

Inside Assessment

May 29, 2015
VOLUME 1, Issue 5

Delaware Department of Education, Office of Assessment

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Delaware Assessment Inventory Process

Assessment is an integral part of the instructional cycle and fulfills several purposes for educators, students, parents, policy makers, and community members. Assessments administered at the state, district, and school levels combine to form a system of assessments with the goal of supporting student growth toward college and career readiness.

“Our educators, our students, and their parents all deserve the benefits of effective assessments that show when students are excelling and when they need extra support,” said Governor Jack Markell. “At the same time, tests that don’t add meaningfully to the learning process mean less time for students to receive the instruction and support they need. We are committed to finding the right balance, and this initiative is an important part of that process.”

In order to further develop a balanced system of assessment, it is necessary to review all assessments currently being administered at the state, district, and school levels. Recently, Governor Markell announced an important initiative related to assessment in Delaware. District and charter schools are embarking on an internal inventory of assessments currently being implemented and an in-depth review process. The Office of Assessment is also participating in the same process as they examine all summative assessments managed by the Office of Assessment.

Governor Markell asked for this process “with the goal of decreasing the testing burden on students and teachers and increasing the time available for teaching.” Once all state, district, and school tests have been identified and the essential information recorded, recommendations will be addressed and action plans developed. A communication component will be included and stakeholder groups will be involved as we strive for input and transparency. Educators interact daily with student assessment data and should play an integral and significant part in this inventory process.

District and charter schools were recently invited to apply for a Delaware Assessment Inventory grant to support the costs associated with this process (such as teacher stipends, contractors to assist with the inventory process, and professional development related to the inventory process).

Ultimately, the overall goal of this project is to provide a balanced system of assessments incorporating a minimum amount of high quality testing while meeting accountability needs and the needs of the educators supporting student growth and maximizing time for instruction.

For additional information, please contact Carolyn Lazar at carolyn.lazar@doe.k12.de.us.

More Than Five Million Students Take Smarter Assessments

The first Smarter Balanced operational summative assessment window is quickly drawing to a close. Students from 18 states and one territory have been participating in this testing process. As of May 22, 2015 more than five million students have taken Smarter summative assessments. This accounts for approximately 70 percent of the total expected number of students testing this year. In Delaware, the Smarter summative assessment window will be closing June 4, 2015.

Smarter News

Educators From Across the Country Gather to Design Smarter Balanced Performance Tasks

Educators from across the country are coming together this week and next to help design and refine Smarter Balanced assessments.

Making good on a promise to include classroom teachers at every stage of test development, the consortium held collaborative work sessions at the University of California Los Angeles and the University of Connecticut, with educators representing 13 states. Katia Foret from the Delaware Office of Assessment will be participating in this work with the Connecticut work group on the development and refinement of Smarter Balanced performance tasks.

Over the course of two weeks, 70 educators with expertise in mathematics and English language arts will review and edit performance tasks to make sure they are aligned to the standards they are assessing and are written and designed in a way that students can understand. Performance tasks are an item type designed to provide students with the opportunity to critically analyze and synthesize information and to support their responses with evidence. After the educators have refined the performance tasks, they will be field tested with students and further analyzed prior to being included in live tests.

Site Visits During Testing

Office of Assessment staff completed visits to schools across the state. All visits were completed during the month of May. DOE staff used a simple protocol for the observations of the first year of the administration of the Smarter Balanced tests for ELA/literacy and mathematics.

A total of 22 visits were made, ranging from elementary to high school grade levels in either math or ELA/literacy. We appreciate all involved districts sharing their schedules and arranging for visits. Information and feedback gathered will help to improve the testing administration for next year.

All districts and charters, especially ones that were not visited, will be asked to provide feedback so we can improve our testing procedures and revise manuals. The information gathered during the observations, the feedback received by district test coordinators through the help desk, and directly in our weekly contacts, will be compiled and will help shape the testing experience for next year.

For additional information, please contact Kata Foret at katia.foret@doe.k12.de.us.

Smarter Test Security

The primary goal of test security is to protect the integrity of the examination and to assure the results are valid and reliable. Accurate assessment results depend upon the security and integrity of the tests administered through the Delaware System of Student Assessment (DeSSA).

To-date, there have been 48 improprieties, 24 irregularities, and one breach reported to the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE). Of the 73 reported test security incidents, 27 are related to inappropriate cell phone usage; 12 involved cheating; and 7 incidents of students not receiving the classroom activity prior to completing the performance task.

Although most incidents have been handled at the school level, approximately 300 test scores have been invalidated.

For additional information, please contact Rita Fry at rita.fry@doe.k12.de.us.

SmarterNews

Summative Assessment Scores

The first operational administration of the Smarter summative assessments is well under way. Over five million students have taken Smarter assessments nationwide. To-date, 8,193 assessments have been completed in Delaware. The Smarter summative assessments included both machine-scored and non-machine scored items.

Delaware non-machined scored online items are being hand-scored by the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). Delaware student items are being scored using the rubrics and student samples validated by educators from Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium states, including educators from Delaware.

Hand-scored results will then be combined with machine-scored results for reporting purposes. Our score reports will then be sent from our Delaware online platform vendor, American Institutes for Research (AIR).

Parent reports are scheduled to be sent out early August, providing student scores for testing in ELA/literacy and mathematics. An interpretative guide will also be distributed to support full understanding of the document.

Next DTC 101 Face-to-Face Meeting

The next District Test Coordinators 101 Face-to-Face meeting will be held June 17, 2015 from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at the John W. Collette Education Resource Center located at 35 Commerce Way—Dover, DE 19904. You can register now through PDMS. The course number is 23474 and the section number is 39886. Please contact Sandy Mullett if you have any questions or need assistance with registering for this session. She can be reached at (302) 857-3391 or via email at sandra.mullett@doe.k12.de.us.

Educator Involvement in Item Development

A survey was sent to educators who expressed interest in item development during the November 2014 in-person achievement level setting meetings. A link to the survey is provided below:

http://uclaed.co1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eybCHwZC0JRyl1z

Upcoming Deadlines

End of test window	June 4, 2015
Resets/Reopen requests due Do not forget to specify which type of test to reset/reopen (ELA, CAT, ELA PT, Math CAT, or Math PT)	June 3, 2015
Exemption requests due Do not forget to specify which type of test to reset/reopen (ELA, CAT, ELA PT, Math CAT, or Math PT)	June 3, 2015
Deadline for entry of DCAS paper/pencil responses	June 4, 2015
Deadline for entry of DCAS - Alt 1 scores	June 4, 2015
Deadline for shipping Smarter paper-pencil materials	May 22, 2015

Other Assessment News

Exemption Procedures

The following procedures should be used to submit requests for exemptions for any content area of DCAS, Smarter or DCAS-Alt 1:

- Use the exemption request spreadsheet to submit one sheet of exemptions from your district/charter that contains all requests for your district/charter.
- Remember to declare a doctor's or medical professional's note (mental health or physical health professional) if claiming a medical exemption.
- Please submit the exemption request spreadsheet in Excel format—not PDF to Helen Dennis at DOE.

Please contact Helen Dennis for further information or questions at helen.dennis@doe.k12.de.us.

Spanish Stacked Accommodation

The Spanish/English stacked 3.06 is not functioning for grade 4 mathematics performance tasks. Users are seeing either Spanish OR English instead of both languages. Although we appreciate that this is not an ideal situation, you may wish to consider utilizing other combinations of supports for the student in the interim:

1. The student could take the English language test with the Spanish glossary (3.05). If a test has already been launched, the removal of 3.06 requires a reset. Please contact Helen Dennis for the reset.
2. The student could have a human interpreter (4.12) with the English language test. If a test has already been launched, the removal of 3.06 and the addition of 4.12 will also require resets. Please contact Helen Dennis for the reset.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding these supports, contact Helen Dennis at: helen.dennis@doe.k12.de.us or (302) 857-3316.

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