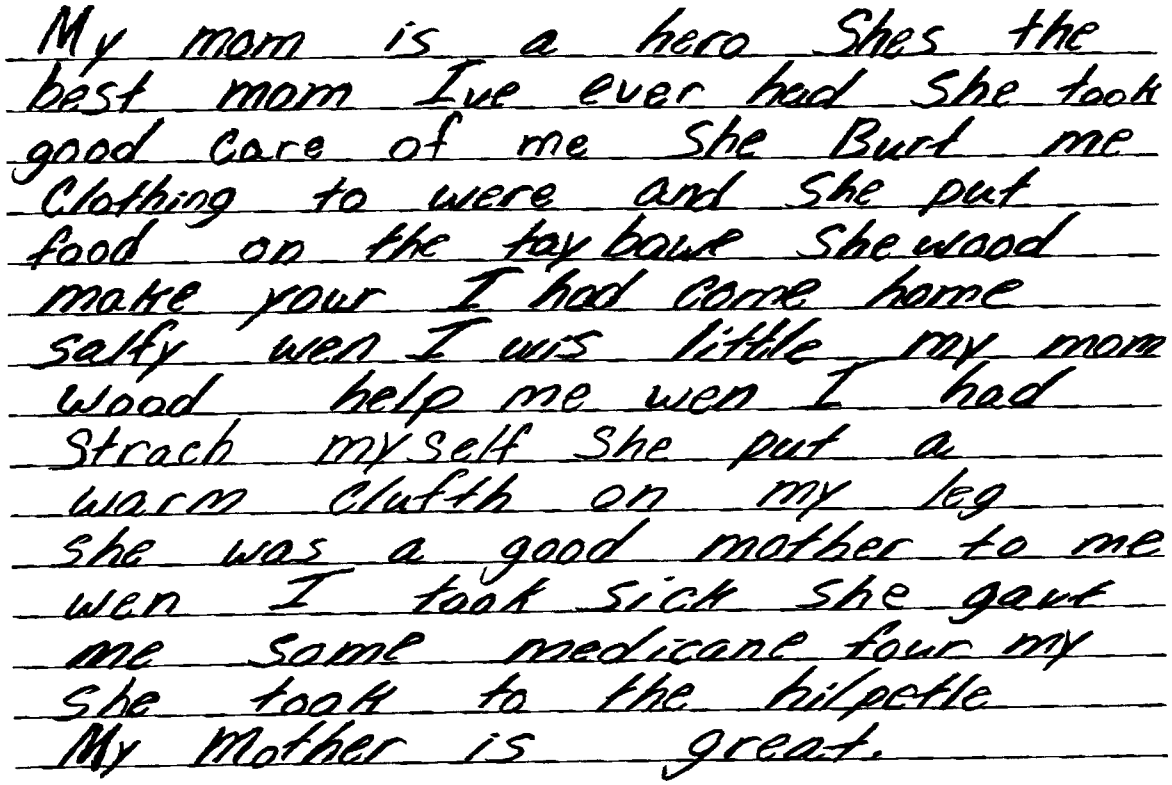
Before you begin to write, think about one person whom you consider to be an everyday hero. What does this person do to make other people's lives better? **Why** do you think the way you do?

Now write a **multi-paragraph** composition in which you name someone, and **explain** why this person is an everyday hero.

- Give specific details, and explain why you think the way you do so that your teacher will understand what you mean.
- Be sure to write clearly, and check your composition for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

The Unsatisfactory response

- addresses the topic but has little organization and lacks supporting details, and
- contains serious errors in spelling, usage, mechanics, and sentence structure.



My mom is a hero Shes the best mom Ive ever had She took good care of me She Burt me Clothing to were and She put food on the tay bowe She wood make your I had come home salty wen I wis little my mom Wood help me wen I had Strach myself She put a warm Clufth on my leg she was a good mother to me wen I took sick she gave me same medicane four my She took to the hilpetle My Mother is great.

Grade 8
English Language Arts
Writing Samples

The Approaching Basic response

- presents an idea but lacks organization and relevant supporting details;
- is repetitious and lacks sentence variety; and
- demonstrates acceptable control of spelling but unacceptable control in sentence structure, mechanics, and usage.

I think my mom is consider to be an everyday hero. She brought me into this world.
She helps me and, I help her. Because, I care about her and, she cares abou me. We both love each other. If it was'ent for her, I would'ent be here right now. Everyone has a mom.
She helps me alot. She tells me to hang out with the right people and, the right crowd.
she teaches me right and, wrong. She is allwas there for me. Shes there to lean on.
I think my mom is the best person in the world.

The Basic response

- presents a central idea and is loosely organized, but lacks relevant supporting details;
- uses limited vocabulary; and
- demonstrates acceptable control of sentence structure and mechanics, although there are a few errors in usage and spelling.

An everyday hero is a individual that makes history. In my opinion, Princess Diana is a excellent example of a hero. She was a very generous woman with looks to kill. There was not a day that this human being would not help a needy child. She was not the greedy kind. She always had a word of wisdom on her shoulder. She was the kind of person that you know wouldn't let you down on a rainy day. Many people still keep their heads up high because they have breathed easier because Princess Diana was born. Alot of children looked up to her, and I know no one will ever forget her. I know she is in Heaven looking down on us still making history. God bless her, she sure did earn it. I know that I walk a straiter line because of her. Now that's what I call a hero.

Grade 8
English Language Arts
Writing Samples

The Proficient response

- presents a main idea with logical organization and supporting details;
- projects a clear voice and uses adequate vocabulary; and
- shows acceptable control of usage, mechanics, and spelling although there are some sentence structure errors.

"My Everyday Hero"

My Everyday Hero is my father. My father is a hero to me because he has fun and still manages to keep his house in order. I picked my father because his job, mood, leadership, and things he has done for our country.

My Father's job is helping my uncle with a paper route, sure it may not be a corner office for an executive but it will do for me. He helps him every day. On Sunday's I help him with the route. My father helps me stay up because it is 2:30 in the morning.

My Father is not only a hero to my family but a hero to this country too. He was drafted into the Vietnam War, army. He was in the 52 air born division and got a medal.

I guess what I am trying to say is my Father may not sound like a hero, but he is to my family because of his job, mood, leadership, and things he has done for this country.

Grade 8
English Language Arts
Writing Samples

The Advanced response

- establishes a main idea and supports it with elaborated, specific details;
- projects personality through the use of varied sentence structure, vivid images, and engaging vocabulary; and
- demonstrates acceptable control of sentence structure, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Parents in my opinion are great everyday heroes, especially mothers. Think about it. Mothers are always there for you, when you need them. They hurt when they see you hurt. They understand what you are going through and sympathize with you. And when you are happy they get happy (sometimes).

Mothers also seem to be everywhere at once. They always seem to be so busy! "Mom" wakes up early to make a nice hot breakfast for you, your brothers and sister and (oh yes) we can't forget "Dad". Then after the dishes are done and the lunches are made and she is finished screamming at you 'to quit messing' with your hair and brush you teeth. She happily drives you and you siblings to school. She drives home and after she finishes scrapping half-chewed Gummy Bears off the carpet, she crams in the thing she loves to do best, paying the bills.

Mothers always seem to crunch every thing in and still appear halfway sane. With the evidence I have give there is no doubt in my mind that mothers a true heroes.

The end

Questions and Answers

Louisiana "High-Stakes" Testing: *The Facts*

Q ***What is "High-Stakes" testing?***

A All first-time 4th-and 8th-grade public school students must score Approaching Basic or above on the Math and English LEAP 21 exams to be promoted fully to the next grade. Students take LEAP 21 in March.

Q ***Why do we need "High-Stakes" testing in Louisiana?***

A Too many students have gone on to middle and high school without the basic skills. Many of them cannot read, write, or solve problems. Most of these students either drop out of school or pass all the way through high school only to find they do not have the skills they need to get a decent job.

High-stakes testing will give those students who have not learned the basics more time, attention, and resources, so that they will have the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in school and in life.

Q ***How were LEAP 21 tests developed?***

A The LEAP 21 tests were developed over a number of years. First, a committee of Louisiana educators, parents, community members and policymakers developed Louisiana's content standards, which represent what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. Second, the Department of Education began developing a test consistent with the standards. Third, a testing contractor prepared test questions which were reviewed by committees of Louisiana teachers. Finally, the questions were "field tested" on Louisiana students to ensure reliability of the questions. The questions were first field tested in 1998 and 1999.

Q ***What happens to 8th-grade students who do not pass LEAP 21?***

A First-time 8th graders who fail, do not attend summer school, retest, and fail at least one part of the LEAP 21 must repeat the 8th grade.

Depending on local district policy, if they attend summer school, take the retest and pass at least one part of the test (Math or English), they may proceed to the high school campus with remediation as part of a transitional (8.5) program.

Questions and Answers, continued

Q ***Will summer school help my child?***

A It should. In the summer of 2000, about 80% of fourth graders improved their scores on the summer retest. More than 60% of eighth graders improved their scores.

Q ***What happens to students who take LEAP 21 after repeating the 8th grade?***

A Eighth-grade repeaters who pass move on to the 9th grade.

Eighth-grade repeaters who fail LEAP 21 have three choices. Depending on local policy, they can

(1) remain in the 8th grade (for the third time);
(2) proceed to the high school campus with remediation as part of a transitional (8.5) program; or
(3) enter a Pre-General Equivalency Diploma (GED) Skills Option program that includes preparation for the GED and job skills training.

Those students in a transitional (8.5) program have three choices. Depending on local policy, they can

- be retained again in a transitional program;
- continue the regular high school curriculum and take the Graduation Exit Examination for the 21st Century (GEE 21); or
- enter the Pre-GED/Skills Option program (including GED preparation and job skills training).

Q ***Are students who pass the LEAP 21 tests automatically promoted to the next grade?***

A No. Students also must meet any other criteria set by their school districts. Those criteria may include grades, attendance, and other factors.

Q ***What if my child is strong in one subject and weak in another?***

A Students who score Advanced or Proficient in either Math or English but Unsatisfactory on the other may move to the next grade if they go to summer school, take the retest, and receive the recommendation of their school building-level committee.

Q ***How will Special Education students be tested?***

A For spring 2001, special education students who take LEAP 21 and fail may be promoted if they go to summer school, take the retest, and receive the recommendation of their school building-level committee. Alternate and out-of-level students are not currently subject to "high-stakes" testing.

Questions and Answers, continued

Q ***Does "high-stakes" testing work?***

A Research from Texas and Chicago shows that Louisiana's policy—one of retention plus remediation — will work. In Texas, a study tracked 35,000 children who failed the state test in the 3rd grade. Some were retained; others were promoted. By the 5th grade, the students who were retained and remediated were achieving higher scores on state tests than students who were promoted. The study found that giving students the help they needed was what made the difference.

Louisiana's policy combines retention with extra help for students. Some of the efforts include

- early intervention (K-3 Reading and Math programs) so we can fix problems early,
- summer school,
- after-school or Saturday tutoring,
- smaller class sizes and transitional 4th-grade classes, and
- incentives for teachers and schools to help these students.

Q ***With such an emphasis on testing, won't teachers "teach to the test" and ignore other topics important to the overall education of students?***

A It is a fact that tests drive instruction. However, if the tests measure what students should know and be able to do, then it is appropriate that teachers incorporate LEAP 21-type work into their daily teaching.

Unlike the former LEAP tests, which focused mainly on recall of facts, the LEAP 21 tests emphasize critical thinking and real-world application of knowledge and skills – the same things teachers are supposed to be teaching in the classroom.

Q ***What if students have a bad day and don't score well on the test?***

A Students are given more than one opportunity to pass the LEAP 21 tests. They can take a second test in July. If they fail that test, they can appeal under certain circumstances.

Q ***Are there provisions for students who miss the test because of circumstances outside of their control?***

A Yes. Students who were unable to take LEAP 21 tests or attend summer school because of extenuating circumstances are eligible for a waiver under a recent BESE policy. The policy also covers students whose grades were adversely affected because of administrative error.

Among the extenuating circumstances covered by the policy are the following:

- a physical illness or injury that is acute or catastrophic in nature,
- a chronic physical condition that is in an acute phase, or
- court ordered custody issues.

The requests for a waiver must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. If a waiver is granted, the student must still take The Iowa Tests for grade placement.

Questions and Answers, continued

Q ***How can a student appeal being retained due to failure of LEAP 21?***

A To appeal, the student must meet all of these conditions:

- The student's highest score on either the spring or summer LEAP 21 test must fall within 20 scaled score points of the cutoff score for *Approaching Basic*.

Grade	Subject	Scaled Score Range for LEAP 21 Appeals
8	English	249-268
	Math	276-295

- The student must have a 3.0 grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale in the subject on which he or she scored *Unsatisfactory* on LEAP 21.
- The student must have attended the LEAP 21 summer school.
- The student must have taken the summer LEAP 21 retest.
- The student must have met his or her district's attendance requirement during the regular school year and the summer school session.
- The principal and the school building-level committee must review samples of the student's work and attest that the student's work is at the *Approaching Basic* level or above.
- The district superintendent must approve the appeal.

Q ***Won't such a difficult test be unfair to poor and minority students?***

A On the contrary, the LEAP 21 test, "high-stakes" testing, and accountability ensure that all students who need extra help get it. For many schools, that additional help means redirecting resources to students most in need.

Further, to ensure that the test was fair, a special bias committee regularly reviews every question to determine the reliability of the questions for students with a variety of interests and socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds.

Our reforms will help all students become prepared for school and life. Based on evidence from Texas and Chicago, Louisiana's higher standards will result in better achievement for all students, especially poor and minority students.

Q ***Is there information available on the LEAP 21?***

A The Department of Education has produced teacher newsletters, parent brochures, videos, pamphlets, and other materials to help teachers, parents and students prepare for the LEAP 21 test.

Call the Department's toll-free helpline (1-877-453-2721) or visit its website (www.louisianaschools.net) for more information.

Test-taking Tips

1. Reassure your child that he or she does not have to answer all the questions correctly to pass. It is not expected that students answer every question correctly.

2. Tell your child to attempt to answer all of the questions and not to leave any blanks. There is no penalty for guessing, and students can get partial credit on the open-ended items.

3. Remind your child that the test is important.

4. Explain to your child the importance of using time wisely**.** If your child gets stuck on a question, encourage him or her to make the best guess or place a mark in the test booklet by that item and go back to it after finishing that section of the test.

5. Make certain your child gets a good night's sleep and a good breakfast before taking the test.

6. Try to make the morning of the test a pleasant one. Do not add to your child's stress.

7. Get your child to school on time the day of the test.

8. Remind your child to listen carefully to the instructions from the teacher and to read the directions and each question carefully.

9. Encourage your child to stay focused on the test, even if other students finish early.

10. Remind your child that it is okay to mark in the test booklet as a help in taking the test -- i.e., underlining important words, etc. -- but to mark all answers on the answer sheet.

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