



Thomas J. Schoeck, Ed.D., Bureau Chief
Test Administration and Communications
Office of State Assessment

March 2008

TO: Principals of Public and Nonpublic Schools

FROM: Thomas J. Schoeck 

SUBJECT: Spring 2008 Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests

GENERAL INFORMATION

This memorandum provides information concerning the shipping, storing, administration, and returning of test materials for the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests. Information on each of these tests is available at: <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa>. If you have any questions about the information in this memorandum, you may call 518-474-8220.

DATES FOR THE SPRING 2008 GRADE 8 INTERMEDIATE-LEVEL SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES TESTS

Test	Administration Dates	Makeup Dates
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Performance Test	Any dates between April 2 and May 8	Any dates between April 3 and May 9
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Written Test	Any date between April 30 and May 9	Any dates between May 1 and May 9
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test	June 3 and June 4	June 5-6, 9-11

The supply of test materials for your school will be sent in one to three shipments, depending on the tests requested. Shipments will be delivered by UPS and may be delivered at any time between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Please be sure that someone is available in your school or approved storage location during those hours to accept the shipment(s). Should any problems occur in connection with the delivery of test materials, please call this office at 518-474-8220 or 474-5902 immediately.

The dates on which the shipments of tests will be delivered to schools are as follows:

Test	Delivery Date
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Performance Test (Public schools other than New York City; all nonpublic schools)	March 28–April 1
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Written Test	April 25–29
Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test	May 29–June 2

Schools that do not receive their shipment of secure test materials by 12:00 p.m. on the last delivery date indicated in table above should track the shipment of test materials on the Internet.

1. Go to: <http://www.ups.com/tracking/tracking.html>.
2. Click "Track by Reference Number."
3. In the Reference Number field, type the BEDS code of the school where you indicated you wanted your tests to be shipped.
4. If you are unable to track your shipment or notice some other irregularity, contact the Office of State Assessment via fax at 518-474-2021.

OBTAINING SOCIAL STUDIES TEST MATERIALS FROM REGIONAL CENTERS

School administrators needing to obtain Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Social Studies Test materials from a regional center should contact the official in charge of the regional center before sending a representative to pick up materials. The person sent to pick up an emergency supply of test materials from a regional center must present authorization written on school letterhead and signed by the principal that lists the materials to be picked up and authorizes the person to pick up those materials. The person obtaining test materials must provide picture identification and must countersign the authorization letter and leave it with the official in charge of the regional center. Test materials may be picked up from the regional centers only on the scheduled date for the administration of that part of the test.

Science Test materials are not available at regional centers. School officials who determine that some materials are missing from their shipment(s) of Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test materials must contact the Office of State Assessment via fax to 518-474-2021 to obtain these materials.

SECURITY OF TEST MATERIALS

The principal of each school ordering tests is responsible for making the necessary arrangements for safeguarding the materials ordered for the school. The secure location where test materials are being stored should be checked daily to ensure that they have not been tampered with and that they remain secure. The combination or key to the secure location must be maintained under strict security conditions to preclude access to the test materials by students and other unauthorized persons.

All teachers who assist in the administration of the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests are expected to sign the Deputy and Proctor Certificate contained within the test manuals. Similarly, principals are required to complete and sign the Examination Storage Certificate, also found within the test manuals. These certificates, as well as student answer papers, must be retained on file in the school for one year.

Following the scoring of the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Performance Tests, schools are required to return to the Department all *unused* Performance Test answer booklets; including large-type, braille, and alternative language editions; and all used and unused science Performance Test Rating Guides. Schools must follow the complete instructions for the return of test materials found in the *New York State Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test Manual for Administrators and Teachers*. These materials must be returned to:

Test Distribution Unit
New York State Education Department
Cultural Education Center
Empire State Plaza
Albany, New York 12230

STUDENTS TO BE TESTED

Except as noted below, all public school students in Grade 8 must take the State assessments administered for their grade level. This includes students who have been retained in Grade 8. Nonpublic schools are strongly encouraged to administer these tests to their students in accordance with the same provisions. The birthdates of ungraded students are used to determine who must be tested. Refer to the chart on the Department's web site at

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/ungraded.htm> for more information. When determining which students will be participating in these tests, be sure to consider students who attend programs operated by the BOCES as well as any other programs located outside the school.

General Education Students

The Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test should be administered to students in the grade in which they will have received instruction in all the material in the Intermediate-Level Science Core Curriculum (5–8). While this is typically Grade 8, the test may also be administered to students in Grade 7 who will have received instruction in all the material in the Intermediate-Level Science Core Curriculum (5–8) and are being considered for placement in an accelerated high school-level science course when they are in Grade 8. The school may **not** use this assessment to retest any students who participated in this assessment last school year while in Grade 7. Schools are required to administer this assessment to students in Grade 8 who did not take this assessment last school year while in Grade 7, unless they will be taking a Regents Examination in science at the end of this school year.

Principals have the discretion to either require or waive the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test for accelerated Grade 8 students who did not take this examination during the last school year but who will be taking a Regents Examination in science at the end of this school year. For accelerated students for whom the school waives the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science Test, their achievement in science will be measured by their performance on the Regents Examination in science.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must participate in the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests unless their Individualized Education Plan (IEP), as developed by the Committee on Special Education (CSE), specifically indicates that they should take the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). A small percentage of students with disabilities are recommended by their CSEs to participate in the NYSAA for students with severe disabilities. The criteria that the CSE must use to determine eligibility for the NYSAA are available on the Department's web site at:

<http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/alterassess.htm>.

Limited-English-Proficient (LEP) Students

All LEP students are required to participate in the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests. Students may take the tests either in an alternative language or in English, whichever would be better for the student. Alternative language editions of the Grade 8 Intermediate-Level Science and Social Studies Tests are provided in Chinese (Traditional), Haitian Creole, and Spanish. These tests may be translated orally into other languages for LEP students whose first language is one for which a written translation is not available from the Department. Schools are permitted to offer LEP students specific testing accommodations when taking these tests. (See pages 4 and 5.)

TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Students Who Incur Disabilities Shortly Before Test Administration

Principals may provide accommodations when testing general education students who incur an injury (e.g., a broken arm) or experience the onset of a short- or long-term disability (e.g., epilepsy) acquired or diagnosed within 30 days prior to the administration of State assessments. In such cases, when sufficient time is not available for the development of an IEP or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan), principals may authorize certain accommodations that will not significantly change the skills being tested. These accommodations are limited to:

- extending the time limit for a test,
- administering the test in a special location,

- recording the student's answers in any manner, and
- reading the test to the student (only for students whose vision is impaired).

Eligibility for these accommodations is based on the principal's professional discretion, but the principal may confer with members of the CSE or with other school personnel in making these determinations. Prior permission need not be obtained from the Department to authorize testing accommodations for general education students. However, a full written report concerning each authorization must be sent to the Office of State Assessment via fax to 518-402-5596. The report must be on school letterhead, must be signed by the principal, and must include the following information:

- the name of the student,
- the title of the test,
- a brief description of the student's injury or disability, and
- a listing of the accommodations that were authorized by the principal.

If the student is expected to continue to need testing accommodations, the principal must immediately make the appropriate referral for the consideration of an IEP or 504 Plan.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must be provided with the testing accommodations specified in their IEPs or 504 Plans when taking these tests. It is the principal's responsibility to ensure that this occurs and that staff members who will be providing these testing accommodations are appropriately trained. Students who have been declassified may continue to be provided testing accommodations if recommended by the local CSE at the time of declassification and in the student's declassification IEP. Plan all necessary arrangements for implementing testing accommodations well in advance of the test date.

The Department's Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) provides more information on test access and accommodations for students with disabilities on its web site: <http://www.vesid.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/policy/testaccess/policyguide.htm>. You may contact that office via e-mail to vesidspe@mail.nysed.gov if you have questions on this topic for which you are unable to find answers on the web site.

LEP Students

Schools may provide the following testing accommodations to LEP students:

- ***Time Extension:*** Schools may extend the test time for LEP students. Principals may use any reasonable extensions, such as "time and a half" (the required testing time plus one-half of that amount of time), in accordance with their best judgment about the needs of the LEP students. Principals should consult with each student's classroom teacher in making these determinations.
- ***Separate Location:*** Schools are encouraged to provide optimal testing environments and facilities for all students. They may administer State tests to LEP students individually or in small groups in a separate location.
- ***Bilingual Dictionaries and Glossaries:*** LEP students may use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries when taking these tests. The bilingual dictionaries and glossaries may provide ***only*** direct translations of words. Bilingual dictionaries or glossaries that provide definitions or explanations are ***not*** permitted.
- ***Simultaneous Use of English and Alternative Language Editions:*** For these examinations, LEP students may use both an English and an alternative language edition of the test simultaneously. However, they should be instructed to record all of their responses in only one of the two editions. The alternative language edition used by the student should be so indicated on the student's answer sheet.
- ***Oral Translation for Lower Incidence Languages:*** Schools may provide LEP students with an oral translation of these tests when there is no translated edition provided by the Department. All translations must be oral, direct translations of the English editions. Written translations are not allowed. No

clarifications or explanations may be provided. The translator should receive a copy of the English edition of the test one hour prior to administration. The Department's Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies and the Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Centers (BETACs) can assist schools in locating suitable translators.

- ***Writing Responses in the Native Language:*** LEP students may write their responses to the open-ended questions in their native language. Scoring the tests is the responsibility of the school. However, the Department's Office of Bilingual Education and Foreign Language Studies and the BETACs can assist schools in locating persons who can translate the students' responses into English to facilitate scoring of the answer papers.

REPORTING ADMINISTRATION AND SCORING IRREGULARITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT

The building principal is responsible for all aspects of the school's administration of State examinations and must take appropriate measures both to prevent, as much as possible, and to investigate all irregularities associated with administration and scoring of these tests. In addition, the principal must report the following events in writing to the Office of State Assessment:

- All confirmed cases of students having committed fraud on State tests.
- All interruptions of testing sessions including any caused by power outages or fire alarms.
- All suspected or confirmed cases of teachers, administrators or paraprofessionals giving inappropriate aid to students during a State test or altering student responses on a test paper.
- All instances in which scorers do not score State tests in accordance with the scoring materials provided by the Department.
- All cases in which a school official or staff member alters or otherwise misrepresents a student's response to one or more test questions or earned test score.
- All cases in which student answer papers are lost prior to either the scoring of the papers or recording of the scores in students' permanent records.

Principals must report all such events in writing by fax to 518-474-1989 or via e-mail to emscassessinfo@mail.nysed.gov.

ONLINE SUBMISSION OF TEACHER EVALUATIONS OF THE TESTS TO THE DEPARTMENT

Suggestions and feedback from teachers provide an important contribution to the test development process. The Department provides an online evaluation form for State tests. It contains spaces for teachers to respond to several specific questions and to make suggestions. Instructions for completing and submitting the evaluation form are as follows:

1. Go to www.emsc.nysed.gov/osa/exameval.
2. Select the test title.
3. Complete the required demographic fields.
4. Complete each evaluation question and provide comments in the space provided.
5. Click the SUBMIT button at the bottom of the page to submit the completed form.