



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

BUREAU CHIEF, TEST ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS
Office of Assessment Policy, Development and Administration

Summer 2011

TO: Principals of Schools Administering August 2011 State Examinations

FROM: Barbara M. Wallis *Barbara M. Wallis*

SUBJECT: The August 2011 Regents Examinations and Regents Competency Tests

IMPORTANT: Regents boxes will be delivered to single-shipment storage locations on Monday, August 15, or Tuesday, August 16. For daily-delivery locations, deliveries are scheduled for Tuesday, August 16 and Wednesday, August 17, with each shipment containing the next day's exams. In all cases, delivery can be expected between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. See "Shipment of Exam Materials" below for further information.

This memorandum provides essential information about the shipping, storage, and administration of the August exams. In addition, all persons coordinating the administration of the August 2011 exams should be familiar with the publication *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Second Language Proficiency Examinations: School Administrator's Manual, 2008 Edition*. This manual is available on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/sam/secondary/home.html>. If you have any questions about this information, please call this office at 518-474-8220 or 518-474-5902.

Accompanying this memorandum, which has been posted on the Department's web site, are a list of regional centers, a memorandum regarding the content of each August exam, and the schedule for the August 2011 exam period. We appreciate all the hard work you do to help implement the New York State Testing Program.

SHIPMENT OF EXAM MATERIALS

Exam materials will be delivered to schools in two or three shipments, depending on the titles requested and the location of the school. The first shipment, containing nonsecure materials, will be shipped in cardboard cartons and/or padded mailers and delivered to schools by August 5. This shipment will include answer booklets for the Regents Competency Test (RCT) in Writing; essay booklets for the Regents Examinations in English, Global History and Geography, and United States History and Government; Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test materials; and reference tables for the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science. **Directions for administering and scoring exams will no longer be included in the shipment of nonsecure materials. All directions will be provided by e-mail to summer school principals and have been made available on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/hsgen/>.**

Note: Schools will receive printed scoring materials for the RCTs in Global Studies, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and U.S. History and Government but will not receive printed copies of scoring materials for the RCT in Writing or for any of the August 2011 Regents Exams. Instead, for each of these exams, the scoring keys and rating guides will be made available on the scheduled administration date on the Department's web site at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/scoring/home.html> at approximately 10:30 a.m. for morning exams and at approximately 2:30 p.m. for afternoon exams. Schools must print sufficient copies of the non-restricted scoring materials to supply one to each rater. (See page 4.)

The final shipment(s), comprising the secure materials for all August exams, will be packed in locked Regents boxes and arrive at daily-delivery schools (or their Department-approved storage locations) between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 16 and Wednesday, August 17. Single-shipment schools will receive their single deliveries of secure materials on Monday, August 15, or Tuesday, August 16. Refer to the confirmation notice you previously received to identify your school's status as either daily delivery or single shipment.

Be sure that someone in your school or approved storage location is available between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the scheduled delivery days to accept the exam shipment. Should any problems occur in connection with the delivery of exam materials, call this office immediately at 518-474-8220 or 518-474-5902.

The locked plastic sliding-lid Regents boxes will be secured with either two locks and a plastic crimp or one lock and two plastic crimps. Padlock keys are mailed in one or more envelopes to the principal and should arrive before the locked Regents boxes. If your padlock keys are not delivered by noon on Monday, August 15, please call the Test Distribution Unit at 518-474-5914.

CHECKING THE EXAM SHIPMENT

Enclosed in each delivery is a shipping notice listing the materials included. As soon as you receive the shipment, use the shipping notice and your School Record of Examinations Requested to ensure that the appropriate exam materials have been received for each subject. If your inventory shows that the shipment contains excess exam materials or that it contains exam materials that you did not request, please notify the Office of Assessment Policy, Development and Administration (APDA) immediately via fax to 518-474-2021. It is the principal's responsibility to maintain these excess materials under the same strict security as the exams that your school will be administering, as outlined on the next page under "Safeguarding Exam Materials." Under no circumstances may the sealed packages of secure exam materials be opened during this inventory. The number of test booklets contained in each of the sealed packages is indicated below:

- *All Regents Exams, including Spanish editions, and the RCT in Writing:* Each sealed package will contain 25 booklets.
- *Restricted editions – All editions of the RCTs in Mathematics, Reading, Science, Global Studies, and U.S. History and Government.* Each test booklet is numbered and sealed in a separate envelope. The exact quantity requested will be shipped to the school.
- *Braille and large-type editions of all Regents Exams and RCTs:* The exact quantity requested will be shipped to the school.
- *Scoring keys.* Printed scoring materials for the RCTs will be shrink-wrapped in packages, one for each session in which they are administered. **Please note** that printed copies of the scoring materials for the August 2011 Regents Exams will *not* be sent to schools. Instead, they will be posted at approximately 10:30 a.m. for morning exams and at approximately 2:30 p.m. for afternoon exams on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/scoring/home.html>. Schools must print sufficient copies of the scoring materials to supply one to each rater.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES OF EXAM MATERIALS

If your school's shipment does not include all the materials needed, additional materials must be obtained from a nearby regional center. The regional center must be contacted immediately to ensure that a sufficient supply of exam materials will be available when you or your representative arrives. Advise the regional center of the exact number of test booklets that your school will require. A list of regional centers accompanies this memorandum. Ordinarily, supplies will be available at regional centers of all exam materials *other than* braille and large-type test booklets, alternative language editions of the RCTs, and Spanish editions of Regents Exams. If you require an emergency supply of ten or more test booklets of any regular English edition of any exam, or if you require materials that are *not* ordinarily available at the regional centers, please fax a brief statement of your summer school's needs to APDA at 518-474-2021.

Exam materials are available at the regional centers only on the day of the exam. Secure materials for morning exams will be released in the morning; secure materials for afternoon exams will not be released until after 10:30 a.m. RCT scoring keys will not be released by regional centers until after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines (9:15 a.m. for morning exams, 1:15 p.m. for afternoon exams). Subject to these limitations, materials may be picked up at regional centers between 7:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

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

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

SAFEGUARDING EXAM MATERIALS

The principal of each school requesting exams 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. Exam materials may be removed from locked Regents boxes only for inventory and for administration of the exams on the scheduled date.

If the locked Regents boxes containing a school's shipment of secure exam materials are found to be too large to fit into the Department-approved safe or vault, the principal must contact this office immediately at 518-474-8220 or 518-474-5902 to make arrangements for the storage of the boxes in an alternate approved location.

The Regents box keys and the combination or key to the safe or vault must be maintained under strict security conditions to preclude access to the exams 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 exams to ensure that they have not been tampered with and that their contents remain secure.

The sealed packages containing exam booklets may not be opened until the day each exam is scheduled to be administered, and no earlier than is necessary for distribution to proctors. RCT scoring key packages must be kept secure and may not be opened until after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines of 9:15 a.m. for morning exams and 1:15 p.m. for afternoon exams. The principal must notify the Department by fax to 518-474-2021 if any of the packages of secure exam materials were not sealed properly when received.

No school administrator is authorized to redistribute any State exam to any location outside of New York State by any means, including but not limited to use of common carrier, hand carrying, facsimile, or e-mail, without the Department's express written approval. If there is a circumstance that may warrant the administration of a State exam at a location outside of New York State, the school official must contact APDA to request prior Department approval.

Department personnel will make unannounced visits to some schools after the exam materials have been delivered in order to verify that they are being properly stored. If a violation of storage procedures is found, all exam 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 exam materials from that location each morning and afternoon during the Regents Exam period, and to pick up scoring materials after the morning and afternoon Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines on the appropriate days. The school will then be required to store all exam 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 exams.

Following the exam period, the principal must sign and return to the Department the completed **Examination Scoring Certificate, Deputy and Proctor Certificate, and Examination Storage Certificate** (included 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, pages 1–2, of the *School Administrator’s Manual*.

ADMISSION OF STUDENTS TO EXAMS

Students who have not completed the appropriate course(s) may not be admitted to State exams. Students must provide written authorization from the home school principal or superintendent to “challenge for credit.” In all cases, nonresident students and any others not enrolled in your summer school program may be admitted to State exams only at the written request of the home school principal. Public school districts may not charge resident students a fee for admission to the August exams. Nonresident students may be charged a reasonable fee to cover administration and scoring costs.

STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND RECORDKEEPING

Plans should be made before the administration of the exams to verify the identity of each student entering the exam room, especially those not enrolled in the summer school program. Accurate attendance records must be kept for each exam. The school must have attendance records that can be used to verify the presence or absence of any student for any of the August exams.

ADMINISTERING AND SCORING NONRESTRICTED EXAMS

The general test administration procedures for Regents Exams and for the RCT in Writing are outlined in the *School Administrator’s Manual*. Specific directions for administering and scoring each exam will be e-mailed to principals and posted on the Department web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/hsgen/>. The teacher directions, which may be photocopied, must be distributed to all proctors before the exam date. In addition, all proctors must be instructed to carefully read the directions so as to become familiar with the instructions. It is not acceptable for proctors to rely on their recollection of these instructions from past administrations.

ADMINISTERING AND SCORING RESTRICTED EXAMS

The administration procedures for restricted exams (the braille editions of Living Environment and Physical Setting/Earth Science and all RCTs except the RCT in Writing) are different from those for nonrestricted exams. General information about the administration of restricted exams is provided in the *School Administrator’s Manual*. Specific instructions for administering and scoring each of the restricted exams will be provided to principals by e-mail and posted on the Department web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/hsgen/>. Each person who will administer the restricted editions must be thoroughly familiar with the procedures detailed in both publications.

The scoring key provided for the alternative language and braille editions of the RCT in Mathematics is different from that for the English language edition. This scoring key will be shipped only to those schools requesting these editions. To ensure that correct scores are recorded, make certain that all persons responsible for rating any State exam are provided with the appropriate scoring materials.

The scoring keys provided for the braille editions of Living Environment and Physical Setting/Earth Science are different from the scoring keys provided for the regular editions of these exams.

PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS RETAKING THE REGENTS EXAMINATION IN PHYSICAL SETTING/EARTH SCIENCE

All students taking the Regents Exam 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 exam. Only the performance test score earned by the student in the weeks immediately preceding the written exam may be used to determine the student’s final exam score for this Regents Exam.

Consequently, all schools planning to administer the Regents Exam in Physical Setting/Earth Science must make arrangements for all students who will be taking the written exam 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 exam. This requirement applies both to students enrolled in the course of study and to students who plan only to retake the exam. All schools administering this exam must notify students of the date and time to appear for the performance test.

REPORTING ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING IRREGULARITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT

The principal is responsible for all aspects of the school's administration of State exams 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 exams. In addition, the principal must report the following events in writing to APDA:

- All student infractions of the Department's policy prohibiting the use of cell phones and other communications devices during State exams.
- All confirmed cases of students having committed fraud on State exams.
- 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 exam or altering student responses on an exam paper.
- All instances in which a State exam 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 exam.
- All instances in which scorers do not rate State exams in accordance with the scoring materials provided by the Department.
- All cases in which a school official does not adhere to the Department policy concerning the finality of exam scores as determined by the teacher scoring committees. The policy is explained under the heading "Rating Exam Papers" on pages 13–14 of the *Directions for Administering Regents Examinations, June and August 2011 Administrations*.
- All cases in which a school official or staff member alters or otherwise misrepresents a student's earned exam 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 occurrences in writing by fax to 518-474-1989 or via e-mail to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov. 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, June and August 2011 Administrations*.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

Summer school principals must ensure that students with disabilities are provided the testing accommodations specified in their Individualized Education Programs or Section 504 Accommodation Plans when they take State exams. Under certain conditions, special exam arrangements may be made for general education students taking State exams. The guidelines to be followed in such circumstances are provided in "Administering Examinations to Students with Disabilities" in Section Two, pages 15–16, of the *School Administrator's Manual, 2008 Edition*.

English Language Learners

Schools may provide the following testing accommodations to English language learners.

- *Time Extension:* Schools may extend the test time for English language learners. Principals may use any reasonable extensions, such as “time and a half” (the required testing time plus half that amount), in accordance with their best judgment about the needs of the English language 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. Schools may administer State exams to English language learners individually or in small groups in a separate location.
- *Third Reading of Listening Selection:* Proctors may read the listening passage a third time to English language learners when administering the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English.
- *Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries:* English language learners may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking State exams. 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 Exams for which the Department provides direct written translations, English language 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 **not** direct translations of the English editions being administered during the same exam period and therefore may **not** be used simultaneously with an English edition.)
- *Oral Translation for Lower Incidence Languages:* Schools may provide English language learners with an oral translation of a State exam when there is no translated edition provided by the Department. This accommodation is permitted for State exams 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 edition of the tests *one hour prior* to administration. The Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies can assist schools in locating suitable translators.
- *Writing Responses in the Native Language:* English language learners making use of alternative language editions or of oral translations of State exams may write their responses to the open-ended questions in their native language. Scoring the tests is the responsibility of the school. If needed, the Department’s Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students’ responses into English to facilitate scoring of the answer papers.

Former English Language Learners

Schools may also provide the testing accommodations listed above under the heading “English Language Learners” only to former English language learners who were identified as English language proficient based on their scores on one of the two most recent administrations of the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT). **Therefore, in August 2011, schools may provide these accommodations to former English language learners who achieved the proficient level on the NYSESLAT that was administered in either spring 2009 or spring 2010.** Schools may not provide testing accommodations to former English language learners who achieved the proficient level prior to the spring 2009 NYSESLAT administration.

DEPARTMENT REVIEW

Selected summer school principals requesting exams will receive notice concerning Department review by the end of the August Regents Exam period. This notice will indicate each subject for which answer papers must be submitted in the Regents boxes or via traceable mail to the Department. All answer papers not requested must remain on file in the school for one year.

HANDLING OF STUDENTS' COMPLETED EXAM MATERIALS

When a student has completed a State exam, 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 exams 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 student 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 exams 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 exam 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 exam 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.

REPORTING AND RECORDING TEST SCORES

Summer schools must record the names and test scores of all students tested and then send the scores for each student to the student's home school. Information about recording test scores on the permanent record is provided in Section Three of the *School Administrator's Manual*.

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 wherever possible.

Return all Regents boxes no later than August 26. Please check all storage locations for any boxes remaining from previous exam 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 Regents boxes for a school are returned collect, the Department will refuse delivery.

ONLINE SUBMISSION OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS OF EXAMS

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. Go to <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/teacher/evaluation.html> to complete and submit your evaluation of any exam.

Thank you for everything you do on behalf of New York State students.