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Office of Standards, Assessment and Reporting

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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 

**Subject:** June 2008 Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D)

The first administration of the new version of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D) will take place in June 2008. Part D is the hands-on portion of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Regents Examination. Part D is administered during the last two weeks of the course, but no later than the day before the administration of the written test.

Part D consists of four stations. Students are allotted nine minutes at each station to complete the tasks and additional time to move between stations. The topics covered in the stations are rocks/minerals, mass/density, epicenters, and elliptical orbits. Information about the new version of the 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: [www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hssci](http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hssci).

In order to prepare teachers and school districts for implementation of the new version of the performance test, the Department will provide eight teacher training sessions statewide in September and October at seven regional sites. The teachers trained at these sessions will then serve as turnkey trainers for school district and nonpublic school Earth Science teachers in their respective regions. Part D information, including training dates and locations, can be found on the Department's web site [www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hssci](http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/hssci).

You may contact the Office of Standards, Assessment and Reporting via e-mail at [emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov) if you have questions regarding the new version of the Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test. Thank you for your assistance with this important test.

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 four 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 four 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 × 7 cm × 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. Relative Density of Fluids*

**MATERIALS (per setup)**

- Electronic balance that measures and displays mass to 0.1 gram - A 200-gram capacity is sufficient for this examination.  
*Note: Balances that display mass to the 0.01 gram must not be used.*
- Four identical 10 mL glass graduated cylinders (0.1 mL graduations)
- Four two-inch squares of self sealing film, like Parafilm M®
- Light-colored corn syrup (approximately 10 mL)
- Light-colored vegetable oil (approximately 10 mL)
- Water (approximately 10 mL)
- Four identical small rubber bands
- One four-function calculator
- One hand lens

*Station 4. 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**

- Fine-point black permanent marker to label samples and glassware
- White enamel to label rock and mineral samples
- Page protectors for station directions (approximately 15 per setup)
- Tape
- Scissors