



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
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Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education

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TO: Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools

FROM: Steven E. Katz *SEK*

SUBJECT: Spring 2005 Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science, Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science (Written), and Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Tests

GENERAL INFORMATION

This memorandum provides information concerning the shipping, storing, administration, and returning of test materials for the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science, the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science (Written), and the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Tests. Information on each of these tests 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 2005 TESTS

Test	Administration Dates	Makeup Dates
Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test	Any dates in May	Any dates in May
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Written Test	Any date between June 1 and June 17	Any dates between June 2 and June 17
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test	June 1 and June 2	June 3, 6, or 7

The supply of test materials for your school will be sent in one or two shipments, depending on the tests requested. Shipments 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.

The dates on which the shipments of tests will be delivered to schools are as follows:

Test	Delivery Date
Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test	April 27–29
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Written Test Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test	May 26–31

Schools that do not receive their shipment of secure test materials by 12:00 p.m. on the last delivery date indicated above 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.

STUDENTS TO BE TESTED

Except as noted below, all public school students in Grades 4 and 8 and all ungraded students who are age equivalent to students in Grades 4 and 8 must take the State assessments administered for their grade level. This includes students who have been retained in Grades 4 and 8. Nonpublic schools are strongly encouraged to administer these tests to their students in accordance with these same provisions. The chronological ages of students in ungraded classes should be used to determine who must be tested. When determining which students will be participating in these tests, be sure to consider those students who attend programs operated by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) as well as any other programs located outside the school.

General Education Students

The Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test should be administered to students in the grade in which they will have received instruction in all the material in the Intermediate-Level Science Core Curriculum (5–8). While this is typically Grade 8, the test may also be administered to students in Grade 7 who will have received instruction in all the material in the Intermediate-Level Science Core Curriculum (5–8) and are being considered for placement in an accelerated high school-level science course when they are in Grade 8. The school may **not** use this assessment to retest any students who participated in this assessment last school year while in Grade 7. Schools are required to administer this assessment to those students in Grade 8 who did not take this assessment last school year while in Grade 7, unless such students will be taking a Regents examination in science at the end of this school year.

School principals have the discretion to either require or waive the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test for those accelerated Grade 8 students who did not take this examination during the last school year but who will be taking a Regents examination in science at the end of this school year. For those accelerated students for whom the school waives the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test, the

student's achievement in science will be measured by the student's performance on the Regents examination in science.

Students With Disabilities

The Committee on Special Education (CSE) must decide for each student with a disability on a case-by-case basis, and document on the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), whether the student will be participating in the general State assessment or will not be participating in this assessment because the student is eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) for Students with Severe Disabilities or for a locally selected assessment. The criteria that the CSE must use to determine a student's eligibility to participate in NYSSA are available in a memorandum entitled *Supplemental Guidelines for Participation of Students with Disabilities in the State Assessments: Locally Selected Assessments*. This memorandum is available at the web site: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/participate.htm>. The criteria to determine eligibility for the NYSSA are available at the web site: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/alterassessment/alterassess.htm>.

Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students

The school principal must adhere to the following procedures in determining how LEP students will participate in the Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science, Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science, and Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Tests. All LEP students are required to participate in these tests. Students 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, Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science, and Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Tests are provided in Chinese, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. These tests may be translated orally into other languages for those 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 such 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 such a 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

All students with disabilities must be provided full access to State assessments to the extent that such testing is consistent with their individual needs. Students identified by the CSE of the district as having a disability should be allowed to utilize the testing accommodations specified in their IEP. Students who have been declassified may continue to be provided with those testing accommodations recommended by the local CSE at the time of declassification and specified in the student's declassification IEP.

All necessary arrangements for implementing testing accommodations should be planned well in advance of the test date. The principal is responsible for insuring that students are provided with the testing accommodations specified in their IEP or 504 Plan.

More information on testing accommodations for students with disabilities is provided by the Office for Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) on its web site: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/guide.htm>.

Limited English Proficient (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 LEP 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 the Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) can assist schools in locating suitable translators.
- ***Writing Responses in the Native Language:*** LEP students making use of alternative language editions or of oral translations of these examinations 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 the BETACs can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students' responses into English to facilitate scoring of the answer papers.

SECURITY OF THE TESTS

The principal of each school ordering tests is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for safeguarding the materials ordered for the school. As soon as each shipment of test materials arrives at the school or other approved location, it should be checked to verify that all materials indicated on the packing sheet have been received. **Do not open shrink-wrapped secure test materials when taking inventory or at any other time until the day that the test is scheduled to be administered.** Except when taking inventory, the cartons of secure test materials must be stored in the secure location in the school or other approved location specified by the principal on the test order form. Schools storing their secure test materials in a location other than in the school building where they will be administered may transport the secure test materials to the test site only on the day that each test booklet will be administered. Packages containing scoring materials must be stored in the secure location specified on the test order form and may *not* be opened until after the test has been administered in the school. If a school determines that some materials are missing from shipments, contact the Department via fax at 518-474-2021.

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 that the test materials remain secure. The combination or key to the storage location must be maintained under strict security conditions to preclude access to the test materials by students and other unauthorized persons. Please note that after the tests have been administered, all test booklets must be collected and securely stored.

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

page 6 of the *New York State Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test Manual for Administrators and Teachers*. These materials must be returned to:

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

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 those caused by power outages or fire alarms.
- All suspected or confirmed cases of teachers, administrators or paraprofessionals giving aid to students during a State examination or altering student responses on an examination paper.
- All instances in which scorers do not rate 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 earned examination score during scoring, recording, or reporting.
- 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.

Enclosure