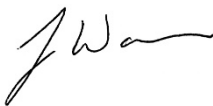




ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, OFFICE OF STATE ASSESSMENT  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 775 EBA  
Albany, New York 12234

January 2024

**To:** District Superintendents  
Superintendents of Schools  
Principals of Public Schools  
Charter School Leaders  
Principals of Religious and Independent Schools  
Participating in Computer-based Testing

**From:** Zachary Warner 

**Subject:** State-level Scoring of Computer-based Elementary- and Intermediate-level Science Tests

The new Elementary-level (Grade 5) and Intermediate-level (Grade 8) Science Tests will be administered for the first time in Spring 2024. These tests are designed to assess student achievement of the knowledge and skills contained in New York State P-12 Science Learning Standards. As detailed in the [Statewide Implementation of Computer-Based Testing \(CBT\) memorandum](#), all students in Grades 5 and 8 will be required to take the 2024 science tests by CBT.<sup>1</sup>

The New York State Education Department (“NYSED” or “the Department”) has identified funding to support state-level scoring of all Grade 5 and Grade 8 science tests taken by CBT this spring. This approach to scoring is intended to reduce the burden on teachers, schools, and districts in terms of time and efforts devoted to scoring student responses within the needed timeframe. Additionally, because the Department will cover the cost of state-level CBT science scoring, this may allow for the repurposing of local funds that had previously been allocated to science scoring activities.

New York is currently the only state that relies on local scoring for its state assessment system. The benefits of shifting to state-level scoring can include:

- return of instructional time to students and teachers,
- faster production of test results, and
- improved reliability of scoring.

To help realize these benefits, participation in state-level scoring of all science tests taken by CBT will be required for all schools. State-level scoring is being implemented for the Elementary- and Intermediate-level Science Tests because these are new assessments, providing an opportunity for the CBT and state-scoring models to be implemented concurrently. The Department intends to demonstrate the efficacy of a state-level scoring model and hopes to secure additional funding that would allow for expanding it to other state assessments in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> The only exceptions are for those students who must test on paper according to their Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan), and students who require an alternate language edition of the mathematics or science test. These students should test on the same days as their CBT grade classmates. In addition, paper-based testing will remain available to religious and independent schools, who do not make use of technology in the classroom because of religious beliefs.

Schools do not need to make any arrangements for the scoring of computer-based science tests. Students' CBT constructed responses will be sent directly to the Department's contractor, NWEA, for scoring once students complete their tests. These responses will be scored in accordance with scoring materials that will also be provided to schools via the Help tab in the Nextera Administration System (Nextera Admin).

**Please note that student responses will continue to be available after the test administration for review by teachers and parents. The responses will be viewable in Nextera Admin after June 1, consistent with prior years.**

Paper-based sciences tests (i.e., accommodated editions) will still need to be scored at the local level. All schools that will administer any paper-based tests must contract with a Regional Information Center (RIC) or large-city scanning center to obtain answer sheets and scanning services. As a reminder, schools must also contract with a RIC or large-city scanning center to obtain test results at the conclusion of testing. Schools or districts are encouraged to reach out to their RIC or scanning center with questions about these services.

Additional guidance about scoring the Elementary- and Intermediate-level Science Tests will be available in the scoring information provided closer to the testing window. Questions about state-wide scoring of the computer-based science tests may be sent to [CBTSupport@nysed.gov](mailto:CBTSupport@nysed.gov).