




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

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, P-12 EDUCATION

December 2011

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

FROM: Ken Slentz – Deputy Commissioner for P-12 

SUBJECT: 2012 Grades 3-8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Testing Program

This memo provides information on:

- Test book design and testing times
- Field test questions embedded in the operational tests
- Testing calendar
- Changes in ELA scoring rubric
- Changes in scoring materials
- Test security

PLEASE NOTE: This memo is a change from previously-released testing information and supersedes all previously-released information.

TEST BOOK DESIGN AND TESTING TIMES

This year the state testing program is going to be more comprehensive because of the need to better determine student learning and to improve future assessments. To help accomplish those goals, the Department has made two significant changes to the 3-8 ELA and mathematics testing program.

First, we have increased the number of test questions to obtain the most accurate information possible about student achievement and to include field test questions upon which future tests will be built (see page 2). To accommodate the increased number of questions, **the ELA and mathematics assessments will be administered over the course of three days respectively.**

- ELA, Day 1 consists of Book 1 and will be administered in two consecutive parts with a carefully supervised short break at about the midway point for all grades. To ensure test integrity, students are not permitted to talk during the break. Additional information on the break will be included in the *Guide to the 2012 Grades 3-8 Testing Program*.
- All other books for ELA and all books for Mathematics are administered in a single session and do not include a break.

Second, the Department has designed the testing times to allow students sufficient time to demonstrate what they have learned. Although the actual time that it will take the typical general education student to complete each session is estimated to be 45, 50, 60 or 70 minutes depending on grade and subject (see table on page 5), **school districts must schedule 90 minutes for each session, on each day, at each grade.** This does NOT include approximately 10 minutes of prep

time at beginning of each session for handing out materials and reading directions. The 90 minutes should begin when the students begin testing. The start time of each session may be staggered by grade to accommodate staffing and space needs (e.g.: grade 3 starts at 9:00 while grade 4 starts at 10:30).

Students completing all questions in a test book prior to the end of the scheduled time are permitted to review their answers (including those answered prior to the break during ELA Day 1, Book 1). If all students complete the assessment earlier than 90 minutes, the teacher may end the session. As soon as the testing of each book is completed, the principal must arrange for the collection and secure storage of all used and unused test books.

Students with disabilities must be provided testing accommodations as stated in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plans). Accommodations for extended time, such as time and a half or double time, should be based on 90 minute sessions. Extended time for current and eligible former English language learners should also be based on 90 minute sessions.

EMBEDDED FIELD TEST QUESTIONS

In 2010, the Department announced its commitment to embed multiple-choice questions for field testing within the Spring 2012 Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests. Embedding field test questions allows for a better representation of the student population and more reliable field test data on which to build future operational tests.

It will not be apparent to students whether a question is a field test question that does not count towards their score or an operational test question that does count towards their score. The embedded field test questions will reduce the amount of stand-alone field testing during the spring of 2012, but will not eliminate the need to conduct stand-alone field tests later this year.

2012 TESTING CALENDAR

Testing will be administered in April 2012. The Grades 3–8 ELA Tests will be composed of three books per grade and will be administered over three consecutive days.

- **ELA Book 1 will be administered in two consecutive parts with a short break in between on Tuesday, April 17.**
- **ELA Book 2 will be administered on Wednesday, April 18.**
ELA Book 3 will be administered on Thursday, April 19.

Make up days for the ELA Tests will be Friday, April 20; Monday, April 23; and Tuesday, April 24.

The Grades 3–8 Mathematics Tests will be composed of three books and will be administered in three sessions over three consecutive days.

- **Mathematics Book 1 will be administered on Wednesday, April 25.**
- **Mathematics Book 2 will be administered on Thursday, April 26.**
- **Mathematics Book 3 will be administered on Friday, April 27.**

Make up days for the Mathematics Tests will be Monday, April 30; Tuesday, May 1 and Wednesday, May 2.

The complete schedule for the administration and scoring of these tests is posted at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/schedules/home.html>.

CHANGE IN ELA SCORING RUBRIC

For the 2012 tests, writing mechanics has been added to the rubric for scoring the extended-response questions on the ELA tests. The scoring of these questions will now be based on the following five qualities:

- Meaning
- Development
- Organization
- Language Use
- Writing Mechanics

More information and sample student responses are provided in the *Guide to the 2012 Grades 3–8 Testing Program* which will be forthcoming from the Department.

SCORING MATERIALS

The Department has discontinued the audio version of the Scorer Training materials. Schools will no longer be receiving the Scorer Training Audio CDs with their materials. As in 2011, the Department will not be printing scoring materials for the Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Tests. Instead, a CD containing PDF files of scoring materials will be sent to schools for each of these tests. Schools must print copies of the scoring materials to supply to each rater.

TEST SECURITY FOR 2012 GRADES 3–8 ELA AND MATHEMATICS TESTS

As in 2011, the 2012 Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Tests **must** be kept secure following their administration in April 2012 and **cannot be released** or posted on any web site; no part of the test may be used for instructional or staff development purposes. It is also essential to protect the integrity of the embedded field test questions. The tests administered from 2006 through 2010 will continue to be available on the OSA website.

In order to ensure the security of the test books, schools will submit specific components of the test materials for secure destruction immediately after administration and scoring. The remaining test materials will be stored securely for a minimum of one year in the school, and then securely destroyed, as outlined in the following chart:

Destruction of Secure Test Materials for Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Tests

For Secure Destruction: Return Immediately to the Department Contractor	Store Securely in School or District for One Year, then Securely Destroy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All used and unused ELA and Math Book 1s • All used and unused Math Book 2s • All unused ELA Book 2s and Book 3s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All used ELA Book 2s and Book 3s • All used Math Book 3s • All used answer sheets after their return from the scanning center

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All unused Math Book 3s• All scoring CDs including any copies• All scoring materials printed from the CDs | |
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Photocopying test material is **not** permitted.

The Guide to the 2012 Grades 3 – 8 Testing Program in English Language Arts and Mathematics will be sent by the Department in a future correspondence.

If you have any questions, please submit them to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov. Thank you very much for your cooperation. We appreciate the hard work that you and your staff do on behalf of New York State students.

2012 Testing Times

Grade	English Language Arts			Mathematics		
	Book	Estimated Time for completion	Day Administered	Book	Estimated Time for completion	Day Administered
3	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	45	3	3	50	3
Total Estimated Time		175			170	
4	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	45	3	3	60	3
Total Estimated Time		175			180	
5	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	45	3	3	60	3
Total Estimated Time		175			180	
6	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	50	3	3	60	3
Total Estimated Time		180			180	
7	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	50	3	3	60	3
Total Estimated Time		180			180	
8	1	70	1	1	60	1
	2	60	2	2	60	2
	3	50	3	3	60	3
Total Estimated Time		180			180	

Please note that the total estimated time for completion **does not include** time for preparation or for reading aloud the listening passage.