

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

2004 NYSESLAT

(April 1, 2004)

Test Administration

1. What are the dates for administering the 2004 NYSESLAT?

The Listening, Reading, and Writing sessions will be administered on dates selected by the school or the district with the period from Monday, May 10 through Friday, May 21, 2004. The Speaking sessions will be individually administered to students during the period from Monday, April 26 through Friday, May 21, 2004.

2. When should a school expect to receive their test materials?

The dates of deliveries of the Speaking Session test materials are Wednesday, April 21-Thursday, May 22, 2004. The dates of deliveries of the test materials for the Listening, Reading, and Writing Sessions are Wednesday, May 5 – Thursday, May 6, 2004. For more information, please check the OSA website (<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat.html>) for the April 2004 memorandum on the shipping, storing, administration, and return of NYSESLAT test materials.

3. What should a school do if they are missing test materials?

Schools should fax to the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-1989 the shipping notice they received in their test delivery indicating on the notice what they are missing.

4. What if a school did not order their test materials?

Schools should fax as soon as possible to the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-1989 with their school's bedcode and the quantities of tests that are needed. Please include a telephone number and contact person.

5. The Listening test takes 45 minutes and the Reading and Writing tests take 50 minutes. Our class periods are 39-42 minutes. How do we accomplish this?

The NYSESLAT is a timed test. The instructions concerning the times to be allotted to students for parts of the test are specified in the *Teacher's Guides* and must be followed. The school will need to allocate extra class time for the students to take the test. Students with disabilities who have extended time as a testing accommodation in their Individualized Education Program or Section 504 Accommodation Plan should be provided with that accommodation when taking the NYSESLAT. In addition, school principals may authorize extended time for this test for students who incur disabilities shortly before test administration as described on page 3 of the *NYSESLAT Manual for Administrators and Teachers*.

Test administration time is built into the testing time. Organizing the test materials before the class period and preparing the students for the logistics of the test the day before could save test administration time.

6. What about absentees? Can makeups happen all on one day?

Make provisions to administer the test at a later date to all students who were absent when the test was initially given. These students should not be involved in any classroom discussions about the test prior to the time they take it. The makeup date(s) can be anytime within the designated testing period. We recommend that the four sessions be administered on different days. However, if necessary, all sessions may be administered on one day.

7. Can NYSESLAT sessions be given to groups of students at different grade levels?

The school may decide whether to administer the NYSESLAT Sessions for Listening, Reading, and Writing in the students' own classroom(s) or elsewhere and whether to test students in class groups or in groups of other size(s). Whether a school administers it by grade or grade cluster is up to the school.

The Speaking test must be administered individually and in a location separate from other students.

8. Who can administer the NYSESLAT tests?

The Department recommends that ESL teachers administer and score Speaking. A teacher can administer the Listening, Reading, and Writing tests.

If a school has questions or needs clarification, please call the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-5099.

9. Are students allowed to write in their test booklets?

Yes, with the exception of the Listening test booklets. Students should not take notes in the test books or on scrap paper during the Listening tests. Due to the nature of the test, note taking would be a distraction for the student.

10. If the ESL teacher works in multiple buildings, each section will need to be given on different days? Is this a problem?

This is not a problem. The *NYSESLAT Manual for Administrators and Teachers* advises that schools may administer these sessions in a different order for some or all students if doing so will help the school complete this testing.

11. What do the districts need to do to get the extension for the Speaking test?

Since schools have been given nearly a month, beginning April 26 through May 21, to administer the Speaking tests, there will be no extensions this year.

12. What if a student will be leaving the country before all four parts of the NYSESLAT test can be administered? Should the student take the test at all?

The school should make every effort to give the student all four parts of the test. At the minimum, the school should administer as many NYSESLAT sessions to the student as practical within the time available.

Modality specific

Speaking

13. Can the teacher paraphrase the question if it appears the student does not understand something? What if a student is shy and unwilling to give more than a few words in response? Can the teacher prompt the student to elaborate or give more information to get more speaking text to score?

The Teacher's Guides for Speaking contain instructions to the teacher that they may:

- rephrase a question if the student does not understand the question as initially asked
- asking probing questions if the student's response is too brief to accurately represent the student's speaking ability. Possible probing questions are in the teacher's guide

Probing questions can be used as necessary to get students to start speaking if they are stuck, to clarify the question, and to encourage the student to expand or elaborate. Probing questions are **not** meant to introduce new topics or change significantly the focus of the topic.

14. Is there an expected length of answer to the speaking questions?

The Speaking test is a timed test: 10 minutes for students in grades K-1 and 15 minutes for students in grades 2-12. However, there is not a specific length of time for a student to answer each question. There is a length of time (5-7 seconds) that the teacher pauses before asking a probing question.

15. What if a teacher cannot complete the speaking test within the 15 minutes?

The teacher has 15 minutes to administer the Speaking test for grades 2-12. It is the responsibility of the teacher to monitor the time to ensure that the student is asked to respond to all five questions within the 15 minutes. If a student is speaking longer than 3 minutes on a question, the teacher should intervene and move on to the next question. All five questions have to be asked within the 15 minutes for grades 2-12 and within the 10 minutes for grades K-1.

16. What happens if the child has no answers during the speaking test? Does the teacher transcribe what the student says for the speaking sub-test?

The teacher should first prompt the student to try to elicit a response. If a student does not answer a Speaking question at all (even after prompting), the student would receive a rubric score of "0": "the student gives no response". The teacher should proceed to ask the remaining questions in the Speaking tests. All five questions must be asked.

The teacher scores the test "on the spot" using the Speaking Score sheet, but does not need to transcribe what the student says.

Reading

17. If we know that the child does not read, should we continue to administer the reading test?

The teacher should give a child the opportunity to answer the reading questions.

Listening

18. What happens if the child doesn't complete all the multiple choice questions?

The multiple-choice questions that the child was able to answer would be scanned and scored.

Scoring

19. Can one teacher score the writing tests?

No. Each writing test must be rated by at least two raters. Raters should score only the questions that they are trained to score. Questions 1 and 2 will take more time to score than Question 3. Please refer to the Writing Scoring Guides.

20. Will they give us anchor papers to score the writing and the speaking?

Yes, anchor "benchmark" papers and additional sample papers are provided in the Writing and Speaking Scoring Guides.

21. What are the benchmarks in the Writing and Speaking Scoring Guides? How are they different from the samples?

The benchmarks are the "exemplars" or "anchor" responses. They were chosen during range finding as being representative of the score point on the scale. The teacher evaluates a student's work for its total or overall effect based on the rubric and the benchmark "exemplar" responses.

The samples are additional student work at the score points. A sample paper does not have the score readily available. The teacher can score the sample paper for practice and then find out the score.

22. What does holistic scoring mean?

The constructed response items on the NYSESLAT test are scored holistically, which means that a student's work is evaluated for its total or overall effect based on the rubric and accompanying exemplar responses. Please refer to the Scoring Guides for Writing and Speaking.

23. Should the relevance of a student's response be considered in scoring Speaking?

When scoring Speaking responses, it is important to take into account the relevance of a student's response.

For responses scored with the 3-2-1-0 scoring guide:

* a response that scores a "3" should not only be completely and easily comprehensible; it should accurately address the question

* a response that scores a "2" should be comprehensible and should address the question, though it may not address it as fully and accurately as a response that scores a "3"

* a response that scores a "1" may not address the question.

For responses scored with the 2-1-0 scoring guide:

* a response that scores a "2" should be understandable and appropriate; it should address the question accurately

*a response that scores a "1" should be understandable, but it may not address the question accurately.

24. What shall we do if there is only one itinerant ESL teacher available for scoring the tests?

Talk to your administrator about working with an ELA certified teacher to help you administer and score the test. This is a state-mandated test, and it is the building administrators' responsibility to make sure that the needed resources are available, including staff. Remember that an ELA certified teacher can be a common branch elementary teacher, a reading teacher, a speech/language teacher – anyone qualified to teach English language arts at any grade level.

25. Is it possible to begin scoring NYSESLAT Writing tests before May 21?

The procedures for the scoring of this test are consistent with the procedures for scoring other State tests that have a large window for test administration. Schools may begin scoring the test after the test has been administered to most test takers in the school even if the window for test administration statewide is not over or if some makeup administrations will still need to be conducted. In the case of the latter, the school will need to make special arrangements to score at a later date those makeup tests that are written by students while or after the majority of scoring has been completed. Raters must be careful not to discuss the specific content of the test with students who are yet to take their makeup examinations.

Accommodations

26. What accommodations are available for LEP students?

The NYSESLAT is designed specifically for LEP students. Therefore, testing accommodations ordinarily permitted for LEP students taking other State examinations are unnecessary and are not permitted for the NYSESLAT. LEP students who have or incur disabilities as described below should be provided with the testing accommodations specified for those situations.

27. Do students with disabilities still get the accommodations specified on their IEP for the NYSESLAT?

All LEP students with disabilities should be provided the testing accommodations specified in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). However, two testing accommodations are not permitted for any LEP student because these accommodations would interfere with the measurement of the construct of that session of the test:

- Session 2–Reading may **not** be read to **any** student.
- For Session 3–Writing, students may **not** receive assistance or have their responses corrected for spelling, grammar, paragraphing, or punctuation.

Students who have been declassified may continue to be provided their testing accommodations if the local CSE recommended the accommodations at the time of declassification and included them in the student's declassification IEP.

Plan all necessary arrangements for implementing testing accommodations well in advance of the test date. The principal is responsible for ensuring that students are provided the testing accommodations specified in their IEP or 504 Plan.

The Department's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) provides more information on testing accommodations for students with disabilities on its web site:

<ftp://unix2.nysed.gov/pub/education.dept.pubs/vesid/oses/test.access.mod/testacce.txt> and <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/guide.htm>. Questions pertaining to testing accommodations for students with disabilities may be sent to VESID by e-mail to vesidspe@mail.nysed.gov.

28. Which test is given to students with disabilities in ungraded classrooms?

Use the chronological ages of LEP students in ungraded classes to determine which NYSESLAT grade-level assessment each student will take.

29. How should the listening and speaking tests be administered to a student with a hearing impairment?

The passages in Session 3—Listening ordinarily presented to students by playing a prerecorded audiocassette tape may be signed using American Sign Language (ASL) to students with hearing impairments who know ASL. Students with hearing impairments who are not proficient in ASL may read those passages. Schools requiring written transcripts of the listening passages so that they can be signed to or read by a student with a hearing impairment should contact the Office of State Assessment via e-mail to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov.

The interactions between student and teacher associated with Session 4—Speaking may be conducted through the use of signing with ASL for students with hearing impairments who know ASL. In the case of students with hearing impairments who are not proficient in ASL, such interactions may occur through the exchanging of notes written in English by the teacher and student.

Questions about NYSESLAT:

NYSED OFFICE OF STATE ASSESSMENT

Website

<http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/nyseslat.html>

Email address

emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov

Telephone Numbers

518-474-5902 or 518-474-5099

Questions about test access and accommodations for students with disabilities:

NYSED VESID

Website

“Test Access and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Tools to Guide Decision Making”

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/guide.htm>

Email address

vesidspe@mail.nysed.gov

Telephone Number

518-473-2878