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To: District Superintendents
School Superintendents
Principals of Public and Nonpublic High Schools and Intermediate Schools
Science Department Chairpersons and Coordinators
Earth Science Teachers

From: David Abrams 

Subjects: Revision of the New June 2008 Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D)
Change in the Procedures for Students Retaking the Regents Examination in
Physical Setting/Earth Science

Revision of the New June 2008 Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D)

In a revision from that originally planned, the new version of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D) will include hands-on laboratory activities that students will perform at **three stations** rather than **four**. This new Part D will first be administered in conjunction with the June 2008 Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science. The station, entitled *Relative Density of Fluids*, will not be included as part of the administration of the new Part D. Instead, the new Part D will be composed of the following three stations:

- *Mineral and Rock Identification*
- *Locating an Epicenter*
- *Constructing and Analyzing an Asteroid's Elliptical Orbit*

The decision to eliminate the station entitled *Relative Density of Fluids* is based on a finding that this station is too similar in design to a commercially-available classroom laboratory activity that has been marketed to schools in New York State. As a result, this station was eliminated in order to ensure the overall validity of the new hands-on performance test.

As originally planned, students will be allotted nine minutes at each station to complete the tasks and additional time to move between stations. Information about the revised version of the new performance test and a list of materials needed to administer it are attached. This information is also posted on the Department's web site at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/apda/science/science-hs.html>.

The Part D component of the examination will continue to contribute fifteen per cent to each student's final examination score for the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science.

Change in the Procedures for Students Retaking the Regents Examination

Effective June 2008, schools will be administering a new version of the Earth Science Performance Test (Part D) as a component of the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science. All students taking the June 2008 Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science, including those retaking the written examination, must take the new version of the Part D. Scores earned on

the Earth Science Performance Test in conjunction with prior administrations of this written examination may no longer be carried over and applied to the student's final examination score for this Regents Examination.

All students taking future administrations, August, January, and June, of the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science **must** take the performance test **each time** they take the written examination. Only the performance test score earned by the student in the weeks immediately preceding the written examination may be used to determine the student's final examination score for this Regents Examination. This change in procedure with respect to students retaking this examination will ensure that every student's examination score is based on the full composite of the student's demonstration of knowledge, skills, and abilities at the time the written test is taken.

Consequently, all schools planning to administer the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science in August 2008 and January 2009 must make arrangements to administer the new performance test to all students who will be taking the written examination. 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 to both students enrolled in the course of study, such as in summer school, and students who register only to retake the examination. All schools administering this examination must notify students of the date and time to appear for the performance test.

You may contact the Office of Standards, Assessment and Reporting via e-mail at emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov if you have questions regarding the revision to the new 2008 Edition of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test or the rules for its administration. Thank you for your assistance with this important component of the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science.

Attachment

The New York State Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test – Part D Materials List

The New York State Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science consists of two components: a laboratory performance test and a written test. A new form of the laboratory performance test is currently in the development process and will be administered for the first time in June 2008. The performance test consists of hands-on tasks set up at three stations. These tasks are designed to measure student achievement of the New York State *Learning Standards for Mathematics, Science, and Technology* as included in the Physical Setting/Earth Science Core Curriculum.

The three stations of the new performance component of the Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science are shown below along with a materials list for each station. The New York State Education Department will provide the test booklets, rating guides and other printed administration materials. Schools are responsible for obtaining the performance task materials and assembling them for the performance test administration.

Students should be familiar with the content, concepts, and process skills assessed on the performance tasks and should have performed similar tasks during the normal course of instruction. *However, practice of any of the individual stations before this performance component is administered is strictly prohibited.*

Station 1. *Mineral and Rock Identification*

MATERIALS (per setup)

- One hand-sized mineral sample (approximate size: 5 cm x 7 cm x 10 cm). Any mineral can be used, both familiar and unfamiliar, as long as the properties to be tested are clear and unmistakable. Do *not* use the same type of mineral at more than one station.
- Three hand-sized rock samples to include one igneous rock, one sedimentary rock, and one metamorphic rock - The rock samples can only be rocks listed on the rock identification charts from the 2001 edition *Earth Science Reference Tables* and must have unambiguous and unmistakable diagnostic properties. Use different rock combinations or rocks at each station.
- Mineral identification kit containing a glass scratch plate, a streak plate, and a hand lens.

Station 2. *Locating an Epicenter*

MATERIALS (per setup)

- Safe drawing compass

Station 3. *Constructing and Analyzing an Asteroid's Elliptical Orbit*

MATERIALS (per setup)

- Cotton string (approximately 30 cm)
- Triple-walled cardboard, foam board or other suitable material (approximately 25 cm x 30 cm)
- Two push pins
- A small container to hold push pins
- One 30-cm metric ruler
- One four-function calculator

ADDITIONAL PREPARATION MATERIALS

- White enamel to label rock and mineral samples
- Page protectors for station directions (approximately 15 per setup)
- Tape
- Scissors