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TO: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Principals of Public, Nonpublic, and Charter Schools

FROM: David Abrams

SUBJECT: Information on the 2005 New York State English as a
Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

Introduction

As a result of a Request for Proposals (RFP) process, the New York State Education Department has awarded Harcourt Assessment Inc. a contract for the development of the New York State English as a Second Language Test (NYSESLAT) for 2005-2009. A second five-year contract has also been awarded to Harcourt Assessment Inc. for the printing and dissemination of this test. Harcourt Assessment Inc. has extensive experience in helping states assess the progress of limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, as required by Title I and Title III of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

This document and all information in subsequent mailings pertaining to the NYSESLAT will be posted on the Department's web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/>.

General Information About the 2005 NYSESLAT

All LEP students enrolled in grades K-12 in all public and charter schools must take the NYSESLAT even if they have taken or will be taking the Grade 4 or 8 English Language Arts (ELA) Test or the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English. Nonpublic schools are encouraged to administer the NYSESLAT to their LEP students.

Later this month, test samplers will be posted on the web site at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/>. A printed set of K-12 test samplers will be mailed to schools in February 2005.

Field testing will take place in February 2005 and the fall of 2005. Additional information will be provided to schools selected for the participation in the field tests.

The 2005 NYSESLAT is a secure test. After test administration, all used and unused test materials must be returned to Harcourt Assessment Inc.

Distinctive Features of the 2005 NYSESLAT

- Unique cut scores for each grade
- Increased number of multiple choice questions in all subtests
- Increased number of open-ended Speaking questions
- Addition of multiple choice Writing questions assessing early literacy in K-1
- Editing portion of the Writing test replaced with Writing Conventions, consisting of multiple choice questions

Ordering NYSESLAT Tests and Answer Documents

- Harcourt Assessment Inc. will mail information on ordering tests to all schools in February 2005.
- Schools will order tests electronically via Harcourt Assessment Inc.'s web site.
- Public and charter schools must obtain machine scannable answer sheets for NYSESLAT from their Regional Information Center (RIC) or large city school district scanning center.
- Nonpublic schools ordering NYSESLAT will obtain machine scannable answer sheets from Harcourt Assessment Inc.

Regional Turnkey Training

Harcourt Assessment Inc. will provide regional turnkey training sessions in February and early March 2005. These are "train the trainer" sessions, which will focus on scoring the Speaking and Writing subtests.

New York City Only: The New York City Department of Education will provide information to the New York City schools on the training.

Outside New York City: The Bilingual Education Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) will invite selected districts to participate in the turnkey training. Participants in the training will turnkey the training for teachers in their districts. The BETACs will schedule training for teachers in the remaining districts.

Scheduling NYSESLAT

NYSESLAT has four sessions or parts: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing. The Listening, Reading, and Writing Sessions must be administered to classes or groups of LEP students during three separate sessions on three separate days of the school's choosing between May 9 and May 20, 2005. Schools may administer the Speaking Session between April 25 and May 20, 2005. Teachers must administer the Speaking Session to students individually in locations separate from other students.

Administering the Listening, Reading, and Writing Sessions to students in Grades 2 and above requires approximately one class period, or 40-45 minutes per session. Approximately 25 minutes per session are required to administer the Listening and Reading Sessions to students in Kindergarten and Grade 1 and approximately 20 minutes are required to administer the Writing Session to students in these grades.

For all grades, the Department suggests that schools administer the subtests in the following sequence: Session 1–Listening, Session 2–Reading, and Session 3–Writing. However, schools may administer these sessions in a different sequence for some or all students if doing so will facilitate the school’s completion of this testing.

If you have any questions, please contact the Office of State Assessment at emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov or call 518-474-5902.

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