



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK /  
ALBANY, NY 12234

**SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION – P-16**  
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education  
Office of Higher Education

March 2009

To: District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Administrators of Public, Charter and Nonpublic Schools

From: Johanna Duncan-Poitier

Subject: Adjustments to High School Testing Procedures to Address Weather-Related School Closings on January 28, 2009

As promised in my e-mail correspondence dated February 11, 2009, I am writing to update you on our work to minimize the impact of weather-related school closings on students who were unable to complete the second part of the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English and the Physical Setting/Earth Science Performance Test (Part D) Regents Examination. The members of the Board of Regents and Department staff understand the serious implications the weather-related closings have had on many students who were prepared to take the January examinations. **We have developed a set of options that will provide an opportunity for these students to take the portions of the examinations that they could not take due to the weather-related school closings.** Details are provided on the following pages.

We believe that this strategy is a fair and equitable way to help those students whose schools were closed on January 28 due to inclement weather. **Please note that the options described on the following pages are available only for schools that were closed on January 28, 2009.** With the endorsement of the Board of Regents, we are also exploring some long-term strategies for future administrations of the examinations. These include redesigning the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English so that it is no longer a two-part examination and exploring the possibility of “banking” some examination questions so that make-up examinations can be administered if needed. More information on these long term strategies is forthcoming. We will also be seeking your input as we proceed.

If you have any questions on the options outlined on the following pages, please send them to the Office of State Assessment at [emsctesting@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:emsctesting@mail.nysed.gov).

We received a great many comments on this issue and genuinely appreciate your concerns. Thank you very much for your comments and your commitment to the students of New York State.

Attachment

c: The Honorable the Members of the NYS Board of Regents  
Commissioner Richard Mills  
David Abrams  
Alan Ray

## Adjustments to High School Testing Procedures to Address Weather-Related School Closings on January 28, 2009

Staff from the Office of State Assessment worked with external measurement experts to develop these options. The Department also had to work within the constraints of the United States Education Department as both of these examinations are required by NCLB as high school accountability measures.

### Regents Comprehensive Examination in English

We convened a team of testing experts to review the questions from the test this January and the tests to be given in June. They carried out extensive research and appropriate conversions so that Session One from the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination could be equated and used with Session Two from the forthcoming June 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English. As a result, students in schools that were closed on January 28 will be permitted to do the following:

1. All affected students who took Session One of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English may, if they choose, take only Session Two of the June 2009 examination. The raw scores earned by the student on Session One of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English may be combined with the raw scores earned on the June 2009 Session Two to constitute one complete and official examination administration. The student's final score for this special combined-date administration will be derived from a special conversion chart that will be provided to schools on June 18, 2009. Affected students who choose to take both sessions of the June 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English will be awarded a final examination score for the June 2009 administration, as well as a final score for this special combined-date administration.

The student should make the determination which option (described above) to pursue. We are asking that school districts cooperate in making sure that the option the student selects is carried out.

2. For affected **seniors who meet the criteria listed below**, participation in Session One of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English may be counted in determining the senior's eligibility for the May 2009 Component Retests in Comprehensive English. Information on the May 2009 Component Retests will be mailed to schools shortly. It will include special instructions for schools that were unable to administer Session Two of the January 2009 examination because of inclement weather. These instructions will explain that an affected senior will be eligible for the May 2009 Component Retests if the senior has done **any** of the following:

- Earned a final score of 48 or higher on the most recent complete Regents Comprehensive Examination in English taken by the student prior to the January 2009 administration, **OR**

- Earned a final score of 48 or higher on the next-to-last complete Regents Comprehensive Examination in English taken by the student prior to the January 2009 administration, **OR**
- Earned a “Total Score for Session One” of the January 2009 Regents Comprehensive Examination in English greater than or equal to 22 (the expected “Total Score for Session One” for a student earning a final score of 48 for the complete examination). The “Total Score for Session One” is calculated by multiplying by 2 the student’s total essay score and adding to that result the student’s multiple-choice score.

### Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science

Those students whose schools were closed on January 28, 2009, because of inclement weather may carry forward the performance test scores (lab test) they earned in January 2009 and apply those scores to the written test component of only the June 2009 Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science. If any of these students wish to take the performance test again, they must be given the opportunity to do so. However, if an affected student takes the performance test in June 2009, that performance test raw score *must* be used in determining the student’s final scale score for the June 2009 Regents Examination in Physical Setting/Earth Science.

The student should make the determination which option (described above) to pursue. We are asking that school districts cooperate in making sure that the option the student selects is carried out.