SPRING 2021 ASSESSMENT FLEXIBILITY AND SUPPORT

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Overview

This school year has presented all schools with unprecedented challenges. The global pandemic has increased the need for accurate measures of student learning so we can support all students in their development. This document outlines State assessment guidance and support so that each LEA can have a successful spring 2021 administration.

ASSESSMENT WINDOWS, FLEXIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

Flexibilities and Support

To ensure LEAs receive ongoing support while making decisions for assessment logistics, each LEA has a DOE Liaison. The department will be reaching out individually to each District Test Coordinator to help collaborate and answer questions as they arise.

The largest concerns from our on-going conversations with LEAs and district test coordinators (DTCs) are related to calendar changes and solutions for students who have been learning in a remote context or schools that have experienced closures or quarantines. The department has been working on solutions with our stakeholders and vendors to provide flexibility and support; for example, additional make-up dates, window extensions, shorter assessments and flexibility with logistics. For more information, please see Figure 1: *2021 Assessment Calendar to Include Additional Make-up Dates and Window Extensions.*

Window Extensions

- SAT additional make-up date on April 13, 2021
- ACCESS extended through May 7, 2021
- PSAT10 extended through April 30, 2021
- DCPS (Communication Portfolio) extended January 11-February 24, 2021 – allowing for two observations within this window

Logistics and Administration

- SAT flexibility for start times, breaks and locations: Delaware Coordinator Supplemental Guide
- Smarter Balanced ELA and Math assessments will be shorter: Summative Assessment Adjusted Form Blueprints
- ACCESS Best Practices includes: Test Coordination, Managing Materials, Test Administration, Sanitizing Materials, Set Up and Safety
- Alternate Assessment: Guidance and Procedures for Safely Administering the Alternate Assessment

Figure 1: 2021 Assessment Calendar to Include Additional Make-up Dates and Window Extensions

Assessment	Assessment Windows
Grades 3-8 ELA and Math	March 15-May 27, 2021 Paper Pencil: April 1-April 30, 2021
Science Grades 5, 8 and Biology	March 15-May 27, 2021 Paper Pencil: April 1-April 30, 2021
Social Studies Grades 4, 7 and 11	March 15-May 27, 2021 Paper Pencil: April 1-April 30, 2021
SAT Grade 11	March 24, 2021 Make-up Dates: April 13 and April 27, 2021 Accommodation Window: March 24 to April 6, 2021
Alternate Assessment	March 15-May 21, 2021
ACCESS	February 1 – May 7, 2021
PSAT 10	February 22 – April 30, 2021
DCPS	Window #3: January 11-February 24, 2021 2 observations may be given in this window

Additional assessment window information: 2021 Assessment Calendar

To support leaders who oversee either building or district coordinators, a step-by-step guide for regular check-ins can be found in *Appendix A: Checklist: 11-Step Management of Testing Plans and Testing Coordinators* of this document. This resource provides a set of questions that will help school and/or district teams determine the necessary calendar, space, people, and systems needed for a successful administration, and maximize available flexibilities.

DUE DILIGENCE TO TEST ALL STUDENTS

Statement released by CCSSO on December 17, 2020: *CCSSO and the state education chiefs remain committed to key core principles: measuring the progress of as many students as possible, providing aggregated and disaggregated data, and ensuring every family has access to data on how their child is performing academically. CCSSO stands ready to support every state as they strive to best meet the needs of all students, especially our marginalized student populations, and navigate the continued challenges brought on by a global pandemic.*

- It is DDOE's intent to offer all students and families access to testing and data on how their child is performing academically.

- DDOE will continue working with LEAs on challenges as they arise to determine options for flexibility and support.

COVID-19 Related Flexibility

- A student who tests positive for COVID-19 and is unable to return to school to test within the testing window may be exempt from testing with appropriate medical exemption documentation. This exemption follows DDOE's typical medical exemption protocol; documentation to be kept with the LEA.

- Students with health conditions, such as those who may be immunocompromised, may also qualify for a medical exemption, if the school building testing coordinator or district testing coordinator is unable to accommodate the testing environment needed to ensure student safety. This exemption will require an assurance from the LEA with a DDOE provided exemption form.

- In the case of a student, set of students, or school impacted by a quarantine due to COVID-19 in advance of testing, school districts are strongly encouraged to schedule make-up testing opportunities for a date when students could safely return to school.

TESTING TIMES AND SCHEDULING

As Delaware's students and educators work through the unique challenges of the 2020-2021 school year, the Delaware Department of Education emphasizes that LEAs first and foremost should be attentive to the safety of students and staff. Assessments should occur only if they can be administered safely.

Based on the current status of federal and state law, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should be making plans for students to take the spring assessments. LEAs should prioritize safety but put forth a good faith effort to communicate with parents and students about the importance of assessment. For LEAs operating with hybrid models, plans for testing likely will depend on the days students are in school. LEAs offering remote instruction should consider creative options to have students on-site for relevant testing. LEAs can be flexible about test administration locations. Students need not take tests in the buildings to which they are assigned for attendance purposes. Below are examples to assist with planning:

o **Remote Students:** Schedule appointment times for students to utilize days when other students may not be in the buildings to bring students in to test (for example, if there is one day per week when all students are virtual or if the LEA is fully virtual);
o **Alternative In-School Locations**: Use alternative locations that may allow for students to test in larger groups but remain physically distant (such as in gymnasiums, auditoriums or cafeterias) as long as the environment is appropriate for testing (quiet, no distractions);
o **Other Buildings:** Test some students in other buildings (for example, elementary students at a middle school) when they are not being used for in-person instruction.

It is expected that LEAs provide one administration day for each state assessment listed in Figure 2: *Testing Times by Grade Levels*. An administration should happen in one sitting or more than one sitting with breaks, but within one school day. The Smarter Balanced assessments for grades 3-8 are shorter this year; as a result, older students may be able to take more than one assessment in the course of a school day.

Figure 2: Testing Times by Grade Levels

Grade	Assessment/Times (Hour: Minutes)
3	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 1:30
4	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 1:30 Social Studies → 2:30
5	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 1:30 Science → 1:30
6	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 2:00
7	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 2:00 Social Studies → 2:00
8	English/Language Arts → 2:30 Mathematics → 2:30 Science → 2:00
11	Social Studies → 2:00 SAT → SAT School Day
HS	Biology → 2:00

TEST PROCTORS AND SUPPORT

In order to follow district health protocols and procedures, extra support may be needed in executing assessment logistics. This may require more staff than is typically used during an assessment administration, and the department is committed to providing maximum flexibility when identifying and training non-educator proctors, when responding to their local needs.

The LEA has the responsibility to ensure the security and integrity of each test administration. Supporting staff must be sufficiently trained to assist during assessment windows. Trained proctors may be assigned to help Test Administrators in administering the tests. A proctor is typically a teacher's aide, a paraprofessional, or another paid district or school staff member. See Figure 3: *Required Assessment Training.*

Figure 3: Required Assessment Training

Assessment	Course Number
DeSSA DCPS Test Administrator – Recorded Training Course	26783
DeSSA Alt Test Administrator Training	28581
DeSSA SAT Test Administrator Training	228777
DeSSA ACCESS 2.0 Test Administrator Training	28776
DeSSA ELA/Math – Test Administrator Training	24246
DeSSA Science/Social Studies Test Administrator Training	27306

TEST SECURITY

Administering the spring assessments with increased flexibilities may help overcome some of the challenges we face, but we have to be even more meticulous about test security as a state. We want our state assessments to be meaningful measures of student learning. In this age of online and social media, security breaches could jeopardize our system.

It is important to maintain test security in order to protect the integrity of the assessments and to ensure results are accurate and meaningful. Test security goals include:

• To provide secure assessments that result in valid and reliable scores.

• To adhere to high professional standards in all aspects of the assessment.

• To maintain consistency across all testing occasions and sites.

• To protect the investment of resources, time, and energy in the assessment.

• To protect student information and maintain confidentiality.

Maintaining the security and confidentiality of DeSSA assessments is critical for ensuring valid test scores and providing standard and equal testing opportunities for all students. Test security has always been essential and continues to be vital in these challenging circumstances.

The requirements of the DeSSA Test Security Manual continue to apply. The DeSSA Test Security Manual sets forth test security policies, procedures, and responsibilities for the DeSSA assessments. Among other things, the elements of this manual are intended to provide greater protection of DeSSA intellectual property, to reduce test fraud and theft, and to maintain high program standards and integrity. For more information: Delaware Test Security Manual 2020-2021

HEALTHY TESTING CONSIDERATIONS

LEAs are given flexibility during the spring administration to create locally tailored plans so that they can work within their local health protocols for keeping student and educator health a priority. LEAs should administer spring assessments following guidelines from local and state health authorities to minimize risk of exposure for all individuals. An ideal assessment schedule allows for flexibility and make-up dates. For example, scheduling testing

early in the window allows for maximum opportunities for make-up testing or rescheduling testing dates if a classroom, set of students, or whole school is impacted by a COVID-19 quarantine.

DELAWARE TESTING POLICIES

Delaware Statewide Administration Policy: Policy for tested grades, skippers and repeaters.

Delaware Statewide Participation Policy 2020-2021: Policy for who counts as a participant and attemptedness criteria.

Delaware EL Test Administration Policy 2020-2021: Policy for ELs who take the DeSSA Assessments and ACCESS 2.0.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

DeSSA Assessment Frequently Asked Questions Frequently asked questions by assessment.

DeSSA Help Desk Platforms Contacts for all assessment and DOE Help Desks

DOE Contacts:

Theresa Bennett, Director – theresa.bennett@doe.k12.de.us

Katia Foret, Grades 3-8, ELA/Math – katia.foret@doe.k12.de.us

Dusty Shockley, Social Studies and Test Security – preston.shockley@doe.k12.de.us

April McCrae, Science – april.mccrae@doe.k12.de.us

Lisa Alexander, Assessment Systems – lisa.alexander@doe.k12.de.us

Michelle Jackson, Alternate Assessments and Accommodations – michelle.jackson@doe.k12.de.us

Michele Postles, ACCESS and SAT – michele.postles@doe.k12.de.us

Checklist: Managing of Testing Plans and Testing Coordinators

Recommended for: Supervisors of DTCs/STCs or DTCs for use with check-ins with STCs regarding assessment logistics plans.

Uses:
- Coordinating assessment of student learning across an entire school or district/charter.
- Using a modified or new testing schedule to accommodate unusual circumstances
- Start of Year Checkpoint
- District interims or formative assessments
- Coordinating distance learning assessments or summative tests.

The key to using this checklist is to complete all 12 steps with the testing coordinator at least one month in advance of any test requiring coordination across classrooms or schools. This will provide adequate time to troubleshoot and provide advanced communication for teachers and families to plan with. Meetings using this checklist with your coordinator should recur to match the needs of the district and/or school testing calendars.

1) Assessment Calendar: Identify which assessments are to be delivered and make sure the plan includes the testing windows and any needed additional assessments (e.g. for alternative testers, English language learners), as appropriate. If this is for practice or mock exams, does it align with the instructional calendar (i.e. check to see if there are other assessments also occurring during nearby dates like semester exams)?

Are there any assessment's subparts that will be administered over multiple days clearly indicated?

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, solve right now.

2) **Space and People**: Number of testing groups, rooms, proctors, and administrators are adequate to accommodate a safe and secure testing environment for students and teachers. This should be compliant with any district health policies.

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, solve right now.

3) Materials and Systems: Are there sufficient materials such as calculators, scratch paper, etc. for the kind of test you are administering (e.g. math, science)? If students will be sharing resources (like rotating desks) or will have their assessment materials collected with other students' materials for redistribution later, are there clear district health policies and/or procedures for cleaning these resources between uses?

Depending on the assessment, is the level of test security appropriate for the test being administered?

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, stop. (You may choose if you want to help the STC or DTC solve or if they are to solve the issues later and bring them back to you.)

4) Prioritizing Learning: Effects on non-testing students (if any). How will this plan affect learning and instruction for those students who aren't testing? If the plan for the non-testers ensures quality learning, then move on. This step is very important for any tests that a district or school may be offering that will be longer than the class periods in the current schedule.

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, make sure the vision is communicated (then either solve or delegate solving to another). Remember to run the non-tester plan past some teacher leaders for their input.

5) Proctors and Testing Roles: Assignments and appropriate certifications or trainings as needed for proctoring and administering; have people strategically assigned to proctoring during testing that is motivating to testing students, ensures safety and sanitation, and maintains strong learning for non-testers. Consider all types of testers, including students who may need different schedules, such as extended time and accommodations when planning total numbers of proctors needed. Additionally, if there are district health policies that require additional roles, these should be included as well.

a. If YES, then move on.

b. If no, solve right now, or delegate another to solve.

6) Assessment Schedule: When adjusting school-level schedules, do the times assigned match the needs of non-tester learners and testers alike? Do the times accommodate for extra time for transitions that are compliant with district health policies (e.g. sanitation, social distancing, etc.) and other student needs?

a. If YES, then move on.

b. If no, stop. (You may choose if you want to help the STC solve or if they are to solve the issues later and bring them back to you.)

7) School Operational Needs: Other administration and non-instructional logistics, such as nutrition, meals, emergencies, supplies, copies, bus timing, restrooms, etc. Consider all types of testers, including extended time and accommodations. Are all students considered within your current logistics plan?

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, stop. (Choose if you want to help the STC solve or if they are to solve and bring plans back later.)

8) Make-up testing: Repeat steps 1-7 for any make-up testing scenarios that would require coordination.

a. If make-up testing plan meets above criteria, move on.

b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

9) **Student Clarity:** What are we doing to ensure that students will be able to know where to go and what to do without any confusion? (Where/when do I go? What do I do? What do I need? What do I need to know?)

a. If YES, then move on.

b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

10) Staff Testing Instructions: Will communication ensure implementation without any confusion for school staff? (Do I have clear logistics document that communicate where to go, what to do?) Are they all clear on post-testing logistics (turning in materials, cleaning rooms, etc.)? Does the plan include cafeteria, custodians, and operations staff? Review the communication plan (modes of communication, documents, emails, etc.). *This communication needs to be sent to educators with as much advanced notice as possible, because it will affect how teachers plan*.

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.

11) Family Testing Communication: Does communication with families provide them with the information they need to understand their role with assessment? Do they have a document with clear, concise, and relevant information? Do families have any responsibilities (e.g. sending students with materials, signing a non-disclosure agreement) and are these clear? For parents supporting assessments, it is typically not safe to assume that all parents will be available to support testing, so two-way communication with families and explicit support is a must for any non-staff responsibilities. Review the communication plan (documents, emails, modes of communication, etc.) to maximize participation among students most at risk.

a. If YES, move on.

b. If no, delegate to come back with a plan.