



Gerald E. DeMauro, Coordinator of Assessment
Office of State Assessment, Room 773 EBA
Tel. (518) 474-5902
Fax (518) 474-1989

To: District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools

From: Gerald E. DeMauro, Coordinator of Assessment

Subject: Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test

Date: April 2003 (REVISED 5-04)

The New York State Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test will be administered for the first time in the spring of 2004. The test will have both a written and a performance component. An information sheet for the new test is enclosed.

This test will replace the NYS Program Evaluation Test in Science, Grade 4, which has been administered for a number of years. Schools will administer the current Objective Test, Form H, and Performance Test, Form Z, for the last time in May 2003.

The purpose of the new test is to measure achievement of the NYS Learning Standards for Math, Science, and Technology detailed in the *Elementary-Level Science Core Curriculum Grades K-4*. All public schools are required to administer the test to grade 4 students. Nonpublic schools are strongly encouraged to administer the test as well.

Following a standard-setting procedure to be conducted in the fall of 2003, the Department will establish a State-designated level of performance. For each administration, the rating guide for the Written Test will include a conversion chart. Schools will use this chart to convert each student's score on the two parts of the test into a final test score. Students' final scores will fall into one of several performance levels. All students who score below the State-designated level must receive academic intervention services, commencing no later than the following September.

The Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Test will have two required components, a Written Test and a Performance Test, to be administered on different days. Each component is briefly described below:

- The Written Test will consist of multiple-choice, constructed-response, and extended constructed-response questions. Schools will administer this test to grade 4 students on a date selected by the school or district within the testing period established by the Department. Schools will score answer papers locally using rating guides issued by the Department. The Department will provide a new form of the Written Test each year.

- The new Performance Test, Form A, will consist of three stations where students will perform a number of hands-on science tasks. All students will complete all three stations independently. Unlike the current test, the new test will not have a station where students work together. Except for this change, the Performance Test, Form A, will be comparable to the Performance Test, Form Z, which has been administered since May 2000. Schools will administer the Performance Test, Form A, to grade 4 students in a one-hour time block on a separate date selected by the school or district within the testing period established by the Department. Schools will score student answer papers locally using rating guides issued by the Department. The Department will develop a new form of the Performance Test approximately every 4-5 years.

Workshops on how to administer and score the Performance Test will be offered in your region of the State early in 2004. Schools will receive more information in fall 2003 regarding dates, times, and locations of this training. Specific questions regarding the Performance Test will be answered at that time.

A list of the materials needed for the new Performance Test, Form A, is provided on the enclosed Information Sheet. The new Performance Test, Form A, will require students to use a pan balance with a set of gram masses. Schools will be responsible for supplying this equipment for the test administration. Schools may purchase additional required materials in kits that will be available from commercial vendors and some BOCES. The Department will provide information about kit specifications and vendors at the end of the 2002-2003 school year.

The Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment will distribute a *Grade 4 Elementary-Level Science Written Test Sampler* in late spring 2003. This document will contain sample questions for the Written Test along with rating guidelines. The test sampler is intended to acquaint elementary-level science teachers and administrators with the new Written Test. Because a Performance Test has been given in grade 4 for a number of years and Form A will be similar to the current performance test, there will be no Performance Test sampler.

Further information about ordering, administering, and scoring the test will be provided during the 2003-2004 school year. Questions about the test should be directed to the following Department staff:

Content/curriculum questions	Ann Crotty, Curriculum and Instruction	518-474-5922
Test administration questions	David Moore, Test Administration	518-474-5099
Scoring/rating questions	Judy Pinsonnault, Test Development	518-474-5900