



BUREAU CHIEF
Office of State Assessment

January 2018

TO: Principals of Public and Religious Schools
Leaders of Independent Schools

FROM: Clara DeSorbo *Clara DeSorbo*

SUBJECT: Administration of the January 2018 Regents Examinations and Regents Competency Tests

This memorandum provides essential information about the administration of the January examinations. In addition, all persons coordinating the administration of the January 2018 examinations should be familiar with the [School Administrator's Manual](#). This publication is available on the Department's website. Important telephone and fax numbers for the Office of State Assessment (OSA) are listed on the last page of this memorandum.

Accompanying this memorandum is the list of regional centers, a memorandum regarding the content of each January examination, and the schedule for the January 2018 examination period.

For the January 2018 administration, each scoring key and rating guide posted on the Department's website will be password protected. **Principals and/or their designees will need to access the Online Examination Request System to obtain the passwords required for the scoring materials each day that Regents Examinations are being administered, January 22–25.**

RESCHEDULING EXAMINATIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER

Schools are sometimes affected by snow and ice storms that require them to be closed. Student safety is our first priority during any instance in which schools or districts have to close because of safety concerns. If inclement weather causes closure, Statewide examinations may be rescheduled for another day as described below.

When the school district reopens, each school superintendent, independent school principal, and religious school principal in a district or school affected by closure must send to the Department via [e-mail](#) a description of the date(s) on which schools are closed due to inclement weather, which January 2018 Regents Examinations had to be cancelled, the date(s) and time(s) when the district or school will administer the test(s), and a comprehensive plan to ensure the security of examinations and scoring materials during this period.

In developing such a plan, the following rules must be **strictly observed**:

- All examinations should be administered as close as possible to the original administration date/time, but no later than Thursday, January 25 for those examinations originally scheduled to be administered between Monday, January 22 and Thursday, January 25 and no later than Friday, January 26 for those examinations originally scheduled to be administered on Thursday, January 25.
- Under no circumstances may any examination be administered prior to its original administration date/time.
- Although scoring materials will be available according to the Statewide posted examination schedule, the school may not access or distribute these materials until the examination has been administered in the school.
- All Regents Examination booklets and scoring materials must be kept secure until 8:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 30, 2018.

SAFEGUARDING THE INTEGRITY OF THE TEST MATERIALS

Out of consideration for those students who are participating in examinations that have been rescheduled due to inclement weather and for those students with disabilities who are completing their examinations over multiple days as an approved testing accommodation, educators are not permitted to discuss test questions or other specific test content with others online via e-mail or LISTSERV, or through any other electronic means prior to or during the test administration period or until 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, January 30, 2018. Everyone's cooperation with this rule helps to preserve the integrity of the assessments taken by these students over multiple school days so that they can complete the examinations at a pace appropriate for them. Avoiding public discussion of specific test content over electronic media affords those students an equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do.

For those tests regularly scheduled for administration on Monday, January 22 and Thursday, January 25, staff may discuss specific test content by electronic means beginning Tuesday, January 30. We believe that nearly all students who are testing with this accommodation will have completed their examinations by these dates. Please note that this instruction does not limit educators' ability or permission to discuss test questions among themselves, with their students who have fully completed the test, or with others during an in-person discussion, or to share with the Department any concern they have regarding any of the specific test content.

SHIPMENT OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

Test booklets for the January Regents Examination period will be shipped so as to arrive at schools (or approved storage locations) between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on January 17, 18, or 19. See below for further information.

In early January, a shipment of the Earth Science performance test materials and Regents diplomas will be delivered to schools in cardboard cartons and/or padded mailers. The Department does not provide printed copies of the following nonsecure materials, which will be available on the Department's website. Schools must print sufficient copies to adequately supply each student:

1. **Regular edition reference tables** for Physical Setting/Earth Science, Physical Setting/Chemistry, and Physical Setting/Physics, **and the translated editions of the reference tables** for Physical Setting/Earth Science. The [reference tables](#) can be found on the Department's website. Note that the Department provides schools with the braille and large-type editions of the reference tables.
2. The **essay booklets** for the Regents Examination in English Language Arts, Global History and Geography, and U.S. History and Government. All [essay booklets](#) can be found on the Department's website.
3. The **RCT in Writing Answer Booklets**. The [answer booklets](#) for the RCT in Writing can be found on the Department's website.

The following materials must be printed by the school and supplied to all school personnel involved in the administration and scoring of Regents Examinations and RCTs:

4. [Directions for Administering Regents Examinations](#) and the [Directions for Administering and Scoring RCTs](#).
5. [Information Booklets for Scoring Regents Examinations](#). These materials can be found on the Department's website.
6. [Scoring Keys and Rating Guides](#) for all nonrestricted Regents Examinations. These materials will be made available on the Department's website at approximately 11:00 a.m. for morning examinations and at approximately 3:00 p.m. for afternoon examinations on the scheduled administration date. Note that schools will receive printed scoring materials for the restricted RCTs, the RCT in Writing, and the restricted Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Physics in the shipment of secure materials.

The shipment containing secure materials for the January examinations will be delivered in locked Regents boxes to arrive at schools, or approved storage locations, between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on January 17, 18, or 19. Please be sure that someone is available in your school, or approved storage location, during those hours to accept the examination shipment. Should any problems occur in connection with the delivery of examination materials, please call this office immediately.

All packages containing secure examination materials for your school will be shipped via United Parcel Service (UPS) and will be delivered between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on one or more of the dates indicated above.

The locked Regents boxes will be shipped with either two locks and a plastic crimp or one lock and two plastic crimps. Padlock keys are mailed to the principal and should arrive no later than 2 days before the arrival of the locked Regents Boxes. Please call the Test Distribution Unit at 518-474-5914 if padlock keys have not been received by 12:00 noon on the expected date.

CHECKING THE EXAMINATION SHIPMENT

Enclosed in each delivery is a shipping notice listing the materials included. As soon as you receive the Regents box(es), use the shipping notice and your confirmation notice to inventory the materials received. **Under no circumstances may the sealed packages of secure examination materials be opened during this inventory.** The number of test booklets contained in each of the sealed packages is indicated on the following page:

- *English editions of Regents Examinations and RCTs (except for the restricted examinations: the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Physics, and the restricted RCTs in Global Studies, United States History and Government, Mathematics, Reading, and Science).* Each sealed package contains 25 booklets.
- *Spanish editions of the Regents Examinations in Algebra I, Living Environment, Physical Setting/Earth Science, Global History and Geography, and United States History and Government.* Each sealed package contains 25 booklets.
- *Braille and large-type editions and translations (other than Spanish) of Regents Examinations.* The exact quantity requested will be shipped to the school.
- *Restricted editions of the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Physics; the RCTs in Global Studies, United States History and Government, Mathematics, Reading, and Science, and the alternative language editions of RCTs.* Each test booklet is numbered and sealed in a separate envelope. Exact quantities requested are shipped to the school.

If your inventory shows that the shipment contains excess examination materials or that it contains examination materials that your school did not request, please notify OSA immediately via fax. It is the principal's responsibility to maintain these excess materials under the same strict security protocols as the examinations that your school will be administering, as outlined below under "Safeguarding Examination Materials."

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

A list of regional centers accompanies this memorandum. If the shipment for your school does not include all the materials needed, additional materials may be obtained from a nearby regional center.

Supplies of all examination materials other than braille, large-type, and alternative language editions of all examinations will be available at regional centers.

If your school requires an emergency supply of materials that are not ordinarily available at the regional centers or more than 10 booklets of an examination that is ordinarily available at the regional center, please send a fax to OSA.

Examination materials are available at the regional centers only on the day of the examination. Secure materials for morning examinations will be released in the morning; secure materials for afternoon examinations will not be released until after 11:00 a.m. Scoring materials will not be released by regional centers until after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline, which

is 10:00 a.m. for morning examinations and 2:00 p.m. for afternoon examinations. Subject to these limitations, materials may be picked up at regional centers between 8:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

In order to obtain examination materials at a regional center, an individual must present a letter of authorization written on school letterhead and signed by the principal. The letter must identify the person picking up the materials and list the specific materials requested. Anyone obtaining examination materials must provide identification with a photograph and countersign the authorization letter before the examination materials will be released.

School personnel are forbidden to make or authorize photocopies of secure State examination booklets without the express written prior approval of OSA. Such approval will be considered only when it is not feasible for the school to obtain the secure examination materials from a regional center.

SAFEGUARDING EXAMINATION MATERIALS

The principal of each school requesting examinations must make the necessary arrangements to safeguard the materials requested for the school. Upon delivery, the locked Regents boxes must immediately be placed in the Department-approved safe or vault at the storage location designated by the school. Examination materials may be removed from locked Regents boxes only for inventory and for administration of the examinations on the scheduled date.

If the locked Regents boxes containing a school's shipment of secure examination materials are found to be too large for the approved storage location, the principal who requested the examinations must contact this office immediately to make arrangements for storage of the boxes in an alternative approved location.

The Regents box keys and the combination or key to the safe or vault must be maintained under strict security protocols in order to preclude access to examinations by students and other unauthorized persons. When the safe or vault where the Regents boxes are stored is unlocked, it must be kept under continuous supervision by school personnel. Additionally, the locked Regents boxes must be visually checked daily by the person in charge of the administration of the examinations in order to ensure that they have not been tampered with and that their contents remain secure.

The sealed packages containing examination booklets and teacher dictation copies must not be opened until the day that each examination is scheduled to be administered, and no earlier than is necessary for distribution to proctors. Scoring key packages must be kept secure and may not be opened until after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline of 10:00 a.m. for morning examinations and 2:00 p.m. for afternoon examinations. The principal must notify the Department via fax if any packages of secure examination materials were not sealed properly when received.

Department personnel will make unannounced visits to some schools after the examination materials have been delivered in order to verify that they are being properly stored. If a storage violation is found, all examination materials will immediately be removed from the school and transferred to a location designated by the Department. The school principal will have to arrange to pick up examination materials from that location each morning and afternoon during the Regents Examination period and to pick up printed scoring materials after the morning and afternoon Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline on the appropriate days. The school will then be required to store all examination materials at a location designated by the Department for a period of at least one year. In addition, the Department may rescind the school's authorization to administer examinations.

Following the examination period, in addition to other materials, the principal must sign and return to the Department the completed **Examination Scoring Certificate, Deputy and Proctor Certificate, and Examination Storage Certificate** (received in the shipment of secure materials). For a complete list of items to be returned, refer to the *Checklist for Return of Examination Materials in Regents Boxes* (DET 536) or to Section 4 of the [School Administrator's Manual](#).

STUDENT USE OF COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

All students are prohibited from bringing cell phones and certain other personal electronic devices into a classroom or other location where a State test is being administered. Test proctors and school officials shall retain the right to collect and hold any prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test administration. Admission to the test shall be denied to any student who is in possession of a cell phone or other prohibited electronic device and refuses to relinquish it.

ADMINISTERING AND SCORING EXAMINATIONS

Teachers are **not** permitted to score their own students' answer papers. This means that teachers currently instructing students in the coursework associated with a particular Regents Examination may **not** score those students' answer papers for that examination. This prohibition includes special education and academic intervention services (AIS) teachers. The following examples are intended to offer guidance to school administrators who will be making determinations as to a teacher's eligibility to score specific students' examination papers.

- A teacher providing AIS to a student in preparation for the Regents Examination in U.S. History and Government may not score that student's answer paper for this examination.
- An English teacher who is a student's homeroom teacher but is not the student's current year English teacher may score that student's answer paper for the Regents Examination in English Language Arts.
- A mathematics teacher who taught a student algebra the year before but is not currently instructing a student in the coursework in geometry may score the student's answer paper for the Regents Examination in Geometry.

The principal is responsible for making the final determination as to whether or not a teacher may score specific students' examination papers based on this scoring policy. A principal may establish rules that are more prohibitive than the illustrations above suggest.

The general administration procedures for secondary-level examinations are provided in the [School Administrator's Manual](#). Specific [directions](#) for administering regular and restricted examinations are available on the Department website. These materials must be distributed to teachers before the examination date in order to give them time to become familiar with the instructions.

The Department does not provide printed scoring materials for any examinations other than scoring materials for restricted RCTs, the RCT in Writing, and the restricted Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Physics. Schools must print sufficient copies of the nonrestricted scoring materials to supply one to each rater.

All scoring keys and rating guides posted on the Department's website will be password protected by two levels of password protection.

- *Regents Examinations.* The same scoring materials are provided to score the regular English editions, the alternative language editions, and the braille editions for all Regents Examinations, except for the braille editions of Living Environment, Physical Setting/Earth Science, and Physical Setting/Physics. Separate scoring materials are provided for the braille editions of Living Environment, Physical Setting/Earth Science, and Physical Setting/Physics.
- *Regents Examination in Living Environment.* Two scoring keys are provided — one for the English and alternative language editions, and the second key for the restricted braille edition.
- *Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science.* Two scoring keys are provided — one for the English and alternative language editions, and the second key for the restricted braille edition.
- *Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Physics.* Two scoring keys are provided — one for the English edition, and the second key for the restricted braille edition.
- *RCT in Mathematics.* Two scoring keys are provided — one for the restricted regular English edition, the second for the restricted alternative language and braille editions.

- *RCT in Science*. One scoring key is provided for all editions.
- *RCT in Reading*. One scoring key is provided.
- *RCT in Writing*. One scoring key is provided.
- *RCT in Global Studies*. One set of scoring materials is provided for all editions — the semi-transparent overlay for the Part One multiple-choice questions, and the restricted sequentially numbered rating guide for the Part Two essays.
- *RCT in United States History and Government*. One set of scoring materials is provided for all editions — the semi-transparent overlay for the Part One multiple-choice questions, and the restricted sequentially numbered rating guide for the Part Two essays.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS RETAKING THE REGENTS EXAMINATION IN EARTH SCIENCE

All students taking the January 2018 Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science must take the performance test, even if they have taken it in conjunction with a prior administration of the written examination. Only the performance test score earned by the student in the weeks immediately preceding the January 2018 written examination may be used to determine the student's final examination score for this Regents Examination.

Consequently, all schools planning to administer the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science must make arrangements for all students who will be taking the written examination to take the performance test as well. The performance test must be administered during the last two weeks of the Earth science course and no later than the day before the written examination. This requirement applies both to students enrolled in the course of study and to students who plan only to retake the examination. All schools administering this examination must notify students of the date and time to appear for the performance test.

REPORTING TESTING MISCONDUCT AND IRREGULARITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT

The 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 the administration and scoring of these examinations.

Reporting Testing Misconduct and Other Testing Irregularities

The principal must report the following misconduct by students and testing irregularities in writing on school letterhead to OSA via fax or e-mail.

- All student infractions of the Department's policy prohibiting the possession or use of cell phones and other communications devices during State examinations.
- 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 instances in which a State examination is administered without Department authorization at a time outside the published Statewide schedule.
- All instances in which a school does not conform to the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline in administering a State examination.
- All instances in which scorers do not rate State examinations in accordance with the scoring materials provided by the Department.
- All cases in which student answer papers are lost prior to the recording of the scores in students' permanent records.

Mandatory Reporting of Testing Improprieties by Adults

The Department's Test Security Unit (TSU) handles all reports of testing improprieties by adults involved in the administration and scoring of State assessments. Each school district, BOCES, and independent school employee is required to report to the Department any known incident of testing

misconduct by a certified educator, as well as any known testing misconduct by a non-certified individual involved in the handling, administration, or scoring of State assessments that may reasonably be considered to be in violation of section 225 of the Education Law. Reports should be made via the TSU website by submitting the [Incident Report Form](#) located on the main page under “Report Educator Test Fraud.”

A school district or BOCES may not take adverse action, including dismissal and any disciplinary or other adverse action, against an employee who files a mandatory report of testing misconduct, because the employee filed a report. Any certified employee who takes such unwarranted adverse action against another employee may face disciplinary action by the Department.

More complete information on strategies for avoiding the occurrences listed above and for addressing them should they occur may be found in the [School Administrator’s Manual](#) and in the [Directions for Administering Regents Examinations, January 2018 Administration](#).

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Principals must ensure that students with disabilities are provided the testing accommodations specified in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Accommodation Plans (504 Plans) when they take State examinations. Under certain conditions, special examination arrangements may be made for general education students taking State examinations. The guidelines to be followed in such circumstances are provided in Section Two of the [School Administrator’s Manual](#).

English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners

Schools may provide the following testing accommodations to English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners:

- *Time Extension:* Schools may extend the test time for English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners. 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 English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners. 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 examinations to English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners individually or in small groups in a separate location.
- *Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries:* English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking State 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 those Regents Examinations for which the Department provides direct written translations, English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners 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 document. (Note: The alternative language editions of RCTs provided by the Department are often not direct translations of the English editions being administered during the same examination period and may **not** be used simultaneously with an English edition.)
- *Oral Translation for Lower Incidence Languages:* Schools may provide English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners with an oral translation of a State examination when there is no translated edition provided by the Department. This accommodation is permitted for State examinations in all subjects **except** English. All translations must be oral, direct translations of the English editions—written translations are not allowed. No clarifications or explanations may be provided. Translators should receive copies of the English editions of the tests *one hour prior*

to administration. The Department's Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (telephone 518-474-8775) and the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Networks (RBERNs), can assist schools in locating suitable translators. A [list of RBERNs](#) is available on the website.

- *Writing Responses in Native Language*: English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners making use of alternative language editions or of oral translations of State 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 World Languages and the RBERNs can assist in locating suitable translators who can translate the students' responses into English in order to facilitate scoring of the papers.

Former English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners

Schools may provide the testing accommodations listed above under the heading "English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners" to Former English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners who met the exiting criteria specified in Part 154-2 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education and were exited from English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner status following their participation in one of the two most recent administrations (Spring 2016 or Spring 2017) of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). Such students either achieved an overall level of Commanding on the NYSESLAT or achieved an overall level of Expanding on the most recent administration of the NYSESLAT and scored at Level 3 or higher on the New York State Grades 3–8 English Language Arts Test or earned a score of 65 or higher on the Regents Examination in English Language Arts.

These accommodations may not be provided to Former English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners who were identified as English language proficient prior to the 2016 NYSESLAT administration. Additional [guidance](#) on identification of Former ELLs is available on the website.

HANDLING OF STUDENTS' COMPLETED EXAMINATION MATERIALS

When a student has completed a State examination, the student's answer materials should be collected and confirmed, or "checked in," by a proctor and logged in to a list of examinees before that student is permitted to leave the testing room. When they are hand scored, answer papers for all State examinations must remain in the custody of teachers or administrators in the school building or regional scoring site until the rating process is complete and scores are recorded on the students' permanent records. When answer papers are scored in cooperation with another school, answer papers may be transported to the cooperating school for such scoring. It remains the principal's responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of such papers while they are out of the building. Answer papers that are sent to a scanning center for scoring may be stored either at the scanning location or in the schools where the examinations were administered, as long as storage conditions are maintained that will not limit the principal's access to an individual student's answer paper. As an additional precaution, all scrap paper should be retained until all examination scores have been recorded.

If a student's answer paper is lost, the principal or superintendent must conduct an inquiry and file a written report with this office. This report must include (1) a description of the loss or disappearance, including a list of all students whose papers are missing; (2) the examination title and administration date; (3) the likely cause of the loss or disappearance; and (4) what steps will be taken to prevent a similar occurrence in the future.

MATERIALS RETURNED IN THE REGENTS BOX

The materials that must be returned to the Department in the Regents boxes are listed in Section Four of the [School Administrator's Manual](#) and on the checklist provided to schools in the shipment of secure test materials. Please combine all materials to be returned to the Department in one Regents box when possible.

Return all Regents boxes no later than February 16. Please check all storage locations for any boxes remaining from previous examination periods and return those boxes as well. Each school must pay for the return shipment of its own Regents boxes; the boxes may not be returned collect. The boxes

may be returned by United Parcel Service (UPS) or any other carrier. Regardless of the carrier, the school must call the carrier, make the necessary arrangements, and pay for the return shipment. If the Regents boxes for a school are returned collect, the Department will refuse delivery.

DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Selected principals requesting examinations will receive notice concerning Department review by the end of the January Regents Examination period. This notice will indicate each subject for which answer papers must be submitted in the Regents box to the Department. All answer papers not requested must remain on file in the school for one year with the exception of restricted edition examinations. The latter must be returned to the Department. Schools asked to submit answer papers for Regents Examinations should produce and retain, in the school, photocopies of all answer papers prior to submitting them to the Department.

ONLINE SUBMISSION OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS OF EXAMINATIONS

Suggestions and feedback from teachers are an important contribution to the test development process. The Department provides an online evaluation form for State assessments where teachers may respond to several specific questions and may make suggestions. Complete and submit your [evaluation](#) of any examination (except restricted editions) on the Department's website.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions regarding the requesting, storing, and administering of the Regents Examinations and RCTs, call the Operations Group at 518-474-8220.

For other questions regarding State assessments, call OSA's main number at 518-474-5900.

Fax supplemental requests for the Regents Examinations and RCTs to 518-474-2021.

Other faxes regarding test administration may be sent to 518-474-1989.

OSA's [e-mail](#) address is emscassessinfo@nysed.gov.