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**TO:** Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools

**FROM:** Thomas J. Schoeck 

**SUBJECT:** Spring 2008 Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test

#### GENERAL INFORMATION

This memorandum provides information concerning the shipping, storing, administration, and returning of test materials for the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test. Information on this test is available at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa>. If you have any questions about the information in this memorandum, you may call 518-474-8220.

#### DATES FOR THE SPRING 2008 GRADE 4 ELEMENTARY-LEVEL SCIENCE TEST

Administration Dates	Makeup Dates
Any dates between April 2 and May 7	Any dates between April 3 and May 9

The supply of test materials for your school will be sent in one shipment. The shipment will be delivered by UPS and may be delivered at any time between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. between Friday, March 28 and Tuesday, April 1. Please be sure that someone is available in your school or approved storage location during those hours to accept the shipment. Should any problems occur in connection with the delivery of test materials, please call this office at 518-474-8220 or 474-5902 immediately.

Schools that do not receive their shipment of secure test materials by 12:00 p.m. on April 1 should track the shipment of test materials on the Internet.

1. Go to: <http://www.ups.com/tracking/tracking.html>.
2. Click "Track by Reference Number."
3. In the Reference Number field, type the BEDS code of the school where you indicated you wanted your tests to be shipped.
4. If you are unable to track your shipment or notice some other irregularity, contact the Office of State Assessment via fax at 518-474-2021.

#### SECURITY OF TEST MATERIALS

As soon as the shipment of test materials arrives at the school or other approved location, it should be checked to verify that all materials indicated on the shipping notice have been received. **Shrink-wrapped secure test materials must not be opened until the day that part of the test is scheduled to be administered.** Except for taking inventory of your test shipment, you must keep all test materials in a secure location.

If a school determines that some materials are missing from its shipment of Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test materials, it must contact the Office of State Assessment via fax to 518-474-2021 to obtain these materials. The Science Test materials are not available at regional centers.

The principal of each school ordering tests is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for safeguarding the materials ordered for the school. The secure location where test materials are being stored should be checked daily to ensure that the test materials have not been tampered with and remain secure. The combination or key to the secure location must be maintained under strict security conditions to preclude access to the test materials by students and other unauthorized persons.

All teachers who assist in the administration of the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test are expected to sign the Deputy and Proctor Certificate contained within the *New York State Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test Manual for Administrators and Teachers*. Similarly, principals are required to complete and sign the Examination Storage Certificate, also found within the test manual. These two certificates, as well as student answer papers, must be retained on file in the school for one year.

Following the scoring of the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Performance Test, schools are required to return to the Department all *unused* science Performance Test answer booklets; including large-type, braille, and alternative language editions; and all used and unused science Performance Test Rating Guides. Schools must follow the complete instructions for the return of test materials found on pages 5 and 6 of the test manual. These materials must be returned to:

Test Distribution Unit  
New York State Education Department  
Cultural Education Center  
Empire State Plaza  
Albany, New York 12230

### **STUDENTS TO BE TESTED**

Except as noted below, all public school students in Grade 4 must take the State assessments administered for their grade level. This includes students who have been retained in Grade 4. Nonpublic schools are strongly encouraged to administer these tests to their students in accordance with these same provisions. The birthdates of ungraded students should be used to determine who must be tested. Refer to the chart on the Department's web site at <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/ungraded.htm> for more information. When determining which students will be participating in these tests, be sure to consider students who attend programs operated by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) as well as any other programs located outside the school.

#### *Students with Disabilities*

Each student with a disability must participate in the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test unless the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), as developed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE), specifically indicates that the student should take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). A small percentage of students with disabilities are recommended by their CSEs to participate in the NYSAA for students with severe disabilities. The criteria that the CSE must use to determine eligibility for the NYSAA is available on the Department's web site at <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/alterassess.htm>.

#### *Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students*

All LEP students are required to participate in the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test. They may take the tests in either an alternative language or in English, whichever would be better for the student. Alternative language editions of the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test are provided in Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, and Spanish. These tests may be translated orally into other languages for LEP

students whose first language is one for which a written translation is not available from the Department. Schools are permitted to offer LEP students specific testing accommodations when taking these tests. (See pages 4 and 5.)

## **TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

### *Students Who Incur Disabilities Shortly Before Test Administration*

Principals may provide accommodations when testing general education students who incur an injury (e.g., a broken arm) or experience the onset of a short- or long-term disability (e.g., epilepsy) acquired or diagnosed within 30 days prior to the administration of State assessments. In such cases, when sufficient time is not available for the development of an IEP or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan), principals may authorize certain accommodations that will not significantly change the skills being tested. These accommodations are limited to:

- extending the time limit for a test,
- administering the test in a special location,
- recording the student's answers in any manner, and
- reading the test to the student (only for students whose vision is impaired).

Eligibility for these accommodations is based on the principal's professional discretion, but the principal may confer with members of the CSE or with other school personnel in making this determination. Prior permission need not be obtained from the Department to authorize testing accommodations for general education students. However, a full written report concerning each authorization must be sent to the Office of State Assessment via fax to 518-402-5596. The report must be on school letterhead, must be signed by the principal, and must include the following information:

- the name of the student,
- the title of the test,
- a brief description of the student's injury or disability, and
- a listing of the accommodations that were authorized by the principal.

If the student is expected to continue to need testing accommodations, the principal must immediately make the appropriate referral for the consideration of an IEP or 504 Plan.

### *Students with Disabilities*

Students with disabilities must be provided with the testing accommodations specified in their IEPs or 504 Plans when taking these tests. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this occurs and that all staff members who will be providing these testing accommodations are appropriately trained. Students who have been declassified may continue to be provided testing accommodations if recommended by the local CSE at the time of declassification and in the student's declassification IEP. Plan all necessary arrangements for implementing testing accommodations well in advance of the test date.

The Department's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) provides more information on test access and accommodations for students with disabilities on its web site: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm>. You may contact that office via e-mail to [vesidspe@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:vesidspe@mail.nysed.gov) if you have questions on this topic for which you are unable to find answers on the web site.

### *LEP Students*

Schools may provide the following testing accommodations to LEP students:

- ***Time Extension:*** Schools may extend the test time for LEP students. Principals may use any reasonable extensions, such as “time and a half” (the required testing time plus one-half of that amount of time), in accordance with their best judgment about the needs of the LEP students. Principals should consult with each student’s classroom teacher in making these determinations.
- ***Separate Location:*** Schools are encouraged to provide optimal testing environments and facilities for all students. They may administer State tests to LEP students individually or in small groups in a separate location.
- ***Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries:*** LEP students may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking these examinations. The bilingual dictionaries and glossaries may provide ***only*** direct translations of words. Bilingual dictionaries or glossaries that provide definitions or explanations are ***not*** permitted.
- ***Simultaneous Use of English and Alternative Language Editions:*** For these examinations, LEP students may use both an English and an alternative language edition of the test simultaneously. However, they should be instructed to record all of their responses in only one of the two editions. The alternative language edition used by the student should be so indicated on the student’s answer sheet.
- ***Oral Translation for Lower Incidence Languages:*** Schools may provide LEP students with an oral translation of these examinations when there is no translated edition provided by the Department. All translations must be oral, direct translations of the English editions. Written translations are not allowed. No clarifications or explanations may be provided. The translator should receive a copy of the English edition of the test one hour prior to administration. The Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies and the Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) can assist schools in locating suitable translators.
- ***Writing Responses in the Native Language:*** LEP students may write their responses to the open-ended questions in their native language. Scoring the tests is the responsibility of the school. However, the Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies and the BETACs can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students’ responses into English to facilitate scoring of the answer papers.

### **REPORTING ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING IRREGULARITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT**

The building principal is responsible for all aspects of the school’s administration of State examinations and must take appropriate measures both to prevent, as much as possible, and to investigate all irregularities associated with administration and scoring of these examinations. In addition, the principal must report the following events in writing to the Office of State Assessment:

- All confirmed cases of students having committed fraud on State examinations.
- All interruptions of testing sessions including any that are caused by power outages or fire alarms.
- All suspected or confirmed cases of teachers, administrators or paraprofessionals giving inappropriate aid to students during a State examination or altering student responses on an examination paper.
- All instances in which scorers do not score State examinations in accordance with the scoring materials provided by the Department.
- All cases in which a school official or staff member alters or otherwise misrepresents a student’s response to one or more test questions or earned examination score during scoring.
- All cases in which student answer papers are lost prior to either the scoring of the papers or recording of the scores in students’ permanent records.

Principals must report all such events in writing by fax to 518-474-1989 or via e-mail to [emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov).

**ONLINE SUBMISSION OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS OF THE TEST TO THE DEPARTMENT**

Suggestions and feedback from teachers provide an important contribution to the test development process. The Department provides an online evaluation form for State assessments. It contains spaces for teachers to respond to several specific questions and to make suggestions. Instructions for completing and submitting the evaluation form are as follows:

1. Go to [www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/exameval](http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/exameval).
2. Select the test title.
3. Complete the required demographic fields.
4. Complete each evaluation question and provide comments in the space provided.
5. Click the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the page to submit the completed form.