



BUREAU CHIEF
Office of State Assessment

March 2016

TO: Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools
Leaders of Charter Schools

FROM: Clara DeSorbo *Clara DeSorbo*

SUBJECT: Spring 2016 Grades 3–8 Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests
and Grades 3–8 English Language Arts and Mathematics Field Tests

This memorandum provides you with essential information regarding both the Grades 3–8 Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests, including the embedding of field test questions, and the stand-alone Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The *2016 Grades 3–8 Common Core English Language Arts and Mathematics Tests School Administrator's Manual* provides information needed for the administration of both the Common Core ELA and Mathematics Tests and is available on the Department's web site at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/manuals/>. This memorandum supplements the information concerning the administration of the spring 2016 Grades 3–8 Common Core ELA and Mathematics Tests provided in the *2016 School Administrator's Manual*.

Printed copies of the manual are being sent to schools by the Department. If you have questions about any information appearing in this memorandum or the manual, you may call 518-474-8220 or 518-474-5902 for assistance. The *School Administrator's Manual* contains the *Deputy and Proctor Certificate*, the *Test Storage Certificate*, the *Exam Scoring Confidentiality Agreement*, and the *Scoring Operations Certificate*, all of which must be completed by each school administering these tests and retained in the school's files for one year.

Also included in this memorandum is information regarding the New York State 2016 Common Core ELA and Mathematics embedded and stand-alone field testing.

DELIVERY OF TEST AND SCORING MATERIALS

All test materials will be sent to schools by the Department's vendor, Questar Assessment, Inc. (Questar) and will be delivered by United Parcel Service (UPS). See Attachment A for delivery dates. UPS deliveries may occur at any time between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Schools that do not receive their shipments of test materials by 12:00 noon on the last dates indicated in Attachment A should contact Questar at 866-997-0695.

All schools administering the Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Tests in 2016 must have made arrangements to receive their answer sheets and scanning services from a Regional Information Center (RIC) or large-city scanning center. RICs are data processing centers operated by twelve BOCES that currently provide answer sheets and scanning services for all public schools outside the five large-city school districts. The RICs will also provide data to the Student Information Repository System (SIRS) for participating schools. Participation in the Grades 3–8 testing program and the repository will allow all schools access to reports showing longitudinal data for individual students and for the school as a whole. More information about the repository system is available on the Department's web site at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/>. Answer sheets will be shipped directly to schools from the RIC or large-city scanning center. (The Department does not ship answer sheets to any schools.)

Checking the Shipment of Test Materials

As soon as each shipment of test and scoring materials arrives at your school or approved storage location, conduct an inventory to verify that you have received all materials indicated on the shipping notice. **Do not open shrink-wrapped packages of secure test materials until the day on which that part of the test is scheduled to be administered.** You must store the test materials in a burglarproof safe or vault, except while they are being inventoried.

There will be eleven forms—Forms A-K—of the regular editions of the ELA Test Book 1s and of the Mathematics Test Book 2s and 3s. Each school will receive only one form of each of these books, and the shipping notice will indicate which form your school is receiving. There will be only Form A for the large-type, braille, and alternative language editions. There is only one form of the ELA Test Book 2s and Book 3s, and Mathematics Test Book 3s. If a book has a form letter, the form letter is printed on the cover of the test book.

Note that large type, braille, and alternative language editions are often shipped to schools in separate cartons or padded mailers and may not be delivered at the same time as regular editions. Braille editions of ELA may be delivered later than the delivery dates indicated in Attachment A.

- If your school receives its shipment but an item or items are missing that are listed on the shipping notice, please contact Questar at 866-997-0695.
- If the school requires items that were not originally requested, or items necessary to accommodate students whose needs the school was not previously aware of, contact Questar via e-mail at ny.3-8.help@questarai.com. Questar will determine whether the regional center has the materials necessary to satisfy the additional request. After contacting Questar, the school should contact the official in charge of the regional center to arrange pickup of test materials on the day of test administration. Note that all regional centers will only have emergency supplies of Form A of those books that come in forms. Schools that need to obtain emergency supplies of ELA Book 1s or Mathematics Book 1s and Book 2s need not be concerned if the form they received in their shipment is not a Form A. All schools should, however, make sure that all students indicate the correct form on their answer sheets.
 - The official school representative picking up secure test material must present to the regional center official a photo ID and a letter of authorization signed by the principal listing the materials to be picked up. This letter, authorizing the school representative to pick up test materials, must be written on school stationery. (**Note:** Secure materials can be obtained from the regional center only on the day that they will be administered.)
 - The school representative must countersign the authorization letter and leave it with the regional center official before the emergency supply of materials can be released.
 - Information on regional centers is available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/eigen.html>.

SECURITY OF THE GRADES 3–8 COMMON CORE ELA AND MATHEMATICS TESTS BEFORE TESTING

The principal of each school ordering tests is responsible for making the necessary arrangements to safeguard all test materials by taking the following actions:

- Place all test books and scoring CDs in a safe or vault as soon as they arrive at the storage site.
- Distribute only the nonsecure Teacher's Directions to proctors as soon as practical after the shipment arrives.
- Ensure that no one opens the shrink-wrapped packages of secure test materials prior to the day each part of the test is scheduled to be administered.
- Open the packages of test books just early enough to permit distribution of materials for each session.
- Check the safe or vault daily to ensure that the test materials stored there have not been tampered with and remain secure.
- Safeguard the combination or key to the safe or vault to preclude access to the test materials by unauthorized persons.

- Keep all scoring materials under lock and key in a secure location (except when being used for scoring).

EMBEDDED FIELD TEST QUESTIONS

The Department continues its commitment to embed multiple-choice questions for field testing within the spring Grades 3–8 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 tests.

It will not be apparent to students whether a question is a field test question that does not count toward their score or a test question that does count toward their score. The embedding of field test questions will reduce the amount of stand-alone field testing but does not eliminate the need for it. For additional information on the 2016 stand-alone field tests, please see pages 5–6.

ELA TESTING SCHEDULE

Schools must arrange to administer the ELA Tests to students in every grade on the specified “Administration Dates,” April 5–7, 2016 (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/2016/38testschedule16rev2.pdf>). The 2016 ELA Tests are comprised of three books per grade and will be administered in three sessions over three days. On **Tuesday, April 5**, Book 1 will be administered; on **Wednesday, April 6**, Book 2 will be administered; and on **Thursday, April 7**, Book 3 will be administered.

The make-up testing period begins on Friday, April 8 and ends on Tuesday, April 12. Make-up dates are to be used for administering the test to students who were absent during the designated administration dates. The make-up dates can also be used to complete the initial administrations in schools that were closed due to religious observance or unexpected events, such as power outages. When administering any make-up tests, maintain the same testing sequence whenever possible. For example, administer Book 1 first, followed by Book 2, followed by Book 3. Students must complete all test books to receive a final test result and a score report.

MATHEMATICS TESTING SCHEDULE

Schools must arrange to administer the Mathematics Tests to students in every grade on the specified “Administration Dates,” April 13–15, 2016 (<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/schedules/2016/38testschedule16rev2.pdf>). The 2016 Mathematics Tests are comprised of three books per grade and will be administered in three sessions over three days. On **Wednesday, April 13**, Book 1 will be administered; on **Thursday, April 14**, Book 2 will be administered, and on **Friday, April 15**, Book 3 will be administered.

The make-up testing period begins on Monday, April 18 and ends on Wednesday, April 20. Make-up dates are to be used to administer the test to students who were absent during the designated administration dates. The make-up dates can also be used to complete the initial administrations in schools that were closed due to religious observance or unexpected events, such as power outages. When administering any make-up tests, maintain the same testing sequence whenever possible. For example, administer Book 1 first, followed by Book 2, followed by Book 3. Students must complete all test books to receive a final test result and a score report.

As long as they are working productively, students should be allowed as much time as they need only within the confines of the regular school day to complete each test session. Schools are not expected to extend the school day in order for students to complete a test session. In addition, schools may not extend a test session beyond its scheduled day unless the student has multiple-day testing as a specified testing accommodation in his or her IEP or 504 Plan.

For Grade 7 and 8 students who are receiving instruction in Algebra I and who are taking the June 2016 Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core), school districts will be allowed to administer only the Regents Examination in Algebra I (Common Core) eliminating the need for students accelerated in mathematics to take two State mathematics Common Core tests. The

waiver will also apply to students in Grades 7 and 8 who are receiving instruction in Geometry and who are taking the June 2016 Regents Examination in Geometry (Common Core).

USE OF COMMUNICATIONS DEVICES

All students are prohibited from bringing cell phones and certain other electronic devices, as defined in the script below, into a classroom or other location where a State test is being administered. Test proctors and school officials shall retain the right to collect and hold any prohibited electronic devices prior to the start of the test administration. Admission to the test shall be denied to any student who is in possession of a cell phone or other prohibited electronic device and refuses to relinquish it.

At the beginning of each test session, proctors must read the following statement to all students taking State tests:

You cannot have any communications device, including a cell phone, with you during this test or during any breaks (such as a restroom visit). Such devices include, but are not limited to:

- Cell phones
- Blackberry devices and other PDAs
- iPods and MP3 players
- iPads, tablets, and other eReaders
- Laptops, notebooks, or any other personal computing devices
- Cameras or other photographic equipment
- Headphones, headsets, or in-ear headphones such as earbuds
- Any other device capable of recording audio, photographic or video content, or capable of viewing or playing back such content

If you brought any of these items to the building today, and have not already stored it in your locker or turned it over to me or a school official, you must give it to me now. You may not keep your cell phone or any of these items with you, or near you, including in your pockets, backpack, desk, etc. Is there anyone who needs to give me any of these items now?

[*Proctor: repeat list of devices.*]

This is your last opportunity to do so before the test begins.

Any student observed with any prohibited device while taking a State test must be directed to turn the device over to the proctor immediately. To allow for all possible outcomes of procedural due process, the student should be allowed to complete the test. The incident must be reported promptly to the school principal. If the student had a prohibited device in his or her possession during the test administration, the principal must invalidate the student's test score (no score may be calculated for that student), and report the incident to the Office of State Assessment (OSA).

The incident must be promptly reported, in writing, to OSA by fax to 518-474-1989 or by e-mail to emscassessinfo@nysed.gov, as is the case for all student-related testing irregularities, misadministrations, or other violations of State testing policy and procedures.

Note: Some students with disabilities may use certain recording/playback devices **only if** this accommodation is specifically required as a provision of the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan). In addition, a student may be allowed to retain an otherwise prohibited device in his or her possession if there is documentation on file at the school from a medical practitioner that the student requires such a device during testing. Without such documentation, the general policy on communications devices as provided above is in effect, and the school may not allow the student to retain any such equipment while testing.

SCORING MATERIALS FOR THE GRADES 3–8 COMMON CORE ELA AND MATHEMATICS TESTS

A scoring CD will be sent to schools for each of these tests. The CD will contain PDF files of the scoring materials. Schools must print enough copies of the scoring materials to supply to each rater.

SCORING OF THE GRADES 3–8 COMMON CORE ELA AND MATHEMATICS TESTS

NOTE: Teachers are **not** permitted to score their own students' answer papers.

School personnel may not engage in scorer training or scoring of student responses for any given grade until the initial administration of all test sessions has been completed.

SECURITY OF THE GRADES 3–8 COMMON CORE ELA AND MATHEMATICS TESTS FOLLOWING TESTING

Unlike in past years, the Department will be releasing all of the test questions in English Language Arts Test Book 2s and Book 3s and Mathematics Test Book 3s shortly after the scoring window has ended. These books may be used for instructional or staff development purposes after the scoring window has closed.

As in previous years, English Language Arts Test Book 1s and Mathematics Test Book 1s and Book 2s must not be used for instructional or staff development purposes. They must be returned to Questar using the return shipping materials provided in the Return Kit.

Destruction of Secure Test Materials for Grades 3–8 Common Core ELA and Mathematics Tests

Return via UPS to: Questar Assessment, Inc.	Store Securely in School or District for One Year , then Securely Destroy
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All used and unused Common Core ELA Book 1s• All used and unused Common Core Mathematics Book 1s and Book 2s• All used Common Core Mathematics Test Reference Sheets (Grades 5–8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All used Common Core ELA Book 2s and Book 3s• All used Common Core Mathematics Book 3s• All used answer sheets after their return from the scanning center

SECURE STAND-ALONE 2016 ELA AND MATHEMATICS FIELD TESTS

A critical part of the test development process is the field testing of questions in schools throughout the State in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the New York State Testing Program. Our goal is to require the least amount of testing necessary to build and administer high quality New York State assessments that provide accurate information about our students' achievement. These field tests contain questions that may only be used on New York State tests and benefit only our students and schools.

For spring 2016, we are able to reduce the number of schools that have been assigned to an elementary- or intermediate-level field test by approximately 25%, as compared to spring 2015, and are assigning no more than one grade level/subject to any selected elementary or middle level school. Note that every school that expressed a preference for computer-based field testing has been assigned to a computer-based field test in one grade/subject (ELA or mathematics) but the participation in the assigned computer based field test will be optional for approximately one quarter of these schools.

From May 23–June 10 for computer-based tests and from May 31–June 10 for paper-based tests, the stand-alone New York State 2016 Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests will be administered in most schools to students who participated in the 2016 Grades 3–8 Common Core ELA and Mathematics Tests. Schools assigned to administer the field tests will be asked to administer only ELA or mathematics and will be asked to administer them in only one grade. Schools that are administering Grades 4 or 8 Science Field Tests will not be asked to administer the stand-alone New York State 2016 Grades 3–8 ELA or Mathematics Field Tests.

The New York State 2016 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests must be administered between the prescribed dates. Each school will determine the specific date(s) to administer the field tests during this prescribed time frame. If a student is absent on the day(s) the school administers the field test, there is no need for the student to make it up. Additional information will be available in the *Field Tests School Administrator's Manual* that will be shipped to schools. Schools are expected to administer the assigned field test to all student in the selected grade who are participating in the April 2016 Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Tests, subject to the availability of special formats that some students may require.

For paper-based field tests, regular, large-type, and braille editions, as well as Spanish editions (for mathematics only) will be provided. Schools are not expected to include students in the field test who during the operational test are making use of a translated edition (for mathematics only) that is not available for the field testing. New York State 2016 Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests will be delivered to schools by Questar the week before field testing. Questar will use the information your school submitted through the Department's online examination request system to determine the appropriate quantity of field test materials for the ELA and Mathematics field tests. The field tests will be shipped to the approved secure storage site indicated by the principal in the online examination request system. Step-by-step instructions for administering these field tests will be provided by Questar in the field test teacher's directions. These instructions will be shipped to schools with the ELA and Mathematics Field Tests.

After the delivery of the field tests, principals must inventory the test materials and compare the number received with the quantities listed on the packing list. If any discrepancy is found between the packing list and the materials received, contact Questar Customer Support at 866-997-0695 or via e-mail to ny.3-8.help@questarai.com. Please note that shrink-wrapped packages of field test books cannot be opened prior to the distribution of field tests to students.

For schools selected to participate in the computer-based New York State 2016 Grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests, schools will receive a package from Questar that will be shipped directly to schools and will contain the 2016 Computer-Based Field Test School Administrator's Manual and Teacher's Directions for the grade and subject assigned to the schools. For the computer-based field tests, regular and Spanish editions (for mathematics only) will be available. Schools are not expected to include students in the field test who during the operational test are making use of a special edition that is not available for the field tests.

Following the administration of the stand-alone New York State 2016 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests, schools must collect all of the field test materials and store them in a secure location until they are returned to Questar. Questar will provide schools with instructions for arranging the pre-paid pickups of the New York State 2016 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests. Schools must return **all** used and unused field test materials to Questar by **June 13**. Schools should follow the detailed instructions for returning the field test materials provided by the contractor. The scoring of the New York State 2016 ELA and Mathematics Field Tests will be conducted by Questar. Schools are not permitted to score them.

SHIPMENT AND CHECKING OF ELA AND MATHEMATICS TEST MATERIALS

Contents	Sender	Delivery Dates
<u>Secure</u> Grades 3–8 Common Core ELA Regular, Braille and Large-Type Edition Books 1, 2, and 3 and Nonsecure Teacher’s Directions	Questar	March 17-March 21
<u>Secure</u> Grades 3–8 Common Core ELA Scoring CD containing PDF files of the scoring materials for schools	Questar	April 5-April 7
<u>Secure</u> Grades 3–8 Common Core Mathematics Regular, Braille, Large-Type, and Alternate Language Edition Books 1, 2, and 3 and Nonsecure Teacher’s Directions	Questar	April 7-April 11
<u>Secure</u> Grades 3–8 Common Core Mathematics Scoring CD containing PDF files of the scoring materials for schools	Questar	April 13-April 15
Printed instructions for administering Computer-based Stand-Alone Field Tests	Questar	May 19-20
<u>Secure</u> Paper-based Stand-Alone Field Tests	Questar	May 24-26