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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January 2005

TO: Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools

FROM: Steven E. Katz SEK

SUBJECT: Administration of the January 2005 Regents Examinations and Regents Competency Tests

IMPORTANT: The booklets for each day of the January Regents examination period will be shipped separately so as to arrive at schools (or approved storage locations) between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the school day preceding the administration of the examinations. See "Shipment of Examination Materials" below for further information.

This memorandum provides essential information about the administration of the January examinations. In addition, all persons coordinating the administration of the January 2005 examinations should be familiar with the publication *Regents Examinations, Regents Competency Tests, and Proficiency Examinations: School Administrator's Manual, 2001 Edition*. This manual may be accessed on the Department's web site at http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hsinfogen/hsinfogenarch/sam2001.pdf.

Accompanying this memorandum are the schedule for the January 2005 examination period, the list of regional centers, and a memorandum regarding the content of each January examination.

SHIPMENT OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

Testing materials are delivered to schools in several shipments, depending on the examinations requested. The Native Language Writing Test (NLWT) and the performance test (Part One) of the Comprehensive Regents Examinations in languages other than English have already been shipped to schools that requested those examinations.

Nonsecure materials for the January examinations are shipped to schools in cardboard cartons and/or padded mailers and are delivered in early January. This shipment includes student identification sheets and answer pads for the RCT in Writing; answer sheets for all other RCTs; answer booklets for the Regents examinations in English, social studies, and languages other than English; Earth Science Performance Test materials; science reference tables; evaluation forms; directions for administering and scoring all examinations; and Regents diplomas.

January examinations will be shipped separately in locked Regents boxes, with each school (or Department-approved storage location) receiving up to five shipments: one delivery for each day for which examinations were requested, plus a fifth shipment containing only scoring keys for any examinations scheduled for the last day of the examination period. The examination booklets for each day of the January examination period will be delivered to schools or approved storage locations between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the weekday preceding the date the examinations are scheduled to be administered. Scoring keys for each day will be delivered on the same day their corresponding examinations are administered. For example, Regents boxes delivered on January 27 will contain the scoring keys for the examinations scheduled for January 27 and test booklets for those scheduled for January 28.

Please be sure that someone in your school or approved storage location is available to accept the examination shipment between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on the days when deliveries are expected. Should any problems occur in connection with the delivery of examination materials, call this office at 518-474-8220 or 474-5099 immediately.

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The locked plastic sliding-lid Regents boxes will be shipped with two locks. Many of the boxes will also be secured with a plastic or stranded-wire crimp. A wire cutter or similar tool will be required to remove the wire crimps. Work gloves and protective eyewear should be worn when this crimp is cut. Padlock keys will be mailed in one or more envelopes to the person who signed the request booklet and should arrive before the locked Regents boxes. If padlock keys for each day of the examination period have not been received three days before the expected delivery date, please call the Test Distribution Unit at 518-474-5914.

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 School Record of Examinations Requested to ensure that all appropriate examination materials have been received for each subject. 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 below.

- *English editions of RCTs and Regents examinations (except the Regents Comprehensive Examination in French and the RCT in Science):* Each sealed package contains 25 booklets.
- *Spanish editions of Mathematics A, 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 — the Regents Comprehensive Examination in French, the RCT in Science, and the alternative language editions of all RCTs:* Each test booklet is numbered and sealed in a separate envelope. Exact quantities requested are shipped to the school.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES OF EXAMINATION MATERIALS

If a shipment for your school 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 sufficient examination materials will be available when your school's representative arrives. A list of regional centers is enclosed with this memorandum. At regional centers in New York City, emergency supplies of English editions of all examination materials and selected translations of Regents examinations and alternative language editions of RCTs will be available. At regional centers outside New York City, emergency supplies of English editions of all examination materials will be available. Translated editions of Regents examinations and alternative language editions of RCTs will *not* be available at regional centers outside of New York City. The Native Language Writing Test (NLWT), braille, and large-type editions will *not* be available at regional centers. If you require an emergency supply of materials that are *not* available at the regional centers or if you require more than 25 booklets of an examination that is available at the regional center, please send a fax to the Office of State Assessment at 518-474-2021.

Examination materials are available at 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 keys will not be released by regional centers until after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines (10:00 a.m. for morning examinations, 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 his/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 examination materials must provide identification with a photograph and countersign the authorization letter before the materials will be released.

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 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 at 518-474-8220 or 474-5099 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 conditions 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 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 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 Deadlines of 10:00 a.m. for morning examinations and 2:00 p.m. for afternoon examinations.

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 violation of storage procedures 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 scoring keys after the morning and afternoon Uniform Statewide Admission Deadlines 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, the principal must return to the Department the completed Examination Storage Certificate and Deputy and Proctor Certificate (received in the shipment of secure materials).

ADMINISTERING AND SCORING EXAMINATIONS

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 included in the shipment of nonsecure examination materials. These materials must be distributed to teachers before the examination date in order to give them time to become familiar with the instructions.

Two different sets of scoring materials are provided for the RCTs in Mathematics, Global Studies, and United States History and Government: one for the English edition, the second for the alternative language and braille editions. Three different sets of scoring materials are provided for the RCT in Science: the first for the English edition, the second for the alternative language editions, and the third for the braille edition. Two different sets of scoring materials are provided for the RCT in Reading: one for the English edition, the second for the braille edition. The RCT in Writing is scored using the same scoring key and rating guide for all editions of the test. To ensure that correct scores are obtained, make certain that all persons responsible for rating these examinations are provided the appropriate scoring materials.

Schools will receive no more than eight scoring keys for each State examination. Restricted rating guides for the Regents Comprehensive Examination in French, the RCT in Science and for alternative language editions of the social studies RCTs may not be photocopied. Should the necessity arise, all other scoring materials may be photocopied, but only after the Uniform Statewide Admission Deadline for the corresponding examination.

REPORTING ADMINISTRATION/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 the administration and scoring of these examinations. In addition, the principal must report the following events in writing to the Office of State Assessment:

- All student infractions of the Department's policy prohibiting the 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 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 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 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.

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 and Scoring Regents Examinations*.

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students with Disabilities

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 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 on page 16 of the *School Administrator's Manual.*

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 examinations to LEP students individually or in small groups in a separate location.

- *Third Reading of Listening Selection:* Proctors may read the listening passage a third time to LEP students who are taking the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English. This accommodation is ***not*** permitted on State examinations in languages other than English.
- *Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries:* LEP students may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking State examinations in all subjects ***except*** languages other than English. 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 State examinations for which the Department provides direct written translations, 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 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 examination period and may ***not*** be used simultaneously with an English edition.)
- *Oral Translation for Lower Incidence Languages:* Schools may provide LEP students 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 and languages other than 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 the Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) can assist schools in locating suitable translators.
- *Writing Responses in Native Language:* LEP students 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 the BETACs can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students' responses into English to facilitate scoring of the answer papers.

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 via traceable mail to the Department. All answer papers not requested must remain on file in the school for one year. Schools asked to submit answer papers for the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or Mathematics A should produce and retain in the school photocopies of answer papers for all seniors scoring below 64 on these examinations. These photocopies will be needed by the school to determine which component(s) the students may be eligible for in the Spring 2005 Component Retesting.

RCT in Writing: Schools are no longer asked to submit RCT in Writing answer papers to the Department for validation of scoring. A random sampling of schools will receive instructions to submit their scored RCT in Writing answer papers to the Department for rerating. The remainder of schools must keep the answer papers and the student identification sheets on file for one year in accordance with the standard procedures for the safeguarding of all State examinations as detailed in the *School Administrator's Manual*.

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 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 of those 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 papers. 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 on page 22 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 whenever possible.

Return all Regents boxes no later than February 21. 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.

Enclosures