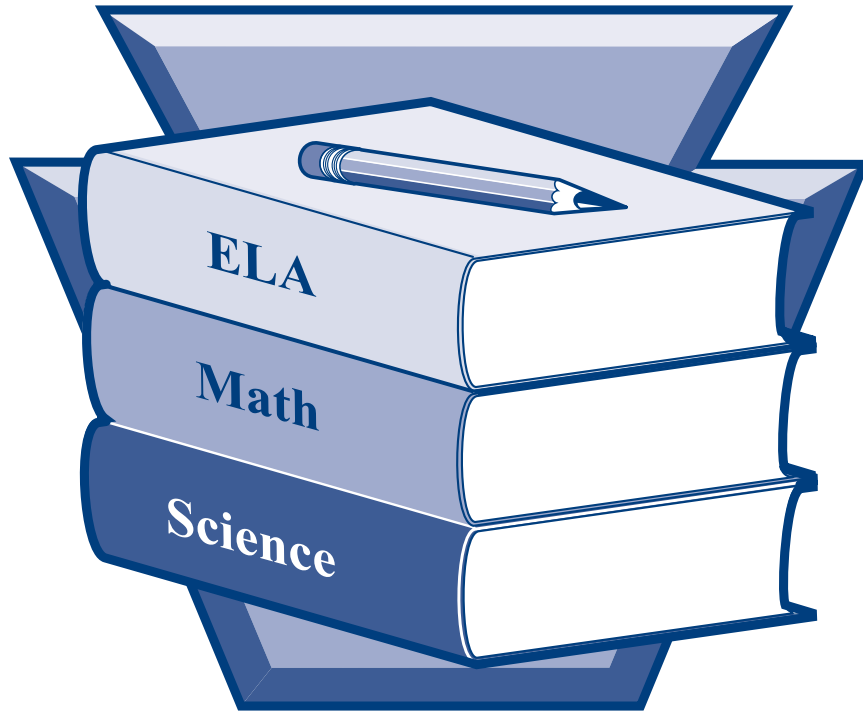




Pennsylvania
Department of Education



2025

PENNSYLVANIA SYSTEM OF SCHOOL ASSESSMENT

Handbook for Assessment Coordinators

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PART I – IMPORTANT INFORMATION

A. New PSSA Science Grade 5

As part of the Commonwealth’s transition to the new STEELS standards (Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy & Sustainability), the elementary science assessment will be administrated in grade 5 instead of grade 4. There will no longer be a grade 4 science assessment.

Science will continue to be assessed in grade 8.

B. Section-Specific Online Test Tickets

Online test tickets are now specific for each section. A different password is generated for each login which eliminates a student from selecting the wrong section. The separate test tickets should be printed and distributed only when testing a specific section.

C. Administration Manuals

Building Principals, District Assessment Coordinators (DAC), and School Assessment Coordinators (SAC) who coordinate the administration of the assessments must become familiar with this handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manuals*. The purpose of this handbook is to provide guidelines and procedures for paper and online testing. It includes details regarding test security, student participation, and managing the assessments. The *Directions for Administration Manuals* are subject and mode specific (i.e., online or paper and pencil) and provide step-by-step instructions for administering the assessments. Manuals will be provided to school entities based on whether students will be participating in the assessment via either online testing or paper and pencil testing.

Note: For testing sites that receive their materials directly from Data Recognition Corporation (e.g., ship-to-school sites, Intermediate Units (IUs), charter schools, non-public and private schools, and other special sites), the SAC fulfills the responsibilities of the District and School Assessment Coordinator as outlined in this handbook.

School staff may make copies (in full or in part) of this handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manuals*. PDF versions of these documents can be found on the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html> and also on the DRC INSIGHT Portal at pa.drccdirect.com.

D. Delivery Dates and Testing Windows

Materials for the assessments will be delivered according to the schedule below. Instruct personnel who are responsible for receipt of the shipments to contact you as soon as the shipments arrive. Avoid the common error of having shipments placed in the book storage area or the supply room without the Assessment Coordinator’s knowledge. Boxes can be identified by a fluorescent label that reads “Test Materials Enclosed: Open Immediately and Inventory.”

Sites that are only testing students online and did not order accommodated forms will not receive a shipment of secure materials. These sites can disregard the dates associated with receiving and returning secure materials.

DATE	ACTIVITY
By March 24	Manuals (all subjects) arrive at districts/schools
By April 7	Administrative and secure materials (all subjects) arrive at districts/schools
April 21–25	ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS TESTING WINDOW
	<i>English Language Arts materials picked up by April 30</i>
April 28–May 2	MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, and MAKE-UP TESTING WINDOW (Including Make-ups for ELA)
May 5–9	OPTIONAL ADDITIONAL MATHEMATICS, SCIENCE, and MAKE-UP TESTING WINDOW
	<i>ALL materials picked up by May 2 for early student reporting or by May 14 to be included in all reporting</i>

E. Early Reporting Return Information

All completed online assessments and all answer and combined test/answer booklets that are shipped to DRC by May 2, 2025, will be included in the PSSA scores released on June 2, 2025. Boxes returned by May 2 that are **properly labeled as containing answer or combined test/answer booklets** will be included for June 2 early reporting. Answer and combined test/answer booklets returned between May 5 and May 14 or returned improperly labeled will be included in a second round of PSSA reporting on June 24, 2025. UPS pickups must occur in accordance with these established timelines to ensure that test materials arrive prior to the close of DRC’s booklet processing. Failure to return PSSA answer and combined test/answer booklets in the required timeline can negatively affect PSSA and accountability reporting. The exclusion of any students in accountability reporting because of an LEA’s failure to return answer and combined test/answer booklets within the established timeline will be investigated and/or researched by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

F. Contact Information Concerning Questions

Many of the test questions can be answered by contacting PA Customer Service. If you have other questions or specific concerns refer to the table below.

Topic or Subject	Contact Person / Telephone	Email address
DRC PA Customer Service	800-451-7849	pacustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com
Test Security/Irregularities		ra-edirregularities@pa.gov
General PSSA and Keystone Exam Testing Questions	Division of Assessment and Accountability	ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov
Opting Out of Testing		ra-ed-pssa-keystone@pa.gov
Testing Irregularities	Jay Gift – 717-783-1144	rgift@pa.gov
Testing Accommodations (IEP and 504, Regular Education, EL)	Dr. Beth Gannon – 717-346-9399	ra-eduniqueaccom@pa.gov
ELA, Keystone Literature Exam, EL Accommodations	Dr. Beth Gannon – 717-346-9399	egannonrit@pa.gov
Math, Keystone Algebra I Exam	Dr. Megan Clementi – 717-783-6543	mclementi@pa.gov
Science, Keystone Biology Exam, Notify Changes in Testing Dates and/or Times, Testing Window Exceptions, and Cell Phone Issues Not Related to Test Security	Craig Weller – 717-525-5825	crweller@pa.gov
Division Chief	Brian Truesdale – 717-214-5433	btruesdale@pa.gov

If a test security violation is suspected, contact the SAC immediately. If you believe the SAC may have involvement in the violation, immediately contact the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) directly at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov. The email should include a detailed subject line. Please ensure that you only utilize the email account provided here for security violations. Please do not send a question to multiple email accounts. This causes a delay in response.

G. Test Security

The PSSAs are a measure of individual student achievement conducted by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). Any deviation from the exam procedures outlined in this manual (including, but not limited to, group work, teacher coaching, teaching or releasing of the performance tasks or exam questions, using old non-released Pennsylvania assessment items as preparation tools, etc.) is strictly prohibited and is considered a violation of exam security. Those individuals who divulge exam questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system in any manner may be subject to professional disciplinary action under the Educator Discipline Act, 24 P.S. § 2070.1a et seq, including a private reprimand, a public reprimand, a suspension of their teaching certificate(s), a revocation of their teaching certificate(s), and/or a suspension or prohibition from being employed by a charter school. In this regard, an educator is any individual who holds public or private academic school certification and all charter and cyber charter school staff members and contracted educational providers who would be required to hold certification if they served in a traditional public school.

Students may not discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the assessment content to others. This includes talking with others about questions on the test during or after the test. Students will be subject to discipline based on the Local Educational Agency's (LEA) policy and procedures. Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.

In order to ensure validity and security of the PSSAs, all District Assessment Coordinators (DAC), School Assessment Coordinators (SAC), Test Administrators (TA), and Proctors should read and understand the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration*. The *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* is Appendix A of this handbook and is a standalone document that can be downloaded from the Pennsylvania Department of Education website. In addition, Coordinators, TAs, and Proctors must complete the online Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT) annually (each school year), found at www.pstattraining.net.

1. TEST SECURITY CERTIFICATIONS

It is required that each District Assessment Coordinator, School Assessment Coordinator, Principal, Test Administrator, Proctor, Translator, Interpreter, Scribe, Secretarial staff, Custodians, and any individual who handles secure assessment materials sign a *Test Security Certification*. The *Test Security Certifications* must be signed **after** the assessments have been administered either online or paper and pencil.

- a. The ***District Assessment Coordinator Test Security Certification*** is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. Each DAC is responsible for photocopying and signing a certification by the end of the testing window. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window.

The District Assessment Coordinator must collect all of the *Test Administrator/Proctor, School Assessment Coordinator/Principal, and General Test Security Certifications* from each testing site. If anyone (TA/Proctors, SAC/Principal, or others) who had access to the assessments and refused to sign or modified a corresponding *Test Security Certification* the DAC must report it to the Chief School Administrator who will report it to PDE. The *Test Security Certifications* are maintained for a minimum of three years. The signed *Test Security Certifications* should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

- b. The ***School Assessment Coordinator and Principal Test Security Certification*** can be found in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window. The SAC and the Principal must sign and date the appropriate *Test Security Certification* by the end of the administration window. It is the responsibility of the DAC to obtain the SAC's and Principal's signature and return the form to the Chief School Administrator who must retain the certifications for a minimum of three years. The signed *Test Security Certifications* should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.

- c. The **Test Administrator/Proctor Test Security Certification** is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification covers security for all assessments administered during the testing window. Prior to the administration of the assessment, the SAC must distribute copies of this certification to all TAs and Proctors involved in the administration of the PSSA. Prior to receiving any assessment materials or participating in the administration of the PSSA in any way, the TA/Proctor must read and understand the *Test Administrator/Proctor Test Security Certification*. Post-administration, the TAs/Proctors must sign and return their individual certification to the SAC who should in turn provide all of the certifications collected to the DAC. Each TA/Proctor must sign one certification annually at the end of the administration window. The DAC should return the certifications to the Chief School Administrator who must retain the certifications for a minimum of three years. The DAC may want to retain a copy of the certifications for their records in addition to the originals provided to the Chief School Administrator. The signed *Test Security Certifications* should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.
- d. The **General Test Security Certification** is provided in Appendix B of this handbook. This certification is for any individual (custodian, secretary, etc.) who will handle secure assessment materials or have access (including keys) to the materials during the testing window and who is not covered by any of the other certifications. The executed *General Test Security Certification* must be retained for a minimum of three years by the Chief School Administrator. The signed *Test Security Certifications* should not be returned to Data Recognition Corporation.
 - i. The SAC must report to the DAC any TAs/Proctors or anyone else who had access to the assessments and refused to sign or who modified a corresponding *Test Security Certification* before signing.
 - ii. When reporting to the DAC, include names and reason(s) for refusal or modification.

When testing is completed, if an individual does not execute the appropriate *Test Security Certification*, the Chief School Administrator must provide the Department of Education's Bureau of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction with a written explanation of the reason or reasons why the certification was not executed. The explanation must be provided within five days of the refusal and must include a description of the action taken by the Chief School Administrator in response to the failure to execute the *Test Security Certification*.

The written explanation should be sent to rgift@pa.gov or mailed to:

Jay Gift
 Pennsylvania Department of Education
 607 South Drive
 Harrisburg, PA 17120

2. REPORTING IRREGULARITIES

TAs must report testing irregularities/security breaches to the SAC, principal, or the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The **SAC** must report the testing irregularities/security breaches to the DAC or the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The **DAC** must report any suspected violations of testing protocol to the Pennsylvania Department of Education immediately.

Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov. The email should include a detailed subject line. Only utilize the email account provided here for security violations.

3. AVOIDING INAPPROPRIATE TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES

DRC scanners will detect all pencil marks. As such, it is not appropriate to have students taking a paper and pencil assessment eliminate answers by striking through an answer bubble or by bubbling multiple answers and later erasing. Likewise, students should not make any extraneous marks near answer bubbles but may cross out text or numbers next to the bubbles if needed. Students must mark their final response in one answer bubble using a No. 2 pencil. Light highlighters may be used within a test booklet, answer booklet, or combined test/answer booklet. The highlighter should not be used over answer bubbles or open-ended responses. Students must not discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the assessment content to others.

4. RECORDING EXCESSIVE LOGINS

Maintain a record of system failures such as the loss of internet access, etc., in the event there are questions regarding excessive logins. Excessive logins by the same student to an online assessment are written to a report that is accessible to both the district and PDE in the DRC INSIGHT portal.

5. STORING SECURE MATERIALS

- a. All test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets must be kept in a preselected, locked, secure storage area at both the district and school levels. Secure materials must never be left unattended or in open areas. TAs must not be given access to secure test materials before the administration day. TAs should only be given access to secure test materials immediately preceding test administration.
- b. The *Directions for Administration Manuals* are not considered secure test materials and should be provided to TAs prior to the assessment for review. TAs and proctors may keep the *Directions for Administration Manuals* during and after testing.
- c. All secure testing materials must be inventoried, counted, and returned immediately to the preselected, locked, secure storage area after each testing session is completed unless another testing session immediately follows. Individual restroom breaks during testing are permitted, but require monitoring. Materials must be kept secure after testing and prior to shipping to DRC.

H. Use of Student Computers/Student Devices for Online Testing (One-to-One Student Devices)

If the LEA staff wishes to incorporate student computers and student devices for their online testing, the one-to-one device must be configured to the school's Central Office Services – Service Device (COS SD).

The COS SD configuration is an absolute requirement to prevent unauthorized student access to a PSSA or Keystone Exams test administration outside of the school building that houses the COS SD. It is incumbent upon any school that utilizes one-to-one devices to ensure that the COS SD configuration has been applied to the devices. Failure to ensure the devices are properly configured will be viewed as a violation of PDE's test security policies.

The one-to-one student device policy can be located on the DRC INSIGHT Portal. If there are any questions regarding the configuration of the COS SD, contact DRC PA customer service at 800-451-7849.

PART II – DISTRICT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR (DAC), SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR (SAC), AND TEST ADMINISTRATOR (TA) RESPONSIBILITIES

A. District Assessment Coordinator Responsibilities

1. PENNSYLVANIA STATE TEST ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

Any person who functions as a DAC must annually complete the DAC, SAC, and TA online training modules found in the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). The PSTAT is found at www.pstattraining.net. These interactive courses are a key component that DACs are required to perform to oversee the administration of the PSSA and Keystone Exams. The DAC must ensure that SACs register and complete their trainings. A certificate of completion will be issued to the DAC and SAC when the courses are completed. These certificates should be kept on file for three years.

2. TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

The DAC is responsible for coordinating all training (including all employees providing assistance to the DAC) that takes place in the LEA and for determining specifics related to test administration such as a schedule, type of administration (paper and pencil or online), and other LEA-level administrative aspects of the testing. Whereas the DAC is responsible for ALL training in the LEA, the primary training done by the DAC directly is for School Assessment Coordinators (SACs) and LEA-level staff who handle and/or have access to secure test material. Additional information on specific responsibilities is included in Appendix A.

Every DAC must train SACs before they can train the TAs. The following topics must be included with LEA-selected topics:

- a. Test Administrator (TA) Training Plan, which includes giving the SACs ample time to distribute the *Directions for Administration Manuals* to TAs. TA training orientation sessions should be scheduled within the two weeks prior to the assessment window.
- b. District assessment schedule
- c. Distribution of parent information
- d. Student Participation
- e. Test Security Policies
- f. Procedures for distribution and collection of assessment materials
- g. SAC responsibility for the security of assessment materials
- h. Requirements for completing demographic and accommodation information
- i. Requirements for assigning a TA to each student assessment
- j. Barcode Labels for paper and pencil testing
- k. Test Sessions for online testing
- l. Procedures for the collection and destruction of paper on which students have written

3. COMPLETING THE MATERIALS RECEIPT NOTICE

The Materials Receipt Notice (MRN) is the tool in which the DAC or SAC provides the date secure material was received. If receiving secure material for paper and pencil testing, boxes should be inventoried immediately by authorized personnel. The inventory must be conducted either centrally by the DAC or at the building level by the SAC or by designated LEA employees. If not inventoried centrally, boxes should be distributed intact to schools, allowing enough time for the SAC to inventory the materials. Once the material has been inventoried, the MRN should be completed via the DRC INSIGHT Portal. Completing the MRN certifies that the school listed has received and inventoried its secure testing materials and that any discrepancies from the packing list have been reported to DRC.

4. REQUESTING ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Additional materials should be ordered after secure materials have been inventoried. The Additional Materials system will be available within the DRC INSIGHT Portal starting two weeks prior to the opening of the testing window. DACs should assign access to the Additional Materials Request system to those who need to order materials for a school. When ordering additional materials, the exact number needed should be entered. DRC will determine final counts and pack sizes.

Materials ordered from DRC after 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) will be shipped on the following business day.

All materials must be ordered at least four days prior to the start of a testing window in order to ensure delivery prior to the start of testing. If additional Braille materials are needed, they may be requested at any time prior to the window for requesting additional materials by calling DRC Customer Service at 1-800-451-7849.

5. MAINTAINING SECURE STORAGE

All paper and pencil booklets and test tickets must be kept in a preselected, locked, secure storage area at both the district and school levels. Secure materials must never be left unattended or in open areas. TAs must not be given access to secure test materials before the administration day. TAs should only be given access to secure test materials immediately preceding test administration. All testing materials must be inventoried, counted, and returned immediately to the preselected, locked, secure storage area after each testing session is completed for the day. Materials must be kept secure after testing and prior to shipping to DRC.

TAs and proctors may keep the *Directions for Administration Manuals* during and after testing.

6. LATE RETURN OF TEST MATERIALS

All PSSA materials must be returned in accordance with the dates provided in this handbook. All answer and combined test/answer booklets must arrive at DRC by the final processing date to be included in 2025 reporting. UPS pickups must occur in accordance with the established timelines, and absolutely no later than May 2 to ensure that your materials arrive prior to the close of answer booklet processing for the early reporting files which will be available on June 2, 2025, or by May 14 to be included in all reporting. Failure to return your PSSA answer and combined test/answer booklets in the required timeline can negatively affect PSSA and accountability reporting. The failure to return paper and pencil secure materials within the established timeline will be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The LEA employees should retain all shipping documentation.

7. HANDBOOK FOR SECURE TEST ADMINISTRATION

Read the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A concerning the DAC, SAC, and TA responsibilities.

B. School Assessment Coordinator Responsibilities

The SAC is responsible for implementing all aspects of the test administration including the schedule, type of administration (paper and pencil or online) and other LEA-level administrative testing responsibilities.

1. TEST ADMINISTRATOR AND PROCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- a. Employed or contracted (either directly or indirectly via a provider) by the LEA
- b. Completed the annual Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT)
- c. Trained by the SACs annually
- d. Have not been prohibited from being a TA by PDE or LEA

TAs are responsible for the test administration including but not limited to distributing and collecting test materials, answering student questions, monitoring students, attending to the secure test administration, and related test administration duties. The DAC and/or SAC may assign multiple TAs to the same test administration room. Proctors are to support the TAs, but are not to be in the room without the TA. The primary function of a Proctor is to monitor the students.

PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be TAs of their own students. As such, it is recommended that other teachers be used as TAs, or that a Proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher acts as the TA for the students they instruct.

Student teachers may be present during the administration of the assessments as part of their professional experience; however, they may not be either TAs or Proctors unless they are employed by the LEA. Individuals with a similar status to student teachers who are not employed by the LEA, such as interns, are also not allowed to be TAs or Proctors.

Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS) and Personal Care Aides (PCA) may be present in the room during the administration of the assessments if they are trained by the SAC and complete the PSTAT. The TSS and PCA must be employed by an LEA or IU either directly or through a contracting agency. After the test has been administered by the TA, the TSS or PCA must sign the *General Test Security Certification*. However, TSSs and PCAs must not act as a TA or Proctor.

2. PENNSYLVANIA STATE TEST ADMINISTRATION TRAINING

Any person who functions as a SAC must annually complete the SAC and TA online training modules found in the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). The PSTAT is found at www.pstattraining.net. These interactive courses are a key component that SACs are required to perform to oversee the administration of the PSSA and Keystone Exams. A certificate of completion will be issued to the SAC when the courses are completed. This certificate should be kept on file for three years.

SACs must ensure that their TAs register and complete the required PSTAT TA online module prior to overseeing the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. SACs are responsible for collecting, via print out or electronically, TA certifications.

3. TRAINING COMPONENTS

The SAC is responsible for providing school specific training at least one week prior to the scheduled assessment dates. Teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessional who will be acting as TAs and/or Proctors along with staff handling or having access to secure test material should attend the school-level training. SAC training session for TAs must include the following topics:

- a. **Assessment Schedule**—Be certain that TAs and Proctors know the assessment schedule.
- b. **Administration Preparation**—TAs and Proctors receive and study the *Directions for Administration Manuals* and the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* (Appendix A) prior to training.

- c. **Students with Special Needs**—Explain which students are to be included in the assessment and what special accommodations may be provided for these students.
- d. **Interpreters**—The following guidance is provided in collaboration with the Bureau of Special Education regarding sign language interpreters: A separate TA is required for test settings where an educational sign language interpreter has been assigned to interpret allowable Keystone and PSSA test material for a student(s). The SAC must ensure that the educational sign language interpreter receives assessment training and completes the PSTAT. The interpreter must sign the *Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter* found in Appendix C (also found in the *Accommodations Guidelines*) prior to viewing any of the secure materials and sign the *General Test Security Certification* found in Appendix B after completion of the PSSA administration. The word “reviewed” in the third paragraph should be crossed out before the interpreter signs the certification.
- e. **Transcribing**—Student responses transcribed as an accommodation that are marked or written in anything other than the answer or combined test/answer booklet will not be scored; only responses in the regular answer or combined test/answer booklet will be scored. Student responses that are marked or written in anything other than the answer or combined test/answer booklet must be transcribed verbatim into an answer or combined test/answer booklet of the correct form designation. It is recommended the transcription take place in the presence of a professional staff member who will sign the appropriate *Test Security Certification* form. The student may not transcribe answers. Typewritten pages, separate handwritten pages, and large-print booklets will not be processed for scoring. Using a No. 2 pencil, responses (multiple-choice and open-ended) must be transcribed verbatim by the SAC or the SAC’s designee. The transcriber may not make corrections for spelling, punctuation, grammar or change student responses in any manner. All student work not in a test booklet, answer booklet, or combined test/answer booklet must be destroyed by the SAC or the SAC’s designee.

For mathematics and science constructed-response items, transfer student responses exactly as written including any work done to achieve the responses. For drawings or figures the student made, copy the drawings or figures into the correct space in the answer booklet. Transfer student responses to ELA items exactly as written; letter for letter, punctuation mark for punctuation mark, word for word. Care must be taken to replicate misspelled words, all uppercase/lowercase letters, and all spacing and paragraphing as written in the original student responses.

- f. **Assessment Conditions**—Emphasize the importance of good assessment conditions (e.g., a comfortable, quiet room without music or other distractions) and a positive approach to the assessment.
- g. **Special Instructions**—All testers using paper and pencil mode of testing must use a No. 2 pencil when responding to the assessment. Also, if there is no student specific label, all demographic data must be coded using a No. 2 pencil prior to the assessment.
- h. **Electronic Devices**—All unapproved electronic device (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, cameras, etc.) are to be collected as students enter the testing site. To ensure students and parents/guardians are aware of this policy the letter found in Appendix D should be provided to parents/guardians before testing.

A student observed actively engaged with an unapproved electronic device is defined as using the device. A student not observed using the unapproved electronic device, but in possession of an unapproved electronic device or found to have placed the unapproved electronic device where the student could easily access it, is considered the same as using an unapproved electronic device. An electronic device anywhere else in the room where a student cannot access it (e.g., in a backpack in the back of the room) should not be considered possession.

The consequences for and responses to a student using an unauthorized electronic device during the test administration include the following:

- i. Students using or possessing an unapproved electronic device must retake the assessment during the same administration testing window in order to receive a score. For a paper and pencil administration place a Do Not Score Label on the student's answer or combined test/answer booklet and re-test the student in a new booklet of a different form number. For an online administration, contact DRC at pacustomerservice@datarecognitioncorp.com. DRC will invalidate the assessment and reset the test prior to the student re-taking the test.
- ii. The unapproved electronic device must be confiscated and, in the presence and with the permission of the parent or guardian, the device must be examined to ensure that no information or material regarding the assessment is present.
- iii. Any data (photos, images, text, etc.) that constitutes a violation of the security or integrity of the test must be copied and reported to the Department of Education immediately at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.
- iv. Students with unapproved electronic devices that the student cannot access where the security or integrity of the test has not been compromised does not have to be reported to the Department of Education.
- v. The student should be disciplined in accordance with LEA policy, and that discipline may vary depending on whether test material has been compromised.
- vi. The parents and students may be responsible for the cost of replacing compromised items.

District personnel, school personnel, and students must understand that the integrity of the test must not be compromised.

- i. **Use of Calculators**—Review and follow the Pennsylvania Calculator Policy in Appendix E.

Calculators cannot be used for the grade 3 PSSA Mathematics assessment.

Calculators cannot be used on the non-calculator items in Section 1 of the grades 4 through 8 PSSA Mathematics assessment. Calculators may be used for the remaining questions in Section 1 and all questions in Section 2.

Calculators can be used on the grades 5 and 8 Science assessment.

- j. **Use of Dictionaries, Thesauri, Spell- or Grammar-Checkers**—Ensure that all TAs and Proctors are made aware that the use of these items is not permitted on any section of the PSSA. Ensure all background applications, such as Grammarly, are disabled on all testing devices.

Note: As an accommodation for English Learners (EL), word-to-word dictionaries that translate a native language to English (or English to a native language) without definitions or pictures are allowed on the mathematics and science assessments only.

- k. **Classroom Displays**—Explain that the *General Description of Scoring Guidelines*, *Writer's Checklists*, and the mathematics formula sheets may be displayed in the testing room. During test administration, paper and pencil testers will receive a separate handout of these documents. Online testers will access the documents through the test engine. LEAs are encouraged to provide copies of the grades 4–8 mathematics formula sheets for students testing online. For reference, the *Scoring Guidelines*, *Formula Sheets* and *Writer's Checklists* are available for download on the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html>.
- l. **Barcode Labels**—Emphasize the important aspects of barcode label use for paper and pencil mode. For more details, see page 31, "Labeling Answer And Combined Test/Answer Booklets."

- m. **Make-up Sessions**—Review the school entity’s make-up procedures. For more details, see page 46, “Make-up Sessions.”
- n. **Scratch Paper**—Remind TAs and Proctors that scratch paper must be provided to students for use during the assessments. Blank graph and grid paper are allowed. All scratch and/or grid paper must be removed from the booklets by the students. Collect all scratch and/or grid paper and any other paper on which students have written at the end of each test session and return it to the SAC to be destroyed. TAs must collect all used scratch paper after the mathematics non-calculator portion in addition to collecting the remaining scratch paper and any other paper on which students have written at the end of the session to ensure students have not recorded non-calculator items on scratch paper.
- o. **Response Space**—Emphasize that students are limited to the response space provided in the booklet or test engine. Additional pages/booklets will not be scored.
- p. **Code of Conduct**—Instruct TAs to review the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* (Appendix F) with all students in advance of the testing day. Prior to starting the assessment, students will be required to indicate that they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* that their TA (or other school personnel) has reviewed with them. It is important that TAs are prepared to answer any questions about the code of conduct so that all students can acknowledge their understanding of the requirements. The paper and pencil and online *Directions for Administration Manuals* will provide instructions as to how the student will confirm their understanding of the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers*.
- q. **Security**—Emphasize that all test materials, including test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, test tickets, and content in the online test must be kept secure at all times prior to, during, and after the assessment, and that completed booklets must be kept secure. Remind TAs that computer monitoring software and other background applications must be disabled during testing including Grammarly, spell checking, suggested words, etc.
- r. **Teacher of Record**—To prevent any suspicion of testing anomalies, PDE strongly encourages school entities not to allow teachers to be TAs and/or Proctors of their own students for the content area in which they teach. As such, it is recommended that other teachers be used as TAs and/or Proctors, or that a Proctor be in the testing room with the teacher if the teacher serves as a TA for the students they instruct.

PDE requires that all tests identify the TA who administers the assessment. It is the SAC’s responsibility to ensure TAs and Proctors understand that each assessment returned will be linked to the TA who administered the assessment.

For paper and pencil, TA initials must be bubbled on the back page of each student answer or combined test/answer booklet. When creating test sessions for online testing, a TA will be required for each session.

- s. **Sign Language Interpreters**—In collaboration with the Bureau of Special Education, the following guidance is provided: A separate TA is required for test settings where an educational sign language interpreter has been assigned to interpret allowable Keystone and PSSA test material for a student(s). The SAC must ensure that an educational sign language interpreter receives assessment training and completes the PSTAT. The interpreter must sign the *Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter* found in Appendix C (also found in the *Accommodations Guidelines*) prior to viewing any of the secure materials and sign the *General Test Security Certification* found in Appendix B after completion of the PSSA administration. Before signing the certification, cross out the word “reviewed” in the third paragraph.

4. COMPLETING THE MATERIALS RECEIPT NOTICE

SACs in a ship-to-school will need to complete the Materials Receipt Notice through the DRC INSIGHT Portal. See the DAC information on page 8 for information on completing the Materials Receipt Notice.

5. REQUESTING ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

SACs needing additional materials will need to follow the process in place at their LEA to order the additional materials. If the SAC is responsible for requesting additional materials follow the directions provided on page 8.

6. MAINTAINING SECURE STORAGE

Please see the DAC information on page 8 on maintaining secure storage.

7. LATE RETURN OF TEST MATERIALS

Please see the DAC information on page 8 on returning materials using the schedule provided.

8. HANDBOOK FOR SECURE TEST ADMINISTRATION

Read the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A concerning the SAC and TA responsibilities.

C. Test Administrator (TA) Responsibilities

Any person who functions as a TA or will be assisting test administration in any capacity must complete the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT) at www.pstattraining.net. This interactive course is designed as an individual, one-to-one training that provides key components to administering the PSSA and/or Keystone Exams. A certificate of completion will be issued to the TA when the course is completed. This certification must be given to the SAC.

In addition, teachers, counselors, administrators, and paraprofessional who will be acting as TAs and/or Proctors along with staff handling or having access to secure test material must attend a school level training held by the SAC at least one week prior to the start of the testing window.

During PSSA test administration, TAs must actively monitor at all times. TAs must not engage in any activity which may distract them from their assigned test monitoring duties. Such activities include, but are not limited to: (1) working on a computer, (2) reading, (3) using a cell phone, (4) grading papers, and (5) having conversations not related to monitoring.

Test Administrators should read the TA responsibilities from the *Handbook for Secure Test Administration* in Appendix A.

PART III – STUDENT PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES FOR ALL ASSESSMENTS

A. Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* (Appendix F) provides requirements that students must follow before, during, and after each assessment. **It is important that the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* be reviewed with all students and all questions are answered such that all students understand each point in this code of conduct before the testing day.** TAs must be prepared to answer any questions about the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* so that all students can acknowledge their understanding of the requirements. Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.

Prior to starting the assessment, students will be required to indicate that they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* that was reviewed with them by their Test Administrators (TAs) (or other school employees).

For the paper and pencil administration, students will indicate they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* by bubbling in a response. For the online administration, students indicate they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* by starting the exam. See the mode-specific *Directions for Administration Manuals* for more details.

B. General Student Participation in the Assessment

With only a few very specific exceptions, the following students must participate (regardless of where the student is being educated) as PSSA assessment participation is used for State and Federal Accountability.

1. Public school students enrolled in grades 3 through 8 are required to participate in the 2025 English Language Arts (ELA) PSSA or the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) in English Language Arts (ELA). The ELA test is optional for EL students in their first (cumulative of time in the US) year of enrollment in US schools.
2. Public school students enrolled in grades 3 through 8 are required to participate in the 2025 Mathematics PSSA or the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) in mathematics.
3. Public school students enrolled in grades 5 and 8 are required to participate in the 2025 Science PSSA or the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA) in science.
4. Participation by students in non-public schools is voluntary. Non-public schools that do participate must follow the same guidelines set-forth for public schools.

The student's current grade level must be assessed at the time of the assessment window.

An answer booklet or online assessment must be returned for every student, with the exception of the students who take an alternate assessment (PASA). Foreign exchange students are to be included in PSSA testing based on federal guidelines. In a few cases foreign exchange students may qualify for EL (English Learner) services. The foreign exchange students being served via an EL program will be treated as EL students when administering the PSSA.

The student data used for accountability purposes are pulled from the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) on the last day of each subject's testing window. It is the responsibility of each public school to ensure that all of its students are administered the exam, whether the student is being educated within the district or testing in an out-of-district placement.

C. Participation of Students With Accommodations

All students with disabilities, except those participating in the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA), should be provided the same allowable accommodations in the state assessment environment as provided for in their 22 PA Code Chapter 14 or Chapter 711 Individualized Education Program (IEP) or their 22 PA Code Chapter 15 Service Agreement regarding their instruction. For more information, refer to the *Accommodations Guidelines* found on the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html>.

D. Court/Agency Placed Student Participation Information

Court/agency placed students are required to participate in the assessments regardless of whether the student has an IEP or 504 plan. Students who have been court or agency placed into a non-public setting (e.g., Private Residential Rehabilitation Institution (PRRI) or other juvenile delinquency institution, mental health, drug and/or alcohol treatment facility) are not exempt from participation in the assessments. Requirements for PSSA participation for these students are the same as the requirements for general education students.

Court agency/placed students should be identified on page 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet or within the portal under 'Student Management' > 'Manage Students.'

Students attending alternative education programs, IU programs, PRRIs, or Approved Private Schools placed by the school or district should not be identified as court/agency placed.

E. Participation in the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA)

Students who are eligible to take the PASA will complete ELA, mathematics, and science during the PASA testing window. For more information on PASA, visit the PDE website at: Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA).

Students must meet specific state identified criteria in order to participate in the PASA. The IEP team must be able to answer 'yes' to all six of PA's criteria and document the data associated with this decision in section IV of the IEP. IEP teams must use the following PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool to determine PASA eligibility. The Pennsylvania goal is to align the percentage of students taking the PASA with the federal requirement of one percent or less at the state level.

PASA Eligibility Criteria:

Decision Making Companion Tool

The *PASA Eligibility Criteria: Decision Making Companion Tool* is a resource provided to individualized education program (IEP) teams in Pennsylvania to assist in determining eligibility for the Pennsylvania Alternate System of Assessment (PASA). The PASA is appropriate for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who meet all six requirements listed below. Additional considerations are provided that further define the criteria and assist the IEP team in decision making. Factors that the IEP team should not consider in eligibility determination are also identified.

The IEP team must answer “YES” to **all** six criteria in order for the student to participate in the PASA. If the answer is “NO” to any of the questions, the student must participate in the PSSA/Keystones with or without accommodations, as determined appropriate by the IEP team.

<p>1 _____ YES</p> <p>Will the student be in grade 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 11 by September 1 of the school year during which the IEP will be operative?</p> <p>Additional consideration: The grade level listed for the student in the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) and the PASA digital system must correlate to the assessment decision documented in the current IEP.</p>	<p>2 _____ YES</p> <p>Does the student have significant cognitive disabilities? Pennsylvania defines significant cognitive disabilities as pervasive and global in nature, affecting student learning in all academic content areas, as well as adaptive behaviors and functional skills across life domains.</p> <p>Additional consideration: A significant cognitive disability is not directly defined by a Chapter 14 disability category. Typically students with a primary disability category of Specific Learning Disability or Speech Language Impairment DO NOT meet the definition of a significant cognitive disability. Generally, a student with a significant cognitive disability may be characterized as having intellectual functioning below average – cognitive measures of intelligence 2.5 to 3.0 standard deviations below the mean.</p>	<p>3 _____ YES</p> <p>Does the student require intensive, direct, and repeated instruction in order to learn and generalize academic, functional, and adaptive behavior skills across multiple settings?</p> <p>Additional consideration: The student’s course of study includes functional skills. Instruction typically occurs in a one-to-one or small group setting with opportunity to generalize and transfer skills across multiple settings.</p>
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4 _____ YES

Does the student require extensive adaptation and support in order to perform and/or participate meaningfully and productively in the everyday life activities of integrated school, home, community, and work environments?

Additional consideration:
A significant cognitive disability is pervasive, affecting student functioning across all academic, social, and community settings. The student is expected to require intensive and ongoing supports after graduation.

5 _____ YES

Does the student require substantial modifications to the general education curriculum?

Additional consideration:
Substantial modifications change the content expectation by a significant reduction in depth, breadth, and complexity of grade-level standards as exemplified in the Alternate Eligible Content.

6 _____ YES

Does the student's participation in the general curriculum differ substantially in form and/or substance from that of most other students? Students found eligible to take the PASA must have measurable annual goals and short-term objectives reflected in the IEP.

Additional consideration:
Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities likely require objectives, materials, prompting hierarchies, and teaching modalities different from the general education curriculum. The student's goals and objectives typically reflect the Alternate Eligible Content.

PASA eligibility determinations are NOT based on:

- IQ score or disability category alone (i.e., All students with an intellectual disability do not automatically qualify for the alternate assessment.)
- English Learner (EL) Status
- Poor attendance
- Expected poor performance on the general assessments
- Educational environment or instructional setting
- Low reading or achievement level
- Anticipated disruptive behavior or emotional duress
- Impact of scores on accountability system
- Administrative decision



F. Procedures for Non-Assessed Students

For paper and pencil testers, use the “Non-Assessed Students” grid on page 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet and darken the bubble next to the reason the student did not participate. For online testers, students must be included in a test session and the non-assessed code is selected within the student’s information found under Student Management/Manage Students. The non-assessed information does not override student responses. If a student attempts all sections of a subject, the student’s responses will be scanned and will be scored regardless of any non-assessed fields that are coded.

Students not participating in the assessment must be coded under one or more of the following categories:

1. **Student had a recent medical emergency:** This applies only to rare circumstances in which a student cannot take or finish taking the assessment during the entire testing window, including make-up dates, due to a recent significant medical emergency. In these situations, the student has remained enrolled at the school, yet the medical circumstances might prohibit the student from participating in the assessment during the testing window. For example, this might include a situation in which a student is recovering from a recent car accident. In order to mark the student as not tested due to a “recent medical emergency,” a note from a doctor excusing the student from participation or hospital documentation must be on file with the LEA.

Special Circumstance: If a student has been diagnosed with a concussive injury and there is medical documentation within two weeks of the start of the testing window that states the student may not participate in standardized testing, school personnel must select “Student had a recent medical emergency.” In all other instances involving concussive injuries and student non-participation due to illness/health issue, the student should be coded as “Other.”

The “recent medical emergency” option allows schools to omit such students when calculating student participation rates. This will ensure that schools whose accountability status might be affected by such situations will not be improperly designated. Keep in mind that if a student is receiving education services (school enrollment, hospital, treatment facility, homebound, etc.) during the testing window, the student must be given the opportunity to participate in the PSSAs at the location the student is receiving the educational services.

2. **Student had an extended absence for the entire testing window.** Schools must make every effort to ensure that all students who experience absences during the testing window are able to participate in the assessments during the school’s make-up sessions. Students who are non-assessed due to an absence without make-up will have a negative effect on the school’s participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school’s accountability status.

If a student is absent from school for an extended period that continues beyond the last day of the PDE-established testing window, school personnel must select “Student had an extended absence for the entire testing window.”

- 3. Student's parent/guardian requested in writing that the student be excluded from participation after reviewing the assessment and determining it to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs:** Chapter 4 of Title 2 of the Pa. Code (22 Pa. Code 4.4) provides for the right of any parent/guardian to excuse a child from the state assessment if, upon inspection of the testing materials, the parent/guardian finds the assessment to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs. This is the only basis under Chapter 4 rules for a parent/guardian to excuse a child from the statewide assessments.
- a. Once tests have been received by the LEA, assessments must be available for review by parents and guardians from the time of receipt through the end of the testing window. The assessment must be reviewed on district property and district personnel must be present at all times. Districts must provide a convenient time for the review. This may include an evening review time, if requested. Proper security and confidentiality of the assessment must be maintained at all times.
 - b. Sites testing 100% online and not receiving paper materials can request an online test ticket for parental reviews. These test tickets will allow parents/guardians to view the same online test that will be administered across the LEA. The review must be conducted on district property and district personnel must be present at all times. LEAs must follow the same security procedures for an online parental review that are required when a parent/guardian is reviewing a paper test. Please see the Online Parent Review information on page 24. However, if the district administration or the DAC/SAC would rather order a set of paper and pencil assessments for the purposes of parental review, these booklets must be returned to DRC following the return instructions outlined in this handbook.
 - c. Parents and guardians must sign the **Parent Confidentiality Agreement** prior to examining test materials. A copy of this must be locally maintained. (Do not send this statement to PDE or DRC.) Parents and guardians may not photocopy, write down, or in any other manner record any portion of the assessments, including directions. The Parent Confidentiality Agreement can be found in Appendix C.
 - d. If after reviewing the test, parents/guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious beliefs and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the parents/guardians must provide a written request to the Superintendent or Chief Executive Officer that states they do not want their child tested because the test conflicts with their religious beliefs. If a parent/guardian requests their child be opted out for religious reasons any time during testing the request should be honored. Note: If the parent/guardian's request comes after the paper and pencil test has been returned to DRC, the request cannot be honored.
 - e. If the student is excused from the assessment due to parental or guardian request, school personnel must provide an alternative learning environment for the student during the assessment and select "Student's parent/guardian requested in writing that the student be excluded from participation after reviewing the assessment and determining it to be in conflict with the parent's/guardian's religious beliefs."
 - f. Students who do not participate in the assessment due to parental request will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.
- 4. Student's parent/guardian chose to exclude the student from participation based on reason(s) other than conflict with religious beliefs, even though there is no provision for this exclusion in Pennsylvania regulation:** Even though PDE does not recognize parental refusal as an allowable exclusion, if a parent refuses to have a child participate in the assessment and does not provide a reason in accordance with Chapter 4 rules, school personnel should select "Student's parent/guardian chose to exclude the student from participation based on reason(s) other than conflict with religious beliefs, even though there is no provision for this exclusion in Pennsylvania regulation." LEAs should check with their solicitor to determine if they will accept refusals, and if they do, determine the procedures to be followed. Students who do not participate in the assessment due to parental refusal will negatively affect the school's participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school's accountability status.

5. **Other:** Although there is no other apparent reason for student non-participation in the assessment, this category is provided for the rare exception. The most notable exception is student refusal to participate at the time of testing. Refusal represents a defiant act on the student’s part despite school personnel’s every effort to obtain compliance. If you have exhausted all options and believe you have a case that fits into this category, select “Other.” Indicating that a student did not participate in the assessments due to “other” reasons will negatively affect the school’s participation rate and can potentially have a negative impact on the school’s accountability status.

G. Student Withdrawal/Enrollment During the Testing Window

PDE has established separate testing windows for English Language Arts and Mathematics/Science that correspond to student data being pulled from PIMS on the last day of those testing windows. The purpose is to ensure that each student is reported at the district/school in which the student is enrolled on the last day of each subject-specific window, including the student’s corresponding Full Academic Year status for each subject. Accordingly, all students are to be attributed to the school and/or district in which they are enrolled on the last day of each testing window.

For the vast majority of students, their district/school of attendance will not change between the assessments. However, to account for student transfers and enrollment changes that occur within the entire PSSA testing window, please follow the guidelines outlined below.

If a student completes an entire assessment but withdraws prior to the end of a subject-specific testing window, return the used answer booklet to DRC to be scored. If the student tested online and the results have been submitted, no further action is needed. The score generated from the completed test will be attributed to the school to which the student transferred (if applicable).

If a school receives a new student prior to the close of the subject-specific testing window, the new school has the responsibility to test the student if the student has not already completed the assessment. The new school also has the responsibility to research whether the student has already taken the test to avoid the unfair burden of re-testing a student who may have completed the assessment in its entirety.

If a student enrolls after the close of a subject-specific testing window, the student is not to be administered that assessment because the PDE-established testing window for the subject will have already passed and the student’s participation was the responsibility of the former LEA.

If a student does not complete an entire assessment and withdraws or transfers out of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania prior to the end of a subject-specific window, place a Do Not Score Label on the student’s answer booklet before returning it to DRC. If the student began an online assessment and withdraws, contact DRC for assistance on removing the student’s assessment. The incomplete test in such a scenario cannot be used by the student’s new school.

District and schools will have an opportunity to review all student records, including those that are impacted by transfers during the test window, within the Grades 3–8 Attribution System window.

In all cases of enrollment during the testing window, the school that receives a transferred student’s score (whether through attribution, via PIMS designation, or by administering the assessment) should be aware that the new student does not meet the Full Academic Year requirement for the school and will not count in the school’s accountability performance calculation. The PIMS data for the student at the new school will indicate that the enrollment began after October 1 (i.e., Not Full Academic Year). Schools should never attribute the records of transfer students back to their previous districts if the students were enrolled in the new school on the last day of the subject-specific testing windows.

H. Testing of Suspended and Expelled Students

Students who have been suspended from daily classroom attendance, but remain on the school's enrollment, should be administered the assessments. The location of the testing (at a school within the district or via homebound instruction) is a district decision. If the district chooses not to test the suspended student, the assessment should be coded as non-assessed due to extended absence.

Students who have been expelled from school and who have been completely removed from the district's enrollments do not need to be administered the assessments. However, if the student remains on the district's enrollment after the expulsion (e.g., the student is placed in an alternate education facility, program, or setting), it is the district's responsibility to ensure that the student is tested.

I. Home Education Students (Home-Schooled)

If the parent/guardian of a home-schooled student requests that the student take the PSSA, the school district must allow the student to take the assessment at the school building the home-schooled student would normally attend or at another central location agreed to by the school district and the parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians of home-schooled students who plan to request that the student take the PSSA with accommodations are subject to the same procedures and timelines as public school students. According to the law, it could take several months for the determination to be made that a student is eligible for administration of the PSSA with accommodations.

Information about home education in Pennsylvania, including the Pennsylvania law on home education and related statutes, regulations, frequently asked questions (and answers), and a list of home education organizations serving Pennsylvania families, is available on PDE's website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html> (keyword search "home education").

Note: Home-schooled students without PAsecureIDs can only be administered the paper and pencil assessment. A District/School Label must be affixed to the used answer or combined test/answer booklet in order for the booklet to be scored. Home-schooled students with PAsecureIDs can be included in a test session to access the online assessments. Full-time home education students should be identified as "Student is home-schooled and assessed at parental request."

J. First-Year English Learner

Participation is required for the mathematics and science assessments, and optional for the ELA assessment for students identified as English Learners (EL) who are in their first year of enrollment in a U.S. school. In 2007, the USDE released guidance on participation of LEP students (ELs) in state assessments. This flexibility allows EL students whose enrollment in any public school in the United States is fewer than 12 cumulative months (not consecutive) the option of taking the ELA PSSA or Literature Keystone exam. It is incumbent upon the LEA to determine a student's EL first-year status.

Note: This exemption can only be used for a student one time.

If an EL student does not participate in the ELA assessment due to first year of enrollment in a U.S. school, a test should still be returned. The first-time EL students should be identified as "Student is a first-year English Learner."

PART IV – ONLINE ADMINISTRATION

A. Informational References for Online Testing

The School and District Assessment Coordinators involved with online testing should refer to the *DRC INSIGHT Portal User Guide* and the subject-specific *Directions for Online Administration Manuals*. These documents contain specific information related to using the DRC INSIGHT Portal to set up students and computers for online testing and managing student test tickets. The user guide and the *Directions for Online Administration Manuals* are available on the portal under the General Information/Documents section.

The *Technology User Guide* is available for the District Technology Coordinator. This user guide provides detailed assistance for downloading the testing software. This user guide is located on the portal under General Information/Documents/Technology.

B. Student Records from PIMS

Student records provided to DRC from PIMS (from the assessment-specific precode templates) are automatically uploaded to the DRC INSIGHT Portal with all associated student demographic data. These student records are available to be placed into online test sessions. Student details are found under the Student Management section within the portal.

Student records that were not included in the PIMS file need to be manually uploaded to the portal before a student can be added to an online test session. When adding a student record, the student's name, date of birth, and PAsecureID must match PIMS to ensure accurate reporting. If a student record that is manually uploaded to the portal cannot match the subsequent PIMS data for reporting (e.g., manually uploading "Bella" will not match with "Isabella" in PIMS), there could be a negative impact on reporting.

C. Accommodations

Accommodation information for students testing online must be completed within the DRC INSIGHT Portal under Student Management. LEAs will not have an opportunity to provide accommodation information for online testers through any other systems.

Students requiring an accommodation that is delivered by the online test engine (e.g., audio) must have the accommodation selected **prior** to creating test tickets. The accommodation will not be available during online testing unless it is printed on a student's test ticket. If a student begins an assessment without a needed accommodation, the test will need to be regenerated to add the accommodation and the student's responses will be lost.

Audio uses text-to-speech software for students who have a documented need for all or many of the allowable test items to be read aloud. For ELA, only approved language items and text dependent analysis prompts will be read aloud within the online tool.

The Color Preferences accommodation is available for students who need color overlay accommodations. When a student has the color overlay accommodation selected, the student will be able to choose the correct text and background color.

Video Sign Language is available for students who need mathematics and/or science items signed.

Refreshable Braille is available to students with visual impairments who use a Job Access With Speech (JAWS) screen reader. **Note:** Students using this accommodation will also need the hard-copy Braille version to access graphics found in some of the items.

Mixed Mode accommodation assists students who will benefit from online testing but have limited or no capacity for extended keyboarding. This accommodation is available for all subjects and grades. Students who use this accommodation because they are unable to type their own open-ended response(s) into the online version of the test but are able to handwrite a response must respond to all multiple-choice questions online and must respond

to open-ended questions on the paper and pencil booklet using their own handwriting. As this accommodation uses both the online and paper and pencil modes, the accommodation should be marked on the student's answer booklet and in the portal. Directions for administering the PSSA for students with the mixed-mode response accommodation can be found on the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

Other accommodations, such as setting and timing accommodations, can be selected after the student has completed testing. Explanations to these accommodations are presented in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* (this manual) starting on page 35, "Accommodations." Also refer to the *Accommodations Guidelines* document found on the PDE website.

D. Non-Assessed Students

An assessment must be returned for every student in Grades 3–8 for ELA and Math, and Grades 5 and 8 for Science, with the exception of the student who takes the alternate assessment (PASA). If a non-assessed student would have taken the assessment online, the student must remain in a test session and have a non-assessed code marked in the DRC INSIGHT Portal. This is the only way the student will have a test record that can be matched to PIMS for accountability reporting. The non-assessed code is selected within the DRC INSIGHT Portal found under Student Management.

E. Teacher Management

PDE requires that all test sessions identify the Test Administrator (TA) who will administer the assessment. When creating test sessions in the DRC INSIGHT Portal, District or School Assessment Coordinators will be required to add a Test Administrator ("Teacher") to each test session. If an assigned TA needs to change after setup, a new/different TA can be added to the existing test session. Test Administrator details are managed under the Teacher Management section within the portal.

F. Test Sessions and Test Tickets

Creating a test session generates the test tickets and rosters that are used for online testing login. Test Sessions will be created and managed under Test Management within the portal.

Once test sessions are created, the test tickets and rosters will be immediately available. A test ticket contains student login information and should not be printed until they are to be distributed to the test administrators. Each section will have a separate test ticket with a unique password. This will require tickets to be printed for each section. Test tickets are secure materials and must be kept secure at all times prior to, during, and after the assessment.

Prior to test administration, it is important to view the roster to confirm the list of students testing within the session. The assessment coordinator should also review, before printing, that the students' names, PAsecureIDs, dates of birth, and accommodations are accurate. Updates need to be made prior to the student logging into the assessment. Test tickets for individual students may need to be reprinted if a change is made to a student's accommodation.

After each testing session, TAs must return test tickets, used and unused, and scratch paper to the SAC.

G. Code of Conduct

The *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* should be reviewed with all student in advance of the testing day. Within the online assessment, students will acknowledge they understand the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* prior to beginning the assessment. It is important that TAs are prepared to answer any questions about the code of conduct so that all students can acknowledge their understanding of the requirements. Instructions are available in the *Directions for Online Administration Manual*.

H. Student Reference Materials

For students testing online, the scoring guidelines, formula sheets, writer’s checklists, ruler, protractor, and calculator are available through the test engine. Students should use the Online Tools Trainings to ensure they can locate these reference documents and tools during the test. LEAs are encouraged to provide copies of the grades 4–8 mathematics formula sheets. For reference, the formula sheets are available for download on the PDE website.

I. Student Status Dashboard

During test administration, assessment coordinators have access to the Student Status Dashboard found under the Student Management section of the DRC INSIGHT Portal. This dashboard displays student testing status which helps manage non-assessed students, make-up sessions, and extended time.

J. PA Online Tutorials

The PA Online Tutorials have been created for each assessment and are designed to be used by students at all grade levels. The tutorials use pictures, motion, and sound to present visual and verbal descriptions of the properties and features of the PA Online Assessment System. Tutorials are accessible from the DRC INSIGHT test engine or publicly from the General Information/Tutorials tab on the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

K. PA Online Tools Training (OTT)

The PA Online Tools Training (OTT) is designed to provide an introductory experience using the online assessment software in preparation for taking the PSSAs. This allows students to become familiar with testing on a computer and allows them to experiment with the features available during an actual test. Two versions of the OTT are available – a public version and a secure version. The secure version is automatically downloaded when the District Technology Coordinator downloads the testing software. To view the public version:

- Go to the DRC INSIGHT portal at pa.drccdirect.com.
- On the home page, copy the Online Tools Training link into Google Chrome.
- In the new window, select the assessment and subject links as needed.

L. DESMOS Calculator

The DRC INSIGHT test engine uses the DESMOS online calculator. If a student needs another calculator model, the calculator must follow the calculator policy found in Appendix E.

DESMOS calculators are available free online, and students can use these calculators for schoolwork. The DESMOS calculators that have been programmed for Pennsylvania state assessments are located at www.desmos.com/testing/pennsylvania.

M. Use of Student Computers and Student Devices for Online Testing (One-to-One Student Devices)

Please reference page 6 for the one-to-one student device policy.

N. Parent Reviews for Online Testing

Sites testing 100% online and not receiving paper materials will have access to the online assessments for parental reviews. About three weeks prior to the start of the assessment, each district assessment coordinator will receive access to test tickets for parental reviews. LEAs must follow the same security procedures for an online parental review that are required when a parent/guardian is reviewing a paper test. Access to the test engine for parental reviews will not be available until two weeks prior to the beginning of the test window. The test engine for online testing is available from 6:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the administration window. If a parent is scheduled to review the test after 5:00 p.m., a printed copy of the PSSA for the grade and subject will need to be ordered.

PART V – RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

A. District and School Assessment Coordinator Checklists

The following checklists are general guidelines of critical dates by which an activity should take place. As a reminder, schools that receive materials directly from DRC should use both checklists.

Sites that are only testing students online and did not order accommodated forms (e.g., Braille, large-print, or Spanish) will not receive a shipment of secure materials. These sites can ignore the dates associated with inventorying and distributing secure materials and returning materials back to DRC in the tables below.

District Assessment Coordinator's Checklist		
_____	Receive Shipment I from DRC	By March 24, 2025
_____	Distribute Shipment I to School Assessment Coordinators	March 26, 2025
_____	Read the <i>Handbook for Assessment Coordinators</i>	March 27, 2025
_____	Distribute parent/guardian flyers in newsletter or mail	March 27, 2025
_____	Conduct training session for School Assessment Coordinators	By March 31, 2025
_____	Receive Shipment II from DRC	By April 7, 2025
_____	Distribute Shipment II to School Assessment Coordinators	April 7, 2025
_____	Request additional materials (if needed)	April 7–May 8, 2025
_____	PSSA English Language Arts Assessment Window	April 21–25, 2025
_____	Inventory English Language Arts materials returned by schools	April 28, 2025
_____	Return English Language Arts materials to DRC	April 30, 2025
_____	PSSA Mathematics and Science Assessment Window	April 28–May 2, 2025
_____	Inventory Mathematics and Science materials returned by schools	As Soon As Possible
_____	Return Mathematics and Science materials to DRC for June 2 reporting	May 2, 2025
_____	Optional PSSA Mathematics and Science Assessment Window	May 5–9, 2025
_____	Return any remaining secure materials to DRC for June 24 reporting	May 5–14, 2025
_____	Confirm that ALL secure materials have been returned to DRC	May 14, 2025

School Assessment Coordinator's Checklist		
_____	Receive and inventory Shipment I	March 26, 2025
_____	Distribute the <i>Directions for Administration Manuals</i> (DFA)	March 27, 2025
_____	Distribute parent/guardian flyers in newsletter or mail	March 27, 2025
_____	Read the <i>Handbook for Assessment Coordinators</i> and the DFA Manuals	March 31, 2025
_____	Attend School Assessment Coordinator training	By March 31, 2025
_____	Receive and inventory Shipment II	April 7, 2025
_____	Request additional materials (if needed)	April 7–May 8, 2025
_____	Conduct training session for Test Administrators	By April 14, 2025
_____	Assist and supervise Test Administrators during the ELA assessments	April 21–25, 2025
_____	Inventory, package, and return ELA materials to the District Assessment Coordinator	April 25, 2025
_____	Assist and supervise Test Administrators during the Math and Science assessments	April 28–May 9, 2025
_____	Inventory, package, and return Math and Science materials to the District Assessment Coordinator	As Soon As Possible/Before May 14, 2025
_____	Destroy scratch paper and any other paper on which students have written	May 14, 2025

B. Receipt of Materials

Materials will arrive in two separate shipments. Districts and schools should be prepared to receive, store, and distribute the volume of boxes associated with the multiple assessments. For ship-to-district sites, school boxes are provided for each participating school. If not inventoried centrally, the boxes should be sent to the schools as soon as they have been received. A copy of each school's packing list is contained in the district administrative materials. Ship-to-school and other special sites receive both district and school materials.

Shipment I (one) will contain this handbook and the *Directions for Administration Manuals*. SACs should be given ample time to distribute the *Directions for Administration Manuals* to TAs. This should be done as soon as the manuals are received to allow time for the TAs to study them prior to an orientation session.

Shipment II (two) contains the secure assessment booklets, precode labels, and all accommodated materials.

If materials are not received by the dates in the table above, the DAC (or SAC at ship-to-school sites) should contact DRC Customer Service at 800-451-7849.

Note: DRC will provide precode labels for all students. If a student is testing online, the precode label can be discarded. A booklet does not need to be returned for a student completing an online assessment.

- a. Accurately inventory the materials immediately upon receipt, without breaking the shrink-wrapped packs. Each shrink-wrapped package has a range sheet that identifies the quantity of booklets and the range of security numbers it contains. These range sheets can be used to inventory the booklets without opening the packages. In most cases, the School Assessment Coordinator (SAC) will be responsible for assigning secure

ranges of materials for TAs. It is vital that everyone understands the importance of assigning materials by security range. The shrink-wrapped packages may be broken open to assemble proper quantities for each TA. Shrink-wrapped packages should only be opened at the school level and should not be opened until school personnel are ready to affix barcode labels, no more than two weeks prior to the start of a testing window.

- b. Be sure to save the box(es) in which the materials were sent.** They will be used to return the materials after the assessments. (If a box is damaged, or if all materials do not fit into the original box(es), a box similar in size and strength from the school may be substituted.)
- c.** After inventorying Shipment II, store all materials in a predetermined, locked, secure storage area.
- d.** Complete the Materials Receipt Notice through the DRC INSIGHT Portal. For more details see page 8, "Completing the Materials Receipt Notice."
- e.** Complete an Additional Materials Request (if needed) through the DRC INSIGHT portal. For more details see page 8, "Requesting Additional Materials."

SHIPMENT I (ONE) MATERIALS

DISTRICT—ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS

1. Copies of School Packing List(s)—one per school
2. School Box Range Sheet—indicates the number of boxes packaged for each school in the district for ship-to-district sites
3. *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*—this manual
4. *Directions for Administration Manuals* for paper and pencil testing (if testing paper)
5. *Directions for Online Administration Manuals* (if testing online)
6. Spanish-translation *Directions for Administration Manuals* (when applicable)

SCHOOL—MANUALS

1. *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*—this manual
2. *Directions for Administration Manuals* for paper and pencil testing (if testing paper)
3. *Directions for Online Administration Manuals* (if testing online)
4. Spanish-translation *Directions for Administration Manuals* (when applicable)

SHIPMENT II (TWO) MATERIALS

DISTRICT—ADMINISTRATIVE AND RETURN MATERIALS

1. School Box Range Sheet—indicates the number of boxes packaged for each school
2. UPS/DRC Return Shipment (RS) Labels for Answer Documents—used for returning boxes containing answer and combined test/answer booklets
3. UPS/DRC Return Shipment (RS) Labels for Test Booklets and Unopened Packages—used for returning boxes containing test booklets and unopened packages
4. Plastic Return Shipment Bags—used to package answer and combined test/answer booklets for return to DRC
5. Plastic ties—for sealing Plastic Return Shipment Bags

SCHOOL—ADMINISTRATIVE MATERIALS

1. Security Checklist
2. School Packing List
3. Student Precode Labels, District/School Labels, and Do Not Score Labels

SCHOOL—SECURE MATERIALS

English Language Arts

1. Grade 3 ELA booklets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 11 and presented as a combined test/answer booklet
2. Grade 3 ELA scoring guidelines—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
3. Grades 4 through 8 ELA test and answer booklets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 11

Note: The test booklets and answer booklets will be shrink-wrapped together by form designation (i.e., a Form 1 test booklet will always be followed by a Form 1 answer booklet).

4. Grades 4–8 ELA scoring guidelines/writer’s checklists—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
5. Shrink-wrapped ELA large-print kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Grade 3 kit contains one large-print combined test/answer booklet, one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

Grades 4–8 kits contain one large-print test booklet, one large-print answer booklet, one Form 1 test booklet, and one Form 1 answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

6. Shrink-wrapped ELA Braille kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Grade 3 kit contains one Braille booklet and one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

Grades 4–8 kits contain one Braille booklet, one Form 1 test booklet, and one Form 1 answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

Mathematics

1. Grade 3–8 mathematics booklets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 11 and presented as a combined test/answer booklet
2. Rulers for grade 3 students to answer PSSA mathematics questions
3. Protractors for grade 4 students to answer PSSA mathematics questions
4. Grade 3 mathematics scoring guidelines—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
5. Grade 4 mathematics scoring guidelines/formula sheets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
6. Grade 5 mathematics scoring guidelines/formula sheets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
7. Grade 6 mathematics scoring guidelines/formula sheets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
8. Grade 7 mathematics scoring guidelines/formula sheets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
9. Grade 8 mathematics scoring guidelines/formula sheets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
10. Shrink-wrapped Spanish-translation combined test/answer booklet with Spanish-translation scoring guidelines/formula sheets (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Each Spanish kit will also include an English-language version of the assessment for reference.

11. Shrink-wrapped mathematics large-print kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Large-print kits contain one large-print combined test/answer booklet and one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

12. Shrink-wrapped mathematics Braille kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Braille kits contain one Braille booklet and one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

Science

1. Grades 5 and 8 science booklets—shrink-wrapped in packs of 11 and presented as a combined test/answer booklet
2. Scoring Guidelines—shrink-wrapped in packs of 15
3. Shrink-wrapped Spanish-translation test and answer booklets with Spanish-translation scoring guidelines (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Each Spanish kit will also include an English-language version of the assessment for reference.

4. Shrink-wrapped science large-print kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Large-print kits contain one large-print combined test/answer booklet and one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

5. Shrink-wrapped science Braille kit (per grade level, if applicable)

Note: Braille kits contain one Braille booklet and one Form 1 combined test/answer booklet.

The Form 1 answer booklet is used for transcription.

C. Procedures for Assigning Booklets Using Security Numbers

The Security Checklist should be used as a tool to account for the secure materials as they are distributed to the TAs and to monitor the materials as they are returned by the TAs. Account for any difference between the number of materials distributed and the number returned by noting the reason on the Security Checklist. Any discrepancies that are not resolved before materials are returned to the DAC must be noted on the Materials Accountability Form found on the DRC INSIGHT portal. No one is permitted to retain any assessment booklets for any reason after all testing and make-ups are complete.

The Security Checklist should not be returned to DRC. Instead, keep this list on file after the return of materials to DRC. If DRC determines that a site has not returned all materials from one of the assessments, the Security Checklist may help the site locate the missing document(s). Checklists should be retained for three (3) years.

An electronic copy of the school's security barcodes is available starting around a week prior to the opening of the testing window. If your school would like the electronic version, it can be downloaded from the DRC INSIGHT Portal under Report Delivery.

PART VI – PREPARING STUDENT BOOKLETS

PSSA administration booklets have been spiraled in a predetermined sequence in each shrink-wrapped pack. The spiraling process ensures an equal distribution of each form within a classroom. Under no circumstances should you arrange the booklets by form designation. (Exception would be for students with a small group read aloud accommodation. See *Accommodations Guidelines* for more information).

The security barcode on the back of each booklet is unique and does not identify the form number. The security barcode should be assigned to a student and TA for ease of distribution.

A. Labeling Answer and Combined Test/Answer Booklets

1. OVERVIEW OF BARCODE LABELS

Student Precode Labels, District/School Labels, and Do Not Score Labels will be provided for use on PSSA answer booklets.

DRC's booklet receiving system is driven by four distinct barcodes that help DRC identify and sort documents for processing. The four barcodes are

- a. **BLANK**—DRC has preprinted a “blank” barcode on the cover of every answer and combined test/answer booklet. A “blank” barcode indicates that the document has not been used, is completely blank, and should not be processed.
- b. **STUDENT PRECODE**—DRC uses data received from the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) to produce Student Precode Labels. The labels contain barcodes that indicate the answer or combined test/answer booklet should be processed and scored for the student whose name is printed on the label. These labels eliminate the need to hand bubble the student's name, birth date, PAsecureID, and demographic items. **If you receive a label for a student who is no longer enrolled or is testing online, that label should be discarded.**
- c. **DISTRICT/SCHOOL**—If a student does not have a Student Precode Label, the SAC or the SAC's designee must use a District/School Label and hand bubble all demographic information, as listed in PIMS, on pages 1 and 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet before testing begins. The District/School labels contain a barcode with district/school-specific information that indicates the document should be processed and scored for the student whose information is bubbled on the booklet.
- d. **DO NOT SCORE**—These labels contain barcodes that indicate whether an answer booklet or a combined test/answer booklet should NOT be processed. Answer and combined test/answer booklets that have a Do Not Score Label will be handled as if they are blank.

2. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING BARCODE LABELS

- a. District/School Labels and Do Not Score Labels are not grade or subject specific and can be used on any PSSA answer booklet.
- b. Before affixing any label to an answer or combined test/answer booklet, check the label to ensure that the information is correct.
- c. Schools should destroy Student Precode Labels or District/School Labels that contain inaccurate information.
- d. The SAC or the SAC's designee must affix the appropriate label to each answer or combined test/answer booklet that will be used by a student.
- e. Place the label in the box located in the lower left corner on the cover of each student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

- f. Do not remove any label that has been affixed to an answer or combined test/answer booklet; this will damage the booklet. Instead, the label must be covered with another label of the appropriate type.
- g. Do not write on the labels. Do not correct information on a label.
- h. **Do not use labels from another school or a previous exam.** If you need more labels, submit an Additional Materials Request through the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

3. STUDENT PRECODE LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

Most testing sites will receive Student Precode Labels that are linked to individual student demographic information and district/school information in PIMS. Student Precode Labels were created directly from a PIMS report and are not created through test sessions. It is important that school personnel make sure the readable information printed on the label is correct.

- a. Testing sites will receive up to three sets of Student Precode Labels depending on what grades are tested at the school. Each set of Student Precode Labels will be separated by a slip-sheet that identifies the assessment for which the labels should be used.
 - i. The first set will include students in grades 3 through 8 and are intended for use on students' PSSA ELA booklets.
 - ii. The second set will include students in grades 3 through 8 and are intended for use on students' PSSA mathematics booklets.
 - iii. The third set will include students in grades 5 and 8 and are intended for use on students' PSSA science booklets.
- b. If a student's name, PAsecureID, or birth date is incorrect, the label **should not** be used. Use a District/School Label in its place and prior to administering the assessment carefully bubble the student's name, PAsecureID, and birth date exactly as it appears in the PIMS reporting snapshot.
 - i. Student name, PAsecureID, and birth date are matching criteria between the precode snapshot and the reporting snapshot. If a student record is uploaded to the precode snapshot with a different name than the reporting snapshot (i.e., printed on the Student Precode Label), DRC cannot match the student's precode label to the PIMS data for final PSSA and accountability reporting.
 - ii. If a student's test record cannot be matched to the PIMS reporting file (which will happen if an incorrect precode label is used in the scenario above), it will be the district's responsibility to match the "PIMS student" to the student's PSSA test record(s) within the attribution system. This functionality for the PSSA Attributions System supports the use of PIMS student records for the participation calculation.
- c. If a Student Precode Label is being used, student identifying information and demographics are embedded in the barcode on the label; therefore, these items should not be bubbled. Items 4 through 7 on page 3 of the answer or combined test/answer booklets must be completed by school personnel for all assessed students who used an accommodation.
- d. It is essential for PIMS Administrators to ensure that the student demographic information in PIMS is correct.
- e. **All embedded Student Precode Label information will supersede any bubbling on page 1 or page 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet.** Any student information changes or demographic changes made by writing on a Student Precode Label or by bubbling page 1 or page 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet WILL NOT change the PIMS information embedded in the Student Precode Label.
- f. If a Student Precode Label is destroyed, school personnel must use a District/School Label in its place and bubble the student's information on pages 1 and 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet before testing begins.

- g. If a student's score should be attributed to a site other than what appears on the Student Precode Label, the Student Precode Label should be used. The correct district and/or school of residence should be corrected in PIMS before the PIMS snapshots are reported; however, school personnel may need to correct the attribution information in DRC's online Attribution System.

4. DISTRICT/SCHOOL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

All sites will receive District/School Labels that contain district/school-specific information only. District/School Labels must be used when Student Precode Labels are not available.

- a. District/School Labels have a stripe across the top of the label.
- b. When using District/School Labels, it is **imperative** that the student's first and last name, birth date, and PAsecureID are bubbled exactly as they appear in PIMS prior to administering the assessment.
- c. Items 4 through 7 on page 3 of the answer or combined test/answer booklets must be completed by school personnel for all assessed students who used an accommodation.
- d. **Do not use labels from another school or another year.** If you need more labels, submit an Additional Materials Request through the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

5. DO NOT SCORE LABEL INSTRUCTIONS

Do Not Score Labels are supplied for use on answer or combined test/answer booklets that are (1) defective and cannot be scored or (2) answer or combined test/answer booklets that should not be scored. Always place the Do Not Score Label directly over any Student Precode Label or District/School Label that was originally affixed to the answer or combined test/answer booklet.

- a. Use the Do Not Score Labels when one of the following has occurred:
 - i. A used answer or combined test/answer booklet is torn, soiled (not bodily fluids), or defective. When a student has used a booklet and it becomes torn, soiled, or is found to be defective (e.g., missing pages), the student's already recorded responses must be transcribed by the SAC or the SAC's designee into a new booklet of the same form designation. In order to ensure accuracy in the transcription process, it is recommended that the transcription take place in the presence of another staff member who will sign the *Test Security Certification* statement. A Do Not Score Label should be affixed to the defective booklet.
 - ii. A used answer or combined test/answer booklet is soiled with bodily fluids. If a student becomes ill or places bodily fluids on an answer or combined test/answer booklet, follow the LEA policy on Universal Precautions on dealing with bodily fluids. This may require that the booklet be destroyed and the student retested using a different form number. However, if allowed by LEA Universal Precautions policy, the SAC or the SAC's designee should transcribe the student's already recorded responses into a new booklet of the same form designation. In order to ensure accuracy in the transcription process, it is recommended that the transcription take place in the presence of another staff member who will sign the *Test Security Certification* statement. Record the security number found on the back of the soiled booklet and securely destroy the soiled booklet. **In either case make certain this information is recorded on the Materials Accountability Form.**
 - iii. A student uses two answer or combined test/answer booklets. Submit one booklet for scoring and return the other booklet with a Do Not Score Label (the student's responses must be transcribed from one booklet into the other, provided both booklets are the same form).
 - iv. A Student Precode Label (for a student who withdrew prior to the testing window) or District/School Label is inadvertently affixed to a blank/unused booklet (a blank/unused booklet does not have any bubbles marked or any student responses). Affix a Do Not Score Label over the previously affixed label.
 - v. A student has been completely removed from the school's enrollment on or before the end of the testing window **and** the student **did not** complete the assessment. Affix a Do Not Score Label over the Student Precode Label or District/School Label.

- b. Do not use Do Not Score labels for the following types of booklets:
 - i. Blank/unused booklets—there is a **preprinted** “BLANK” barcode in the box located in the lower left corner on the cover of the answer or combined test/answer booklet to indicate that the booklet is blank/unused. For unused answer or combined test/answer booklets, a Do Not Score Label does not need to be affixed to these “BLANK” barcodes.
 - ii. Booklets for students who are designated as non-assessed and have been coded as such on page 2 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet. These booklets must have a Student Precode Label or District/School Label affixed to the front cover with student information bubbled.

B. Completing Student Information

1. NAME

For students who are using a Student Precode Label, it is not necessary to complete the name boxes. For students who are using a District/School Label, the SAC or the SAC’s designee must print the student’s first and last name in the boxes provided on the cover page of the answer or combined test/answer booklet and darken the corresponding bubbles. The name on the answer or combined test/answer booklet must be the same as the first and last name in PIMS to ensure accurate matching for reporting purposes. If the test record cannot match PIMS data (e.g. “Bobby” on the answer or combined test/answer booklet will not match with “Robert” in PIMS), there could be a negative impact on reporting.

2. BIRTH DATE

For students who are using a Student Precode Label, it is not necessary to complete the Birth Date. For students who are using a District/School Label, the SAC or the SAC’s designee must darken the corresponding bubbles. Birth Date is a field used to match to PIMS data and if it is missing or incorrect, reporting may be affected.

3. PAsecureID

All public school students have a state assigned ten-digit PAsecureID. Students using a Student Precode Label do not need this field completed on the answer or combined test/answer booklet. However, it is imperative that the PAsecureID is bubbled on the front cover for all students using a District/School Label. If the PAsecureID is missing or incorrect, reporting may be adversely affected.

If the district does not have a PAsecureID for a student, please follow the instructions below. Questions regarding PAsecureIDs can be e-mailed to RA-PAsecureID@pa.gov.

- a. If a student is home-schooled, the grid should be left blank.
- b. If a student transferred from another district within the state, the new district can access the PAsecureID website to look up the student’s PAsecureID.
- c. If a student is new to the state or previously attended a private school, the district can access the PAsecureID website and enter the student’s information to have a PAsecureID assigned.

4. CODE OF CONDUCT

This bubble should be completed by the student during testing. The specific *Directions for Administration Manuals* will inform the student when to complete this bubble.

5. STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS GRID

If a student testing with a paper and pencil assessment is using a Student Precode Label, the Student Demographics information is embedded in the barcode on the label; therefore, these items should not be completed by hand. Students with District/School Labels should have these three items completed by school personnel prior to administering the assessment.

Item 1 Gender

Indicate whether the student is Male or Female.

Item 2 Race/Ethnicity (*indicate only one*)

Indicate the ethnicity with which the student most closely identifies. You must choose only one. If a student should be counted in more than one racial category, choose "Two or more races (not Hispanic)"

Item 3 Mark all of the following that apply, if any:

Student has an IEP (*not Gifted*) – Student has an IEP and has a disability but is not gifted. This demographic item pertains to a student's IEP status at the time of testing.

It is recognized that gifted students, while not having a diagnosed disability, have a Gifted Individualized Education Program (GIEP). The data collected in response to this item are intended to identify ONLY those students with IEPs who have disabilities. Therefore, if a gifted student has a GIEP, but does NOT have a disability, DO NOT select this item.

Student is classified as economically disadvantaged – All students who meet the district's economically disadvantaged criteria.

Students are commonly classified as economically disadvantaged if they qualify for free or reduced lunch; however, other criteria used by the district may be substituted.

6. ACCOMMODATIONS

When an accommodation is used by a student taking a paper and pencil assessment, the Accommodations Section on page 3 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet must be completed by the School Assessment Coordinator (SAC) regardless of the label that was used.

A student's use of an accommodation is not collected from any other source for reporting. If a student requires an accommodation that is not listed, a documented request must be made to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. DRC cannot authorize the use of accommodations. For more information on accommodations, refer to the *Accommodations Guidelines* found on the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html>.

Item 4 Student used the following Presentation Accommodations (*mark all that apply, if any*):

Braille format (Paper and Pencil only) – Student used a hard-copy Braille version of the assessment.

Large-print format (Paper and Pencil only) – Student used a hard-copy large-print version of the assessment.

Students who use the Braille or large-print hard-copy versions must have all of their answers (multiple-choice and constructed-response) transcribed by the SAC or designee into a Form 1 answer or combined test/answer booklet. Additional Form 1 booklets for transcription are provided with the Braille and large-print booklets.

The SAC or designee may not make corrections of student work for spelling, punctuation, grammar or change student responses in any manner.

The answer or combined test/answer booklet that has been used for transcription purposes must have a Student Precode Label or a District/School Label properly affixed.

All Braille and large-print booklets are secure materials and must be returned to DRC.

NOTE: The hard-copy version of the large-print and Braille assessments will not be scored. Transcription is required.

Assistive Technology Device—other than the online test mode – Student used a PDF version of the assessment provided on a secure CD. This accommodation is intended for those students with a severe disability that precludes them from accessing the assessment through the online testing system and the hard copy test booklet. This accommodation needs a unique accommodations assurance form submitted to PDE.

Some test items/questions read aloud (Mathematics and Science only) – Student had some test items/questions read aloud. Any student may request the read aloud of a word, phrase, or test item on the mathematics and science assessments.

Some conventions questions/text dependent analysis prompts read aloud (ELA only) – Student had some language items/text dependent analysis prompts read aloud.

All test items/questions read aloud (Mathematics and Science only) – Student had the entire assessment read aloud. However, there are items for which reading the item aloud (questions and/or answer options) would cue the correct answer(s). It is not permissible to read aloud the part or parts of an item for which the correct answer(s) would be cued. For example, when an item asks students to identify a symbol, only the words and numbers may be read aloud, not the symbols. Also, when a student is asked to identify a shape, the names of the shapes may not be read aloud.

For English Language Arts, this accommodation is only for students meeting the criteria in the *Accommodations Guidelines*. A Unique Accommodations Assurance must be submitted to PDE.

All conventions questions/text dependent analysis prompts read aloud (ELA only) – Student had all the language items/text dependent analysis prompts read aloud.

Pennsylvania Read-aloud and Scribing Accommodation Guidelines for Operational Assessments can be found on the portal and the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html>.

Test items/questions signed (Mathematics and Science only) – Student used an interpreter/translator to sign test items/questions.

Text dependent analysis prompts signed (ELA only) – Student used an interpreter/translator to sign text dependent analysis prompts.

Test items/questions interpreted for EL (Mathematics and Science only) – Student used an interpreter/translator to present test items/questions.

Text dependent analysis prompts interpreted for EL (ELA only) – Student used an interpreter/translator to present text dependent analysis prompts.

Amplification device – Student used an amplification device (e.g., hearing aid, personal sound amplifier).

Magnification device – Student has a documented need for magnification and used a magnification device (e.g., CCTV, hand held magnifier, online magnifier tool). Do not select if a student simply used the online magnification tool as an available test feature.

Color overlay (Paper and Pencil only) – Student used a color overlay, background, or contrast over the paper and pencil booklet.

Other (as indicated in *Accommodations Guidelines*) – Student used any other device or visual organizer during the assessment. Some may require a separate setting.

Item 5 Student used the following Setting Accommodations (mark all that apply, if any):

Hospital/home setting – Student completed the assessment at a hospital or at home.

One-on-one setting – Student completed the assessment in a one-on-one setting.

Small group setting – Student completed the assessment in a small group.

Smartphone or smartwatch for medical/glucose monitoring – Student had an approved electronic device on their desk to be used as a medical device. This accommodation needs a unique accommodations assurance form submitted to PDE.

Other (as indicated in Accommodations Guidelines) – Student completed the assessment in a separate or unique setting.

Item 6 Student used the following Timing Accommodations (mark all that apply, if any):

Extended time – Student required more time than the rest of the regular testing group or required scheduled extended time.

Frequent breaks – Student required frequent breaks within a regularly scheduled test session. Students must be monitored during all breaks.

Changed test schedule – Student required the assessment to be administered on a different day or time to accommodate medical or learning needs. No single section may be administered over more than one day.

Other (as indicated in Accommodations Guidelines) – Student required a unique timing accommodation.

Item 7 Student used the following Response Accommodations (mark all that apply, if any):

Mixed Mode: Multiple-choice items completed online; open-ended items completed in the answer booklet – Student used the mixed-mode accommodation where only multiple-choice answers were supplied online and the open-ended responses were written in the paper and pencil answer or combined test/answer booklet. It is important that this accommodation is marked in the answer or combined test/answer booklet and in the portal.

Test administrator marked multiple-choice responses at student's direction – Student dictated multiple-choice responses to a Test Administrator. Responses must be marked into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Test administrator scribed open-ended/short-answer/TDA responses at student's direction – Student dictated open-ended responses to a Test Administrator. Responses must be scribed verbatim into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet. If a student has special scribing needs for text dependent analysis prompts, refer to the *Accommodation Guidelines*.

Test administrator transcribed student responses – Student marked responses in something other than the answer or combined test/answer booklet being returned for scoring. Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed student's signed responses (Mathematics and Science only) – Student used an interpreter to sign responses to a Test Administrator. Responses must be scribed verbatim into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Qualified interpreter translated, transcribed, and/or scribed EL student responses (Mathematics and Science only) – Student used an interpreter/translator to respond to a Test Administrator. Responses must be scribed verbatim into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Keyboard, word processor, or computer—other than the online test mode – Student used a keyboard, word processor, computer, or one-to-one device with the test booklet. Responses that are written or typed must be transcribed verbatim into student's answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Braille/Note taker (Paper and Pencil only) – Student used a Braille/Note taker. Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student’s answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Augmentative communication device – Student used any device to aid in communication. Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student’s answer or combined test/answer booklet. This accommodation needs a unique accommodations assurance form submitted to PDE.

Assistive Technology Device—other than the online test mode – Student dictated text into the computer or gave commands to the computer using Computer Assistive Technology software with the test booklet. Responses must be transcribed verbatim into student’s answer or combined test/answer booklet. This accommodation needs a unique accommodations assurance form submitted to PDE.

Translation dictionary for EL student (Mathematics and Science only) – Student used a non web-based word-to-word translation dictionary without definitions or pictures.

Other (as indicated in Accommodations Guidelines) – Student used special paper (e.g., large-squared paper) during the assessment.

Pennsylvania Read-aloud and Scribing Accommodation Guidelines for Operational Assessments can be found on the portal and the PDE website at <https://www.pa.gov/en/agencies/education.html>.

7. OTHER GRIDS

a. Local Student ID

The Local Student ID grid is provided to allow districts/schools the option to add a Local Student ID, if needed.

b. Optional Field

The Optional Field is provided to allow districts/schools the option to measure information specific to the district/school. Each district/school may choose to gather information based on a specific need in the district/school and would code this field accordingly. If the district/school is not interested in gathering additional information, this field should be left blank.

c. Supplemental Data Field

The Supplemental Data Field will only be used in the event that a determination is made that additional demographic information should be considered for reporting requirements. This field will be used if districts/schools are instructed to do so by DRC or PDE.

d. TA Initials

The grid for providing the Test Administrator’s (TA’s) initials is located on the back page of each student answer or combined test/answer booklet. The SAC or the SAC’s designee must complete the grid. For this task only, SACs have the option to designate the TA to complete the bubbling of lead TA’s initials. This must be completed prior to administration of any assessment. If there are multiple TAs or proctors in the testing room, the lead TA’s initials should be bubbled in the grid and the multiple administrators field should be marked. The initials field must be completed regardless of how the test administration is structured.

PART VII – PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE ASSESSMENTS

A. Scheduling the Assessment

PDE allows flexibility for LEAs to choose specific testing dates that work within the PDE-established testing windows. All LEAs are required to provide PDE with the specific dates and times (AM or PM) it has selected for administering the PSSAs. LEAs were required to submit this information for each of their schools through the Enrollment System on the DRC INSIGHT portal.

For the ELA assessment, the first administration must not be scheduled before April 21, 2025, and all ELA assessments must be completed by April 25, 2025. The mathematics and science assessments must not be scheduled before April 28, 2025, and must conclude no later than May 9, 2025. Make-ups should be administered as soon as possible throughout the PSSA testing window. No assessments can be completed after May 9, 2025.

When possible, the first days of the PDE-established testing window should be used for administering the assessment. Scheduling the assessment to occur at the beginning of the window will allow the school more flexibility if any unusual circumstances delay the anticipated start date. It may be advisable to postpone the assessment if a large percentage of the school population is absent on any selected day or days, or if a disruption or event (such as a bomb threat, fire in the school, plumbing or heating problems, death of a classmate, etc.) may have caused a level of distress that could result in students performing below their capabilities. LEA personnel are urged to keep the best interests of the students in mind when making a determination to reschedule assessment dates. Administering the assessment in the early portion of the assessment windows should eliminate most scheduling problems.

The following chart outlines the PSSA English Language Arts assessment schedule guidelines and estimated times for each section for each grade.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TIMES FOR PSSA ELA (IN MINUTES)							
Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8
Section 1 ELA	Number of Items	18 MC/TE 1 CR	29 MC/TE 0 CR	28 MC/TE 0 CR	29 MC/TE 0 CR	28 MC/TE 0 CR	28 MC/TE 0 CR
	Student Testing Time	50 to 60	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	65 to 80	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100
Section 2 ELA	Number of Items	10 MC/TE 1 CR	10 MC/TE 1 CR	10 MC/TE 1 CR	10 MC/TE 1 CR	10 MC/TE 1 CR	10 MC/TE 1 CR
	Student Testing Time	30 to 40	65 to 75	65 to 75	65 to 75	65 to 75	65 to 75
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	45 to 60	80 to 95	80 to 95	80 to 95	80 to 95	80 to 95
Section 3 ELA	Number of Items	18 MC/TE 1 CR	12 MC/TE 1 CR	13 MC/TE 1 CR	12 MC/TE 1 CR	13 MC/TE 1 CR	13 MC/TE 1 CR
	Student Testing Time	50 to 60	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	65 to 80	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100
Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8

MC refers to multiple-choice questions.

TE refers to technology-enhanced questions.

CR (constructed-response) questions include short-answer questions and text dependent analysis questions.

The following chart outlines the PSSA Mathematics assessment schedule guidelines and estimated times for each section for each grade.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TIMES FOR PSSA MATHEMATICS (IN MINUTES)							
Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8
Section 1 Mathematics	Number of Items	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE
	Student Testing Time	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100
Section 2 Mathematics	Number of Items	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE
	Student Testing Time	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80	70 to 80
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100	85 to 100
Grade		3	4	5	6	7	8

MC refers to multiple-choice questions.
TE refers to technology-enhanced questions.
OE refers to open-ended questions.

The following chart outlines the PSSA Science assessment schedule guidelines and estimated times for each section for each grade.

SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT TIMES FOR PSSA SCIENCE (IN MINUTES)			
Grade		5	8
Section 1 Science	Number of Items	23 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE
	Student Testing Time	40 to 50	40 to 50
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	55 to 70	55 to 70
Section 2 Science	Number of Items	23 MC/TE 2 OE	24 MC/TE 2 OE
	Student Testing Time	40 to 50	40 to 50
	Administrative Time (Pre-test & Post-test)	15 to 20	15 to 20
	Administration Time (Total Time)	55 to 70	55 to 70
Grade		5	8

MC refers to multiple-choice questions.
TE refers to technology-enhanced questions.
OE refers to open-ended questions.

The assessments should be given in regular classroom settings, but other settings may be used based on school needs and available facilities. Appropriate test conditions optimize the chance for greater accuracy of the performance. To the extent possible, all students participating in a subject/grade-specific assessment in a school should begin the paper and pencil administration at the same time. Staggered start times may be necessary for students testing online due to availability of computers, iPads, and/or Chromebooks.

B. Parent/Guardian Notification of the Assessments

A sample parent/guardian Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Document that covers all the assessments has been included in Appendix D of this handbook to use as is or to revise to specific school needs. This information must be distributed to the parent or guardian of each student enrolled in the school(s) about three weeks prior to the assessment.

Please note that the district or school is responsible for duplicating the flyers. Copies are not provided, except for the samples in this handbook. If a district newsletter is regularly published, include the information in the newsletter. However, if history indicates that parents/guardians do not regularly read the newsletter, direct mail may ensure delivery to parents and guardians.

C. Electronic Device Notification Letter

Unapproved electronic devices that could compromise the security of the assessment, including cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, etc. are NOT permitted. LEAs must notify and ensure that all students and parents/guardians fully understand the policy regarding electronic devices, including cell phones.

If during the testing or after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed, the student's score will be invalidated, and the student will have to retake another form of the assessment.

Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation. 17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.

A parent letter regarding electronic devices has also been included in Appendix D. PDE strongly encourages LEAs to distribute this letter as a means to ensure that all students and parents/guardians fully understand the policy regarding electronic devices in the testing rooms.

D. Preparing Students Prior to the Assessment

Inform students of the scheduled assessment sessions in advance, perhaps at the time the informational flyers are sent to parents/guardians. Explain to the students why they are being given the assessments and how the results will be used. Students should realize that doing their best is important, but school personnel should not place undue pressure on students that could cause harmful stress. Students may also be informed that their parents/guardians and teachers will be receiving the results.

Inform students of the following:

1. School/district personnel must discuss the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* with all students prior to the scheduled assessment time. It is essential that students understand the importance of each point in the code of conduct before testing begins. (Please refer to Appendix F of this handbook.)
2. They are permitted to use scratch/grid paper.
3. They are **not** permitted to use ink pens.

4. They may use their own calculators (or school-supplied, if applicable) provided that testing mode or exam mode is activated prior to the exam session and the calculator complies with the PDE Calculator Policy, found in Appendix E, specifically noting the following.
 - a. Calculators are allowed on the entire grade 4 and grade 8 science assessment and on most items in the grades 4–8 mathematics assessments. Calculators are not permitted on mathematics items in the non-calculator section found at the beginning of Section 1.
 - b. Calculators are not allowed on any portion of the grade 3 mathematics assessment or the non-calculator items within Section 1 of the grades 4–8 mathematics assessments.
 - c. The DRC INSIGHT test engine provides the DESMOS online calculator for student use, but students can use a handheld calculator if desired.

In addition, PDE encourages districts to inform students BEFORE TESTING of the locally determined ramifications/sanctions for student misconduct during the PSSAs. This includes, but is not limited to, sanctions associated with:

1. cheating;
2. sharing and/or reproducing of test content; and
3. possessing cell phones, cameras, smartwatches, or any other unauthorized electronic devices during the administration of the assessment. Students must be informed of this policy in advance and should be encouraged to leave such items at home on administration days. The TA must collect all such devices that were not left at home prior to distributing assessment materials and shall return them upon completion of the assessment.

E. PAsecureID List

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that all SACs generate a list(s) of students by PAsecureID to show all students taking the PSSA for both online and paper and pencil.

Each list should indicate which students are being assessed by which Test Administrator (TA) and Proctor. The list should include the school name, Test Administrator, PAsecureID, grade, subject being administered, and year. Lists should include any changes including substitute teachers serving as TAs, and TAs administering make-up and/or extended time sessions. All lists must be retained at the district/school for three years and be available when requested by PDE. Even though the PAsecureID must be recorded, students' names may also be included for LEA use; however, all lists used to communicate with PDE must not have students' names.

Below is a sample layout.

School Name	Test Administrator and Proctor	PAsecureID	Grade Tested	Subject	Year
PA School	Mr. Trenholm	1234567890	8	Math	2025
PA School	Mr. Trenholm	9876543210	8	ELA	2025
PA School	Mr. Trenholm, Mr. Weller	4567891230	8	Science	2025

F. Seating Charts

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that each TA develop a seating chart for the students to whom the TAs administered the assessment and maintain that seating chart for three (3) years. TAs should assign seats based upon the form number and should ensure that students with the same form do not sit within eyesight of one another. The availability of a seating chart could become instrumental when investigating possible student cheating.

G. Preparing the Classroom Prior to the Assessment

Good organization of assessment materials and well-executed procedures will help the administration proceed smoothly. Student seating must be arranged to prevent student interaction during the exam sessions. During the assessment sessions, keep disturbances to a minimum. A quiet, calm atmosphere is essential for concentration on the task. Place a Do Not Disturb sign on the door(s) to the classroom to indicate that an assessment session is taking place. Extra sharpened pencils should be available to students. Do not permit students to sharpen pencils during the assessment sessions as this may be disruptive to other students.

Remove or cover with opaque material all classroom instructional materials or any other materials that may affect the validity of the assessment. For example, posters about math rules or times tables should be covered or removed from the room on the assessment days.

Note: These are general examples. Any materials that may contain content that could be tested must be removed or covered.

DO NOT DISPLAY:

1. vocabulary words and/or definitions
2. examples of problems or answers
3. instructions on how to use a calculator
4. tips on how to write responses and/or solve problems
5. illustrations or drawings of geometric shapes, algebraic equations, graphs, or number lines

H. Administering the Assessments

The **English Language Arts assessment** consists of a total of three sections. Each section should be scheduled as one assessment session; however, testing sites can make the final determination whether multiple sections can be administered in the same testing session, as long as the sections are administered in sequence. In all cases, individual assessment sections must be completed within one school day. Any student requesting additional time should be allowed the extra time. Students must complete the extended time before working on the next section. Schools that are administering two sections on the same day can avoid extended-time conflicts by scheduling only one section in the morning and one section in the afternoon.

With the exception of grade 3, each student will have one test booklet and one answer booklet; the grade 3 assessment is presented in one combined test and answer booklet. Each student should also be given the separate scoring guidelines and Writer's Checklist (Grades 4–8) reference documents. If a student is testing online, the student will receive a separate test ticket to access each section. The reference documents are available through the online test engine.

1. Answer booklets contain space for recording answers to the multiple-choice, selected-response, and constructed-response questions. Each student must use the same test booklet and answer booklet for all sections of the assessment. Because there are multiple forms at each grade level, **it is imperative that students are provided a test booklet and an answer booklet with the same form designation.** For example, if a student is assigned a Form 3 test booklet, that student must be assigned a Form 3 answer booklet.
2. **Under no circumstances should you attempt to match forms by the security barcode printed on the back of the booklets.** The only match between test and answer booklets is the form designation printed on the front cover of each booklet. Failure to ensure that students have the same form of the test booklet and answer booklet will adversely affect district, school, and student results.

The **Mathematics assessment** consists of a total of two sections. Each section should be scheduled as one assessment session; however, testing sites can make the final determination whether multiple sections can be administered in the same testing session, as long as the sections are administered in sequence. In all cases, individual assessment sections must be completed within one school day. Any student requesting additional time should be allowed the extra time. Students must complete the extended time before working on the next section. Schools that are administering two sections on the same day can avoid extended-time conflicts by scheduling only one section in the morning and one section in the afternoon.

For all grades, the mathematics assessment is presented in one combined test and answer booklet. Each student should also be given the separate scoring guidelines and formulas sheet (Grades 4–8) reference documents. One ruler will be supplied for each student in grade 3. One protractor will be supplied for each student in grade 4. If a student is testing online, the student will receive a separate test ticket to access each section. The ruler, protractor, formula sheet, and scoring guidelines are available within the testing software.

1. Calculator usage and policies must be followed at all times.
 - i. Students in grade 3 may not use a calculator for any portion of the assessment.
 - ii. Students in grades 4–8 may not use a calculator to answer the non-calculator questions found at the beginning of Section 1. Prior to the assessment, calculators should be placed under the student’s seat or on the TA’s desk.
 - a. For students testing online, the calculator in the testing software will not be accessible during the non-calculator items, and the software will not allow a student to go back and review those items once the student confirms the non-calculator section is complete. If a student uses their own calculator, the calculator must follow the calculator policy. Frequent and close monitoring is necessary to ensure students do not return to the non-calculator section.
 - b. For paper and pencil testing, the non-calculator section will be identifiable by a bright color border. It is the responsibility of the Test Administrator to ensure that students do not use calculators during the non-calculator portion of the assessment. Frequent and close monitoring is essential to ensure students do not return to the non-calculator questions.
 - iii. Once students have completed the non-calculator section, they should raise their hand to indicate to the TA they have finished those questions. The TA will then collect any used scratch paper and replace with new scratch paper.
 - iv. Once students have completed the non-calculator items, they may use a calculator for all remaining questions in Section 1 and all questions in Section 2. Calculators should be placed in testing mode or exam mode.
 - v. The calculator memory must be cleared prior to and following the administration of each section of the assessment.
 - vi. Students may not share calculators during the assessment.
 - vii. Consult the PDE Calculator Policy, located in Appendix E, for additional information.

The **Science assessment** consists of two sections at grades 5 and 8. Each section should be scheduled as one assessment session; however, testing sites can make the final determination whether multiple sections can be administered in the same testing session, as long as the sections are administered in sequence. In all cases, individual assessment sections must be completed within one school day. Any student requesting additional time should be allowed the extra time. Students must complete the extended time before working on the next section. Schools that are administering two sections on the same day can avoid extended-time conflicts by scheduling only one section in the morning and one section in the afternoon.

For Grades 5 and 8, the science assessment is presented in one combined test and answer booklet. Each student should also be given the separate scoring guidelines reference document. If a student is testing online, the student will receive a separate test ticket to access each section. The reference documents are available through the online test engine.

1. Students may use calculators for the Science assessment. If students do not have calculators and the school has not made them available, students can respond to the tasks successfully without them. However, if your students have access to calculators and know how to use them, using them during the assessment is permissible. The memory of the calculators needs to be cleared prior to and after the assessment following the administration of each section of the assessment. Students may not share their calculators during the assessment. Read Appendix E, *Pennsylvania Calculator Policy*, for information on calculator use.

I. Spanish-translated Combined Test/Answer Booklet

The Spanish-translation combined test/answer booklet contains items translated in Spanish only. The English reference is not paired within this combined test/answer booklet. An English-language booklet will accompany the Spanish-translation booklet and can be distributed and used as reference by the student.

Students may respond in either the Spanish or English booklet, but all responses must be in one booklet. The second booklet will not be scored as booklets cannot be combined to generate a score. The booklet in which the student responds must have a precode or district/school label affixed to the front cover. If there is writing on the other booklet, a Do Not Score label should be used to indicate this booklet was used as reference and should not be scored. Both the Spanish and English booklets are considered secure material and must be returned.

If the student responds in the Spanish booklet, open-ended responses may be completed in either Spanish or English. If the student responds in the English booklet, the open-ended response must be in English.

J. Distribution and Collection of Assessment Materials

On the day the assessment is administered, distribute the correct number of appropriate booklets needed for that day's assessment to each TA as recorded on the Security Checklist. Each TA should be given one extra assessment booklet to use as a sample, as the DFA manuals may instruct the TAs to use a sample booklet for demonstration purposes.

If the school has students testing online, test tickets will be distributed to each student. These test tickets are secure materials and must be managed as such during distribution to the students.

All assessment materials, including the booklet used as a sample and test tickets must be returned to the SAC immediately after each session.

It is mandatory that school districts utilize a sign-out/sign-in sheet for distribution and collection of secure test materials. It is recommended that TAs count the booklets and test tickets received and returned in the presence of the SAC or the SAC's designee.

K. Managing Extended Assessment Sessions

Students should complete all tasks to the best of their abilities; however, not all students will finish the assessment sections at the same time. Use the flexibility of the time limits to the students' advantage. Students should not feel rushed and no student should be penalized due to working slowly. It is equally important, however, that a student not be given an opportunity to waste time. Students should close their booklets when they have finished the section of the assessment in which they were working. TAs must collect test materials including scratch paper and any other paper on which the students may have written as students finish testing. Students who finish early may sit quietly, read for pleasure, or read non-content-related materials until all students have finished. Reading for pleasure includes magazines along with fiction text such as novels, short stories, poetry, etc. Reading anything that may include information related to the content area being assessed is not allowed. Written work/drawing/coloring of any kind is prohibited to ensure students are not recording secure test content.

Students may request extended time if they indicate that they have not completed the task. Such requests should be granted if the TA finds the request to be educationally valid. Not permitting ample time for students to complete the assessment may impact student and school performance. Students requiring time beyond the time provided for the majority of the student population may be allowed to continue immediately following the regularly scheduled

session in another setting. Students should not be permitted to continue a section of the assessment after a significant lapse of time from the original session. **Any student granted an extended assessment period must have this information gridded in the student's answer or combined test/answer booklet on page 3 or in the portal for students testing online.**

Students with special requirements (i.e., physical, visual, auditory, or learning disabilities as defined by their IEPs or service contracts) and students who work slowly may require extended time. Special assessment situations should be arranged for these students. Requests for extended time should be granted if the TA finds the request to be educationally valid. Students should be permitted to continue immediately following the regularly scheduled session in another setting. (Extended time sessions do not have to be in another location.) Any student granted an extended assessment period must have this information indicated in the student's answer or combined test/answer booklet on page 3 or in the portal for students testing online.

When allowing extended assessment sessions for a portion of the student population:

1. **Do not** allow students to attend a lunch period with other students if the lunch period occurs between the original session and the extended session.
2. **Do not** allow students to attend any classes between the original assessment session and the extended session.
3. **Do not** allow any overnight extensions.
4. **Do not** allow students to return to an unfinished section after indicating they have completed that section.
5. **Do not** allow the extended assessment session to be administered without monitoring. It is the SAC's responsibility to make arrangements for a TA to monitor extended assessment sessions.
6. **Do not** allow students to move to extended time location without supervision of a TA.
7. **Do not** allow students to carry materials to extended time session/location.

L. Make-Up Sessions

If a student is absent during a testing session, the student should resume or begin the assessment in the same section as the rest of the testing population. The section that was missed due to absence should be made up in a separate session. If multiple sections are missed, the make-up session(s) must follow the order of the booklet.

1. There is not a separate window to facilitate make-up testing. Schools should administer make-ups as soon as possible throughout the PSSA testing window. In all cases, schools should follow the procedures established by their district when scheduling make-up testing.
2. If a student becomes ill (as determined by a school nurse, health room aide, principal, etc.) during the administration of a section of the assessment and the student is unable to complete the section, the student may complete that section during a make-up session upon returning to school, starting with the item the student was completing when the illness occurred. The student must be monitored closely so that responses to previous items cannot be changed.
3. Cyber Charter Schools must develop and implement plans that provide for make-up sessions for students absent during testing sessions.

M. Managing Defective Answer and Combined Test/Answer Booklets

If a student receives a booklet with damaged or missing pages, replace the booklet with a booklet **of the same form designation** and allow the student to continue working. If the student has already begun one or more sections of the assessment, the student should start working in the new booklet at the point where the defect was discovered and use the new booklet for the remainder of the assessment. After the assessment has been completed, the SAC or the SAC's designee must transcribe all of the student's responses verbatim from the defective booklet into the undamaged booklet. Affix a District/School label to the front cover of the undamaged booklet and bubble the student information. Apply a Do Not Score Label directly over the existing label on the front cover of the damaged booklet. Return the damaged booklet with the rest of the school's booklets. Do not insert pages from one booklet into another. Multiple documents and loose pages returned for one student will not be scored.

Test materials that have been contaminated with body fluids should be destroyed. Assessment Coordinators should follow the LEA policy on Universal Precautions when dealing with bodily fluids. The destruction of any secure test materials should be reported to DRC on the Materials Accountability Form regardless of how they were damaged. The guidance in the first paragraph should be followed to allow the student to complete the testing and complete any transcribing.

PART VIII – RETURN OF ASSESSMENT MATERIALS

A. Materials Accountability and Return

In the interest of test security it is of the utmost importance that the District Assessment Coordinator (DAC), School Assessment Coordinator (SAC), and all persons responsible for handling test materials account for these materials at all times and return all materials as directed in this section.

Failure to account for and/or return assessment materials constitutes a breach of security. The consequences of such a breach may be severe should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items and may include penalties up to and including remuneration.

As soon as the majority of a school's testing population has completed an assessment, SACs (if a ship-to-school building) or DACs should begin to box and ship the school's test materials to DRC.

1. When materials are returned to DRC from the LEA (ship-to-district sites), SACs are responsible for initiating the return of booklets to the DAC for an early return to DRC.
2. When materials are returned to DRC directly from the school (ship-to-school sites), SACs are responsible for packaging and shipping the materials directly to DRC.
3. Unless instructed otherwise, all secure materials such as test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, large-print booklets, Braille booklets, and Spanish booklets must be returned to DRC. **Note: LEAs must ensure that student answers from large-print and Braille booklets are transcribed or scribed verbatim (per the *Accommodations Guidelines*) into the matching Form 1 regular answer or combined test/answer booklet. Large-print answer or combined test/answer booklets will not be scored.**
4. All paper (e.g., scratch, grid, scoring guidelines, checklists) on which students have written must be destroyed; DO NOT return them to DRC.
5. LEAs should develop a process to ensure that computer files from students who used a keyboarding accommodation are permanently deleted. The typed/word-processed output must be securely destroyed after it has been transcribed into an answer or combined test/answer booklet.
6. If a student is testing online, Test Tickets need to be returned to the SAC. The SAC should have the test tickets destroyed using district guidelines.
7. SACs must closely track all make-ups to ensure that student booklets are completed before materials are returned to DRC. The SAC should not look through the student answer or combined test/answer booklets to establish if they were completed.

B. Materials Accountability Form

Each LEA is responsible for completing the Materials Accountability Form. This form may be updated throughout the testing window, but it MUST be completed by the end of the testing window when all materials have been returned to DRC. A copy of the Materials Accountability Form must be retained by the LEA for three years.

The materials accountability form is accessed through the DRC INSIGHT Portal.

1. The 'Returned to DRC' column must be completed for all listed materials. DACs and SACs are accountable for returning all booklets that were received. Missing materials and/or materials that are returned late are considered a breach of test security.
2. Materials received through an 'Additional Material Request' should be included in the 'Returned to DRC' columns.

3. All discrepancies between the number of booklets shipped from DRC and the number of booklets returned to DRC should be documented in the 'Record reasons for discrepancies here' portion of the form.
4. Any materials that are not returned to DRC or accounted for on the school's Materials Accountability Form will be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Note: Sites that are only testing students online and did not order accommodated forms (e.g., Braille, large-print, or Spanish) will not complete a Materials Accountability Form.

C. Packaging Materials for Return to District Assessment Coordinator

The following process should serve as a guideline for SACs when packaging materials for return to their DAC, if applicable.

1. Verify that all used answer and combined test/answer booklets have a barcode label (Student Precode, District/School, or Do Not Score) affixed to the front cover.
2. Verify that all responses for students using a transcription accommodation have been properly transcribed verbatim into the form-appropriate scannable answer or combined test/answer booklet. Ensure that the field on page 3 of the answer or combined test/answer booklet has been coded.
3. After inventorying all materials, use the Materials Accountability Form located on the portal to record the number of booklets returned to the DAC.
4. For ELA, make sure there are no answer booklets inserted inside a test booklet.
 - i. Booklets that are inserted inside another booklet may not be detected during check-in at DRC.
 - ii. Failure to remove booklets inserted inside of other booklets may cause discrepancies when DRC counts booklets and will impact student and school reporting.
5. Separate all answer and combined test/answer booklets from test booklets. Place all answer and combined test/answer booklets in the boxes retained from DRC's original shipment.
 - i. DRC does not require booklets to be sorted by subject or grade within the school boxes, only that answer and combined test/answer booklets be boxed separately from test booklets.
 - ii. Materials can be returned in one box if the total quantity for all subjects is small enough to fit into a single box. It is important to place the UPS/DRC return shipment answer booklet label on this box to notify DRC that the box contains answer and combined test/answer booklets.
6. Immediately return the boxes of answer and combined test/answer booklets to the DAC, retaining enough materials at the school to account for make-ups and new enrollments through the end of the subject specific testing windows.
7. Box all test booklets and unopened packs of shrink-wrapped materials in the remaining boxes that were retained from DRC's original shipment.
8. All *Test Security Certifications* for the SAC, principal, TAs, proctors, and any other individuals should be sent to the DAC for delivery to the Chief School Administrator for filing. Do not return the certifications to DRC.
9. Electronic or hard copies of the Security Checklists, PAsecureID lists, and optional Seating Charts must remain on file with the school/district for at least three (3) years. Do not return these lists to DRC.
10. Do not return the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*, the *Directions for Administration Manuals*, or scratch paper to DRC. Please follow instructions from the DAC for the destruction of these materials.
11. Return all materials that were retained for make-up or new enrollment purposes to the DAC at the end of the testing window.

D. Packaging Materials for Return to DRC

The following process should serve as a guideline for DACs when packaging secure test materials for return to DRC. For schools that return materials directly to DRC, the SAC is responsible for the packaging steps described in the preceding section.

1. Condense school boxes whenever possible. DRC does not require that the assessment booklets be sorted by school within the district boxes, only that the answer and combined test/answer booklets are boxed separately from the test booklets.
2. Send all test security certifications to the Chief School Administrator for filing. Do not return the certifications to DRC.
3. Place all answer booklets and combined test/answer booklets (used and unused) into one of the protective DRC Return Shipment Bags. Seal each bag using one of the plastic ties provided. After the booklets have been placed into a DRC Return Shipment Bag, place the filled bag into a DRC box. Test Booklets and unopened packages do not require plastic bags and can be placed directly into a separate DRC box. **Note:** DACs and SACs should not open or look into test booklets, answer booklets, or combined test/answer booklets.
4. Use filler (e.g., crumpled paper or bubble wrap) to make sure that the test materials do not shift during transport.
5. Close the boxes by folding the flaps to cover the previous shipping labels. The C printed on the flap should be exposed.
6. Securely tape all boxes using heavy-duty shipping tape. It is recommended that you use at least three strips of tape across both the top and the bottom of the box to ensure the contents are secure during shipping.
7. Affix a UPS/DRC Return Shipment Label to the top of the box flap labeled C.

It is imperative that the correct UPS/DRC RS label is affixed to the boxes to ensure that materials containing scorable booklets are scored in time for reporting.

Note: UPS/DRC Return Shipment Labels are not subject specific.

8. **IMPORTANT:** Record the UPS Tracking Number for each package, noting the assessment for which it was used and the content of each box. Maintain the tracking number(s) for future reference to document the materials returned to DRC. The LEA is responsible to ensure that all materials are returned to DRC.
9. Keep the boxes in a secure, locked location until they are given to the UPS driver.
10. Schedule a pick-up with UPS when boxes are ready to be picked up. Completed assessments should be returned as soon as possible, even if the assessment testing window is still open.

11. Schedule a pick-up with UPS according to the schedule below.

- i. English Language Arts completed by April 30, 2025.
- ii. Mathematics and Science, by **May 2** for early student reporting or by **May 14** to be included in all reporting.

Important Note: PSSA scores will be released on June 2, 2025, for answer and combined test/answer booklets that are shipped to DRC by May 2. Boxes returned by May 2 that are **properly labeled as containing answer or combined test/answer booklets** will be included for June 2 early reporting. Answer and combined test/answer booklets returned between May 5 and May 14 or returned improperly labeled will be included in a second round of PSSA reporting on June 24, 2025 (i.e., will not be included in June 2 early reporting). LEAs are expected to return materials by May 2 to be included in early reporting. If an LEA is not able to return all its materials by May 2, the remaining materials **must** be returned by May 14 at the latest. UPS pickups must occur in accordance with these established timelines to ensure that test materials arrive prior to the close of DRC's booklet processing. Failure to return PSSA answer or combined test/answer booklets in the required timeline can negatively affect PSSA and accountability reporting. The exclusion of any students in accountability reporting because of an LEA's failure to return answer and combined test/answer booklets within the established timeline will be investigated and researched by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

If the district office does not have a daily, scheduled UPS pickup, access the PA Assessment Box Return System at www.astship.com to arrange for a UPS materials pickup. The login information for this website has not changed from the last test administration. If you need assistance logging into the website, call DRC at 800-451-7849. Another method for scheduling a UPS pickup is to call UPS at 1-866-857-1501. Specify that you are using pre-paid, UPS ground return shipment labels. For both pickup-scheduling methods, you must schedule the pickup at least one day prior to the day on which you will ship your materials. The shipping documentation numbers must be retained by the DAC. If you need additional shipping labels, submit the Additional Materials Request through the DRC INSIGHT portal.

Please refer to the following diagram for further clarification on how to package return materials to DRC.

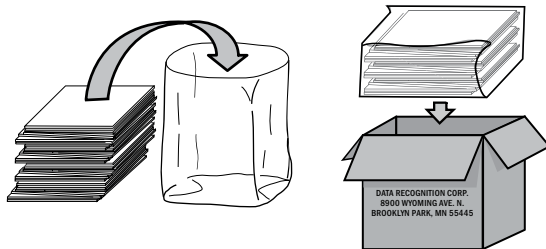
Final District Assessment Coordinator Checklist for Returning Test Materials to DRC

BAGGING, BOXING, PACKING, LABELING, AND TAPING INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT: Use this checklist in addition to the step-by-step instructions for packaging secure test, answer, and combined test/answer booklets. After verifying the return of each school's materials, use this checklist to prepare each box for shipment to DRC.

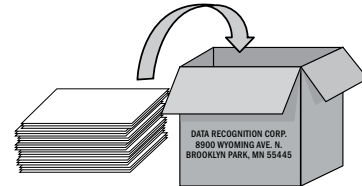
- Pack test materials in boxes provided by DRC. Place answer and combined test/answer booklets within the protective, plastic DRC return shipment bags.
- Seal each DRC return shipment bag containing answer and combined test/answer booklets tightly using one of the plastic ties provided.

Boxes containing answer booklets and combined test/answer booklets



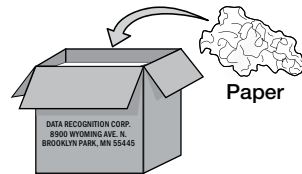
Answer and combined test/answer booklets should be placed into a DRC return shipment bag. Seal the DRC return shipment bag and place it in the DRC box. This includes used and unused answer and combined test/answer booklets.

Boxes containing test booklets and unopened packages

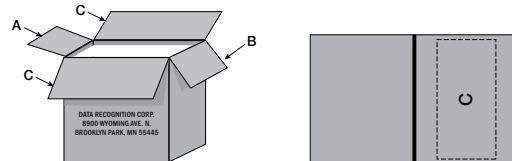


Test Booklets and unopened packages for all subjects do not need to be returned in a DRC return shipment bag. These packages can be placed directly into the DRC box.

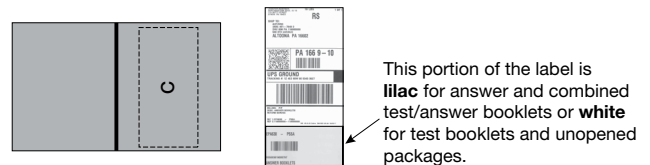
- Booklets do not need to be sorted by school, subject, or class. Condense booklets to fill the boxes to the top. Fill any empty space in the boxes with crumpled paper or bubble wrap to ensure that test material does not shift during transit.



- Fold the flaps with old shipping labels first to expose flap C.



- Affix a UPS/DRC return shipment label with the appropriate color to flap C and verify that each label has the correct district/school name and address. Boxes containing answer and combined test/answer booklets should have a **lilac** label; boxes containing test booklets and unopened packages should have a **white** label.



- Tape boxes securely by using three (3) pieces of packing tape on **BOTH** the top and bottom. Overlap the tape, and make sure it wraps around the sides at least 2 inches.



Appendix A:

Handbook for Secure Test Administration



Handbook for Secure Test Administration

Security Statement

State assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from procedures meant to ensure test validity and security (e.g., group work, teacher coaching, teaching or release of any test items, use of previously administered Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools) is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Local Education Agency (LEA)/school personnel with access to the assessment materials must not review, discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents to anyone. (This prohibition excludes the *Item and Scoring Samplers* available on the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE's) website.)

Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores, or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under the Educator Discipline Act, 24 P.S. §§ 2070.1a *et seq*, which may include a private reprimand, a public reprimand, a suspension of the employee's teaching certificate(s), a revocation of the employee's teaching certificate(s), and/or a suspension or prohibition from being employed by a charter school.

Training and Test Administration Procedures

The purpose of this handbook is to assist in the training of LEA/school personnel to properly and securely administer state assessments. This handbook is also an important and valuable resource in implementing testing successfully from planning and preparing to collecting and returning tests.

Roles and Responsibilities: Training

The District Assessment Coordinator (DAC) is responsible for completing all of the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Trainings (PSTATs) provided by PDE for the DACs, SACs, and TAs/Proctors. DACs must complete the Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) training on receiving and packaging materials, and any DAC specific training provided by the PDE. The DAC is then responsible for coordinating all training that takes place in the LEA and for determining specifics related to test administration such as a schedule, type of administration (paper and pencil or online) and other LEA-level administrative aspects of the testing. The DAC is responsible for ALL training in the LEA with primary responsibility for the direct training of SACs. In some LEAs the DAC may train the LEA-level staff who handle and/or have access to secure test material.

The SAC receives training from the DAC and must also complete both the PSTAT training for SACs and for TAs/Proctors. The SAC is then responsible to oversee all aspects of test administration in a building, including training Test Administrators (TAs), proctors, and other building level staff.

The TAs/Proctors must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors. The TAs/Proctors are responsible for administering the assessment and monitoring students during the assessment.

Translators, interpreters, and scribes must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors and must also complete the training offered by the school/district.

The *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* provides more information related to training.



Roles and Responsibilities: Test Administration

The following lists the general roles and responsibilities for DACs, SACs/Principals, TAs/Proctors, and general personnel before, during, and after test administration. The lists are not exhaustive but provide a general overview of the most important responsibilities of each individual in test administration. In some cases the responsibilities may overlap between or among DACs, SACs, and/or TAs/Proctors. In these cases it is the responsibility of the DAC to determine who has the primary responsibility and is accountable for specific duties, especially when duties may be shared.

A. DISTRICT ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Administer the assessment using the best practices and with fidelity to the administrative guidelines; keep the assessment materials secure and confidential; prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment; and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – DAC

Complete the PSTAT trainings for the administration of the assessments annually.

Complete the *Accommodations Guidelines* training annually.

Update DRC INSIGHT portal accounts for LEA and school users.

Review the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators (HAC)*, *Directions for Administration (DFA)*, *Accommodations Guidelines*, *Online User Guides* (if online testing) and other test-related documents necessary to conduct training for test administration.

Review the LEA's policy/procedures for home-schooled students.

Review the LEA's policy/procedures for handling cyber-charter schools' requests to test their students.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for parental requests to view tests (opt-outs).

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling breaks during test administration and keeping test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets secure.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling disruptions during test administration and keeping test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets secure.

Develop and maintain the LEA's procedure for handling emergencies during test administration.

Develop the LEA's master test schedule (including make-ups) that falls within PDE established test windows for each administration and include it in training. Ensure that the test schedule is developed so that sections are administered in the sequence in which they are printed in the test booklets.

Develop a training agenda and train SACs and other LEA-level staff involved in test administration or the handling of secure material prior to conducting any of their assigned work. (See *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for more information).



Ensure that SACs are trained on the test accountability and security information contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that SACs are trained on the *Accommodations Guidelines*.

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment are instructed in test security protocols and procedures.

Ensure that any individual who will administer and/or proctor the assessment completes the online PSTAT annually (each school year).

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment receive instruction that all assessment materials, including all assessment booklets and other materials containing secure assessment questions and student responses, are to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that SACs receive instruction on the policy regarding all electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, cameras, etc.).

Ensure that all individuals who assist in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who have access to the secure assessment materials have been made aware that they are not in any manner to alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

Communicate to students, parents, and the community that which the assessment does and does not measure, when and how it will be administered, and how the results will be used. Refer to the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for a sample Parent Letter.

Notify and ensure that all students and parents/guardians have been provided the policy regarding all electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, cameras, etc.).

Consider having a teacher other than the teacher-of-record administer the assessment to students. If local circumstances do not allow that option, consider assigning a Proctor to be in the classroom with the TA. (In some circumstances LEAs have been directed by PDE not to use the teacher-of-record to administer the assessment to students they instruct in the present school year.)

Inventory secure materials without breaking the shrink wrap (ship-to-district).

Report any items not received.

Distribute tests to SAC(s) (ship-to-district).

During Test Administration – DAC

Monitor testing sites to ensure administration of the assessments in accordance with PDE policies and procedures.

Ensure that sections/modules are started and completed in the same day as per the LEA testing schedule.

Instruct all school staff to minimize distractions, including intercom announcements.

Suspected testing irregularities/security breaches must immediately be reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.



After Test Administration – DAC

Collect tests from SAC(s) (ship-to-district).

Complete the Materials Accountability Form after inventorying, packaging, and returning the materials to the vendor.

NOTE: DACs should not open or look into test booklets, answer booklets, or combined test/answer booklets.

Record the UPS Tracking Number for each package, noting the assessment(s) for which it was used and the content of each box. Please keep the number(s) for future reference to document the materials returned to DRC.

Sign the *Test Security Certification (District Assessment Coordinator)*. The DAC should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

Failure to account for and/or return assessment materials constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe, up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

B. SCHOOL ASSESSMENT COORDINATOR AND/OR BUILDING PRINCIPAL TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Maintain the security and integrity of all assessment materials, prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – SAC

Attend the annual training for SACs provided by the DAC.

Complete the PSTAT training for SACs and for TAs/Proctors annually.

Review DFA's, the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*, *Accommodations Guidelines*, and *Online User Guides* (if testing online).

Develop a building level master test schedule (including make-ups) that falls within PDE established testing windows for each administration and include it in training. Ensure that the test schedule is developed so that sections are administered in the sequence in which they are printed in the test booklets.

Develop an agenda and train TAs/Proctors and other building level personnel (review the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for more information).

Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment receive instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures.

Ensure that all TAs/Proctors receive a copy of the TA/Proctor *Test Security Certification*.

Ensure that all individuals who will administer and/or proctor the assessment complete the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training (PSTAT). Translators, interpreters, and scribes must complete the PSTAT training for TAs/Proctors and must also complete the training offered by the school/district.



Ensure that all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment receive instruction that all assessment materials must remain secure. This includes all assessment booklets and other materials containing secure assessment questions and student responses that must be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

Ensure that all TAs/Proctors are instructed on the policy regarding electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, cameras, etc.).

Ensure that all individuals who assist in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who have access to the secure assessment materials are instructed that they are not in any manner to alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

Create and maintain the PAsecureID list (refer to the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators* for specific instructions).

Ensure all students are scheduled for the appropriate assessment. For the online administration, ensure the students have the correct test ticket for subject and section or module.

Ensure TAs/Proctors understand that each assessment returned will be linked to the TA who administered the assessment. For paper and pencil assessments, TA initials will be collected on the back page of each answer or combined test/answer booklet. For online testing, teacher (TA) names must be included with each online test session created. This will link the TA to the online session prior to test tickets being generated.

Ensure that students testing online have prior experience with the online practice test and tools that model the testing mode (online).

Maintain a contingency plan for breaks and for disruptions during testing.

Ensure monitoring software or spyware is disabled or removed from computers, iPads, and Chromebooks to be used for testing.

Ensure all instructional materials that could aid students in answering test items are covered with opaque material or removed from classrooms and hallways.

Make sure the testing environment is secure and educationally appropriate.

Know the required accommodations and those allowable accommodations for each student with an IEP or 504 Service Plan and/or for each English Learner being assessed and communicate this to the appropriate personnel.

Provide the appropriate testing environment for each student requiring an accommodation.

Inventory tests received in ship-to-district sites. If additional materials are needed, notify DRC. In a ship-to-school site the SAC should order additional materials, if needed.

Report any shipping or ordering mistakes immediately to DRC.

Create Test Sessions in the DRC INSIGHT portal (if testing online). Make sure to list the correct TA when creating test sessions in the DRC INSIGHT portal.

Put labels on answer and combined test/answer booklets (Do not open test booklets while labeling).

Place a "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign on doors where testing is occurring.



During Test Administration – SAC

Develop and maintain a procedure for distribution and collection of secure test materials to TAs each day utilizing a sign-out/sign-in process. It is recommended that TAs count the test booklets in the presence of the SAC or the SAC's designee.

Ensure that TAs are following proper testing protocols.

Make sure students are supervised at all times during testing and all breaks. This supervision requirement includes those students who need additional time to complete any test session.

If there is a disruption (e.g., fire alarm, power outage) ensure the safety of students at all times, and take appropriate precautions concerning the security of the test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets.

Ensure secure processes and procedures for extended time. Do not allow students to move to an extended time location without a TA and do not allow students to carry materials to an extended time session/location.

Make sure that sections/modules are started and completed in the same day.

Minimize distractions, including intercom announcements.

Ensure tests are stored in a locked area with controlled and limited access.

Report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches to the DAC. If the DAC is unavailable for an extended time or has any involvement in the testing irregularity, PDE must be contacted directly. Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE via ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

After Each Testing Session – SAC

Collect all materials from TAs excluding copies of the DFA.

Account for all student test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets daily. It is recommended that the SAC or the SAC's designee count the booklets and/or test tickets in the presence of the TA.

Store testing materials in a locked, secure location.

Destroy scratch/grid paper, rough drafts, online administration test tickets, and any other paper on which students have written.



After Test Administration – SAC

Inventory and return tests to the DAC (ship-to-district) or follow pack and ship procedures to return tests to DRC (ship-to-school).

NOTE: SACs should not open test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets or review test items.

In ship-to-school LEAs, SACs should record the UPS Tracking Number for each package, noting the assessment(s) for which it was used and the content of each box. Maintain the number(s) for future reference to document that the materials were returned to DRC.

Failure to account for and/or return assessment materials constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe; up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

Sign the *Test Security Certification (School Assessment Coordinator and Principal)*. The SAC should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

Ensure all TAs, Proctors, Translators, Interpreters, Scribes, and other individuals with access to secure testing materials sign the *Test Security Certification*. If someone cannot or does not sign the *Test Security Certification*, immediately report that fact to the Chief School Administrator to report to the Department of Education. Allegations should be referred to ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

C. TEST ADMINISTRATOR/PROCTOR TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

General Statement: Maintain the security and integrity of all assessment materials, prevent any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promote a fair and equitable testing environment in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores.

Before Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Attend the annual training for TAs/proctors provided by the SAC.

Annually (each school year) complete the PSTAT.

Review the *Directions for Administration Manual* for the test to be administered.

Read and understand the *Test Security Certification*.

Know and understand that each assessment returned will be linked to the TA who administered the assessment. For paper and pencil assessments, TA initials will be collected on the back page of each answer or combined test/answer booklet. For online testing, teacher (TA) names must be included with each online test session created. This will link the TA to the online session prior to test tickets being generated.

Remove or cover with opaque materials all classroom instructional materials or any other materials that could aid students in answering test items.

Make sure the testing environment is secure and educationally appropriate.



Review the *Code of Conduct for Test Takers* with students prior to the day of testing and respond to all student questions.

Review the *Calculator Policy* and ensure calculators (other than calculators provided within the online testing engine) meet the requirements of the *Calculator Policy*. Clear the calculator memory. For calculators with exam mode capability, place the calculator in exam mode.

Know and prepare to appropriately implement the required accommodations for each student with an IEP or 504 Service Plan and for each English Learner being assessed in your room.

Review with students the possible local sanctions the district will enforce for student misconduct (e.g., cheating and recording test questions).

During Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Collect cell phones, smartphones, and other unauthorized electronic devices as students enter the testing site.

Ensure students are seated for optimal security and at the assigned workstation (online test).

Appropriately implement required accommodations.

During the administration of the mathematics assessment, collect all used scratch/grid paper and any other paper on which students have written after the non-calculator portion to ensure students have not recorded non-calculator items on scratch/grid paper. Provide new scratch/grid paper to students.

Actively monitor testing. Closely monitor to ensure students do not return to non-calculator questions. These pages are labeled with a bright border for ease in identification. TAs should take positions with the best vantage points and continually move around the testing site to ensure students are adhering to the instructions given and are in the correct session. Ascertain that students are not using inappropriate item elimination strategies or making stray marks in the answer bubbles. TAs/Proctors must not be engaged in off task activities such as working on electronic devices, talking with colleagues, or grading student work.

Make sure students are supervised at all times during testing and all breaks. This supervision requirement includes those students who need additional time to complete any test session.

If there is a disruption (e.g., fire alarm, power outage) ensure the safety of students at all times, and take appropriate precautions concerning the security of the test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets.

Collect test materials when students are finished testing rather than keeping them closed on the students' desks.

Students who finish early may sit quietly, read for pleasure, or read non-content-related materials until all students have finished. Reading for pleasure includes magazines along with fiction text such as novels, short stories, poetry, etc. Reading anything that may include information related to the content area being assessed is not allowed. Written work/drawing/coloring of any kind is prohibited to ensure students are not recording secure test content.

Immediately report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches to the SAC/Building Principal.



After Each Testing Session – TA/Proctor

Return all scratch/grid paper, rough drafts or any other paper on which students have written to the SAC to be destroyed.

Account for all student test booklets, answer booklets, combined test/answer booklets, and test tickets daily and return all secure testing materials to the SAC immediately after the testing session each day. It is recommended that the SAC or the SAC's designee count the test booklets and/or test tickets in the presence of the TA.

Failure to account for and/or return assessment materials constitutes a breach in security, the consequences of which can be severe, up to and including remuneration should it be determined loss of or misappropriation of materials has compromised the integrity of test items.

Clear the memory of calculators and set the calculators in testing or exam mode before and after each testing session.

After Test Administration – TA/Proctor

Sign the *Test Security Certification (Test Administrator/Proctor)* and return it to the SAC. The TA/Proctor should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

D. GENERAL TEST SECURITY GUIDELINES

The assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from assessment procedures is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security.

School administrators, teachers, and any other education personnel who are involved in the assessment program must maintain the security of all assessment materials at all times.

Because the assessment must remain secure, teachers/TAs should not have assessment materials in their possession at any time other than during the actual assessment administration.

Before Test Administration

DO NOT:

Teach students a test-taking technique that would require them to bubble more than one response to a test question and then return and erase all but one response.

Review student test booklets except for purposes as stated in the *Directions for Administration Manual* and any of the accommodations guidelines documents. Knowledge or review of test items is not necessary for valid test administration and is prohibited.

Note: Interpreters may have access to test materials three days prior to test administration to prepare for accurate interpretation of the test.

Reveal any part of copyrighted materials to anyone.

Copy or otherwise reproduce any part of copyrighted materials.

Review and/or provide answers to test items to students. This includes using any of the test items for instructional purposes.



Possess unauthorized copies of state tests.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report immediately any of the actions prohibited in this document.

During Test Administration

DO NOT:

Leave students unattended with testing materials or permit any student to leave the testing site with testing materials for any reason.

Permit students to have unauthorized electronic devices in their possession or accessible to them.

Permit students to look ahead to another section or module of the test before being instructed to do so, or allow students to look back in a test booklet once a test section or module has been completed.

Discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal contents of the test to anyone.

Possess secure test materials at any time other than during the actual administration of the test. TAs should be given the secure materials immediately prior to the administration of the test, and the materials must be collected and counted by the SAC immediately after the testing session ends each day.

Coach or provide feedback to students (e.g., answer any questions pertaining to the content of the test, review rough drafts, or give students feedback of any kind including indicating items students may not have answered correctly). This prohibition applies to, but is not limited to, Personal Care Aides (PCA), Therapeutic Support Staff (TSS), or any other one-on-one aide who is assigned to a student.

Define or clarify a word in a test item.

Deviate from any of the read-aloud rules for any portion of the assessments. (The *Pennsylvania Read-Aloud and Scribing Guidelines for Operational Assessments* can be found on the PDE website.)

Read aloud any part of the assessments that will cue the correct answer(s) or provide a hint for the test taker.

Read-aloud the parts of the assessment that are not permitted to be read-aloud.

Return a test booklet to any student after it has been turned in to the TA, unless approval is granted by PDE, or for the reasons noted in the following sentence. Test booklets will be returned to students for makeup sessions for absences and for students who go to another testing site for extended time.

Alter, influence, or interfere with a test response in any way; fill in any unanswered item, or instruct the student to do so.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report any of the actions prohibited in this document.

Play music while students are taking the test.



After Test Administration

DO NOT:

Discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the contents of the test to anyone.

Keep/save, copy, reproduce, or use any test, test item, specific test content, or examinee responses to any item or any section of a secure test in any manner inconsistent with the instructions provided by and through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. This includes using any of the test items for instructional purposes.

Review student responses in the answer or combined test/answer booklet.

Read or review test booklets, answer booklets, or combined test/answer booklets containing the test items.

Alter, influence, or interfere with a test response in any way, fill in any unanswered items, or instruct the student to do so.

Discuss or provide feedback regarding test items.

Copy or reproduce any portion of the secure test materials or prepare/provide answer keys.

Erase or change student answers.

Make false or misleading statements about assessment results, including inappropriate interpretations, inaccurate reports, or unsubstantiated claims.

Erase stray marks or darken bubbles or make any alteration to a student's test.

Assist in, direct, aid, counsel, encourage, or fail to report any of the actions prohibited in this document.

DO:

Immediately report suspected testing irregularities/security breaches. TAs/Proctors should report to the SAC/Building Principal; SACs should report directly to the DAC. In either case if the appropriate coordinator, whether SAC or DAC, is unavailable for an extended time or has any involvement in the testing irregularity, contact PDE directly. Irregularities and/or allegations should be reported to PDE at ra-edirregularities@pa.gov.

Sign the *Test Security Certification (General)*. Those involved with testing should sign the *Test Security Certification* at the end of each testing window.

Appendix B:

PSSA Test Security Certifications

2025 PSSA Test Security Certification

(District Assessment Coordinator)



Pennsylvania
Department of Education

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment received instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures. Additionally, prior to the administration of the assessment, any individual who administered and/or proctored the assessment completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training and all School Assessment Coordinators were trained on the Test Accountability and Security information contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Furthermore, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to any assessment materials were informed that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These individuals were made aware that they were neither to review, discuss, disseminate, describe, or otherwise reveal the contents of the assessment to anyone nor were they to remove any assessment materials from the school building. They were also made aware that they were not to keep, copy, reproduce, release, or use any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment received instruction that all assessment materials, including all assessment booklets and other materials containing secure assessment questions and student responses, were to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Further, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals who assisted in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to the secure assessment materials were made aware that they were not to in any manner alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

All assessment materials received from DRC have been used and secured in accordance with the directions contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I am not aware that any individual has reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have neither removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction nor am I aware that any individual has removed any assessment materials from the school building unless specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction.

I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I am not aware that any individual has kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have neither provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question nor am I aware that any individual has provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees. I am not aware that any other individual has altered or has caused to have altered any examinee response in any manner.

I understand that I am responsible for the secure administration of the assessment in my school district and for the return of all secure assessment material that was received from DRC and that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Assessment Coordinator Name

Assessment Coordinator Signature

Date of Signature

2025 PSSA Test Security Certification

(School Assessment Coordinator and Principal)



District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling of assessment materials and/or the administration of the assessment received instruction regarding test security protocols and procedures. Additionally, prior to the administration of the assessment, any individual who administered and/or proctored the assessment completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training. Furthermore, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to any assessment materials were informed that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These individuals were made aware that they were neither to review, discuss, disseminate, describe, or otherwise reveal the contents of the assessment to anyone nor were they to remove any assessment materials from the school building. They were also made aware that they were not to keep, copy, reproduce, release, or use any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals involved in the handling and/or administration of the assessment received instruction that all assessment materials, including all assessment booklets and other materials containing secure assessment questions and student responses, were to be kept secure and precisely accounted for in accordance with the procedures specified in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*. Further, prior to the administration of the assessment, all individuals who assisted in the administration of the assessment and all individuals who had access to the secure assessment materials were made aware that they were not to in any manner alter or cause the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

All assessment materials received from DRC have been used and secured in accordance with the directions contained in the *Handbook for Assessment Coordinators*.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I am not aware that any individual has reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have neither removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction nor am I aware that any individual has removed any assessment materials from the school building unless specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction.

I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I am not aware that any individual has kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have neither provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question nor am I aware that any individual has provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response. I am not aware that any other individual has altered or has caused the alteration of any examinee response in any manner.

I understand that I am responsible for the secure administration of the assessment in my school(s) and for the return of all secure assessment material that was received from DRC and that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Name

Signature

Date of Signature



2025 PSSA Test Security Certification

(Test Administrator and Proctor)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

Prior to the administration of the assessment, I completed the Pennsylvania State Test Administration Training, and I understand that the assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I have not reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone. I have not removed any assessment materials from the school building unless I was specifically authorized to administer the assessment to a student on homebound instruction. I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner that is inconsistent with the instructions provided by or through the Pennsylvania Department of Education. I have not provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee's response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

I understand that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Administrator/Proctor Name

Administrator/Proctor Signature

Date of Signature



2025 PSSA Test Security Certification

(General)

District: _____

School: _____

AUN: _____

Maintaining the security and integrity of all assessment materials, preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior in the administration and handling of the assessment, and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment are essential in order to obtain reliable and valid student scores. In that regard, I certify the following:

I understand that all assessment materials are secure, confidential, and proprietary documents owned by the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

I have neither reviewed, discussed, disseminated, described, or otherwise revealed the contents of the assessment to anyone nor have I removed any assessment materials from the school building. I have not kept, copied, reproduced, released, or used any assessment, assessment question, specific assessment content, or examinee response to any item or any section of the secure assessment in any manner. I have not provided any examinee with an answer to an assessment question or in any way influenced an examinee’s response to any assessment question. I have not in any manner altered or caused the alteration of any examinee response, assessment booklet, or papers used by examinees.

I understand that any breach in assessment security could result in the invalidation of assessment results, professional discipline, and/or criminal prosecution.

I understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904.

Name

Signature

Date of Signature

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Appendix C:

Confidentiality Agreements



Pennsylvania Department of Education

Parent Confidentiality Agreement

In accordance with 22 Pa. Code § 4.4 and 22 Pa. Code § 4.51 and to ensure the security and confidentiality of the statewide assessment system, when any individual inspects a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment or Keystone Exam pursuant to 22 Pa. Code §§ 4.4 and 4.5, the individual must attest to the following:

As a parent/guardian of a child who will sit for a Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) and/or Keystone Exam during the current school year, I understand that I have the right to review the relevant PSSA and/or Keystone Exam, but that this review shall not compromise the security or validity of the assessment(s) in any way.

I further understand that the content of the statewide assessments, including the content contained in each test booklet and answer booklet, are the secure, proprietary property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Education (PDE). Therefore, I agree not to discuss, disseminate, or otherwise reveal the content of the assessment materials to anyone, including my own child or children.

I understand that violation of these terms could result in personal liability for damages caused by a breach of test security, including but not limited to liability and/or costs associated with any of the following: retesting students; recalculating student/school/school district achievement data; developing/producing new test items/materials to replace compromised test items/materials; and investigations relating to the breach of test security.

I further understand that false statements herein are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

Name (Print): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witnessed by: _____

Date: _____



Pennsylvania Department of Education

Confidentiality Agreement for Educational Sign Language Interpreter

Test security and student confidentiality are of the utmost importance to the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and it is the Department's obligation to protect information about tests and students in the assessment process. Such information includes performance tasks, multiple-choice items, scoring rubrics, and student responses used in the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment. The nature and quality of an individual student's performance must not be released.

Educational sign language interpreters may review test materials up to three days prior to test administration. Test materials must be reviewed in a secure location supervised by the principal or test coordinator. Materials may not be removed from the secure location. Filing or retaining any notes beyond the testing window or making copies of any kind is strictly prohibited. The principal and/or test coordinator must receive and securely destroy any notes required by the educational sign language interpreter to administer the test.

These assessments rely on the measurement of individual achievement. Any deviation from the assessment procedures outlined in this manual [group work, teacher coaching (e.g., paraphrasing, explaining, giving suggestions about test items), pre-teaching or pre-release of the performance tasks or assessment items, use of old Pennsylvania assessments as preparation tools, etc.] is strictly prohibited and will be considered a violation of test security. Any action by a professional employee or commissioned officer that is willfully designed to divulge test questions, falsify student scores or compromise the integrity of the state assessment system will be subject to disciplinary action under sections 1259-1267 of the School Code (24 P.S. Sections 12-1259-12-1267).

We are certain that you share our concern that all items and students' responses be handled in a professional and confidential manner. By signing this agreement, you acknowledge that you have read and understand this Confidentiality Agreement and agree to abide by these requirements.

Name (Print): _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Signature (Principal or
Assessment Coordinator): _____

Date: _____

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Appendix D:

Information for Parents/Guardians



Dear Parent/Guardian:

In an era of cell phones, smartphones and other electronic devices which can easily photograph and instantly share photographs, confidential and secure test materials can be easily compromised. Not only is it expensive to replace a compromised test item, the material contained in the PSSA and Keystone Exams is copyrighted property of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Copying or duplicating the material from the assessment, including the taking of a photograph of secure assessment material, is a violation of the federal Copyright Act. Penalties for violations of the Copyright Act may include the cost of replacing the compromised test item(s) or fines of no less than \$750 up to \$30,000 for a single violation (17 U.S.C. § 101 et seq.).

In order to ensure reliable test results and to avoid the cost of replacing test items, the Department of Education requires schools to set rules and take certain steps to protect test materials. Electronic devices such as but not limited to cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, E-readers, Nooks, Kindles, iPods, tablets, camera-ready devices, and any other electronic device which can be used to photograph or duplicate test materials, access the internet and/or communicate with others during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams are not permitted in any testing site. Please speak with your child and let your child know that the possession and/or use of a cell phone or other electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams will result in consequences.

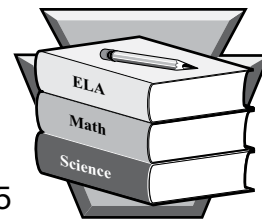
You will be contacted by the school if your child is discovered using and/or having a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Students who ignore this directive will be subject to the school's discipline policy and the Department of Education's requirement that the student's test will not be scored and the student will be required to retake the entire exam. The electronic device will be held by school staff, and the device's stored photographs and other functions will be examined with your permission. You may request to be present when the electronic device is examined. If a photograph of the PSSA or Keystone Exam is discovered or if permission to search other functions of the electronic device is refused, the device will be held by the school staff. The Pennsylvania Department of Education holds the copyright to all material contained within the PSSA and Keystone Exams, the Pennsylvania Department of Education will be contacted and further action may be taken.

If, after testing is complete and test materials have been returned, it is discovered that a student used and/or had a cell phone or other unapproved electronic device during the administration of the test, the school's discipline policy will be followed and the student's test will not be scored.

Information for Parents or Guardians

Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA)

English Language Arts Assessment, April 21–25, 2025
Mathematics and Science Assessment, April 28–May 9, 2025



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE PSSA

Which schools participate?

All school districts and charter schools participate in the assessments. Nonpublic and private schools may also participate on a voluntary basis.

Which students take the assessments?

Except for a very few students who meet specific criteria for participation in an alternate assessment, all students are included in the assessments as outlined below:

ELA & Mathematics—Grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
Science—Grades 5 and 8

Who decided what the assessments should measure?

Groups of educators from all levels of education in Pennsylvania chose the areas of knowledge and skills upon which the assessments are based. The groups included teachers, supervisors, curriculum directors, and college specialists. They also reviewed, edited, and approved the test items.

Who administers the assessments?

Each school chooses the person(s) who will administer the assessments. In most cases, these are teachers in the students' building.

How are the results reported?

Two copies of the individual student report for all assessments will be sent to all schools and districts that participate for distribution to parents, teachers, school counselors, and/or principals. The state will not receive any report with individual names included.

School-level reports will be used for curricular and planning purposes. School districts and charter schools may publish the results of PSSA testing for each school. The state will also release school-by-school assessment data.

May parents see the assessments?

Yes, under one circumstance. School entities are required to have policies to ensure that parents or guardians have the right to review a state assessment in the school entity during convenient hours for parents or guardians from the time testing materials are received to the end of the make-up schedule in order to determine whether a state assessment conflicts with

their religious belief. This is the only reason allowable under regulation.

Confidentiality agreements must be signed, and no copies of the assessments or notes about assessment items will be permitted to leave the school. If after reviewing the test, parents or guardians find the test to be in conflict with their religious belief and wish their student(s) to be excused from the test, the right of the parents or guardians will not be denied upon written request to the applicable school district Superintendent, charter school Chief Executive Officer, or AVTS Director. Parents or guardians should contact their child's school to make arrangements to review the test.

Report Testing Irregularities

Parents/guardians who believe that a testing irregularity may have occurred may email ra-edirregularities@pa.gov to report the incident.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS ASSESSMENT (grades 3 through 8)

How long does the assessment take?

The entire English Language Arts assessment takes approximately three to four hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

What does the assessment include?

Each student completes three sections of questions for the English Language Arts assessment. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to multiple-choice, evidence-based selected-response, technology-enhanced, and constructed-response questions. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer(s) is chosen from four options. Evidence-based selected-response questions have two parts, and students select one or more answers for each part. Technology-enhanced questions use interactive formats to allow students to construct answers. Constructed-response questions may include a short-answer (grade 3) or text dependent analysis (grades 4 through 8). Short-answer questions require students to compose a brief response to support their answer. For the text dependent analysis question, students analyze a text and use evidence from the reading passage to compose an essay.

How are written responses to constructed-response items scored?

The written responses for English Language Arts are scored by evaluators trained in applying an ELA-specific scoring guideline. For short-answer questions, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process. Responses to text dependent analysis questions are scored based on both content and writing skills.

What is assessed in English Language Arts?

The English Language Arts assessment addresses six major reporting categories as well as two text types. Students respond to standalone questions assessing language. Additionally, students read a number of passages from literature and informational genres and respond to questions about these passages that indicate both comprehension and reading skills and the students' analysis and interpretation of different types of texts.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT (grades 3 through 8)

How long does the assessment take?

The entire mathematics assessment takes approximately two to three hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

What does the assessment include?

Each student completes two sections of questions for the mathematics assessment. Some portions will be the same for all students, and some will consist of different groups of questions.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to three types of questions: multiple-choice, technology-enhanced, and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options. Technology-enhanced questions use interactive formats to allow students to construct answers. Open-ended questions require students to compose their responses. Open-ended questions generally require students to provide detail in support of their answers (such as showing or describing the steps performed to complete a calculation).

How are written responses to open-ended items scored?

The written responses for mathematics open-ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a mathematics-specific scoring guideline. In mathematics, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

What is assessed in Mathematics?

The mathematics assessment addresses five major reporting categories across four clusters. The reporting categories assessed and the proportion of questions in each reporting category vary by grade level. As a part of the assessment of Cluster A, Numbers and Operations, students in grades 4 through 8 respond to a set of questions without a calculator. Constructed-response items may require the students to show all of their work (e.g., calculations, graphs, drawings) and/or to explain in writing how they solved the problems.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCIENCE ASSESSMENT (grades 5 and 8)

How long does the assessment take?

The entire science assessment takes approximately one to two hours to complete. Your school district will inform you about the assessment schedule.

What does the assessment include?

Students in grades 5 and 8 complete two sections of questions for the science assessment. The science assessment will consist of different groups of questions on different test forms.

What types of questions are on the assessment?

Students respond to three types of questions: multiple-choice, technology-enhanced, and open-ended. In a multiple-choice question, the correct answer is chosen from the four presented options. Technology-enhanced questions use interactive formats to allow students to construct answers. Open-ended questions require students to compose their responses. Grades 5 and 8 may also include science scenarios.

What is a science scenario?

A science scenario contains text, graphics, charts, and/or tables and uses these elements to describe the results of a class project, an experiment, or other similar research. Students use the information found in a science scenario to answer multiple-choice questions.

How are written responses to open-ended items scored?

The written responses for science open-ended items are scored by evaluators trained in applying a science-specific scoring guideline. In science, scores are based on content only. Spelling and punctuation are not included as part of the scoring process.

What is assessed in science?

The science assessment addresses the four major reporting categories: Technology and Engineering, Life Sciences & Environmental Literacy and Sustainability, Physical Sciences, and Earth and Space Sciences. The proportion of items in each reporting category varies by grade level.

Appendix E:

Pennsylvania Calculator Policy



PENNSYLVANIA CALCULATOR POLICY

If a student chooses to use a calculator (other than the online options) on the Keystone Exams or PSSA in sections where the calculator is permitted, the student must adhere to the guidelines listed below. It is incumbent upon the School Assessment Coordinator to ensure that all calculator policies are implemented and followed, including making sure calculators have no programs or other data stored in their memory other than those that are factory installed. Please note that if a student wants to restore the deleted programs, the student will need to back up these programs prior to the assessment. In addition, the memory must be cleared on the calculator prior to and following each test session of the assessment. This task must be completed by the Test Administrator or Proctor. Students are not to complete this task.

Calculators with testing mode or exam mode must have the testing mode or exam mode activated prior to the exam session by the Test Administrator or Proctor. Directions to activate testing mode or exam mode are provided on the PDE website.

The following are not permitted for the PSSA or Keystone Exams:

- Devices that have a primary purpose other than functioning as a calculator such as cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, PDAs, laptops, tablets, pocket organizers, etc.
- Calculators with infrared, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, or other beaming or wireless capabilities, unless the beaming or wireless capabilities are disabled
- Calculators with built-in Computer Algebra Systems (CAS)
- Calculators that make noise, have paper tape, need to be plugged in, or talk; these specific calculators can only be used as a required accommodation as stated in the Accommodations Guidelines
- Calculators shared by students during a test session
- Any and all non-factory (add-on) programs or information stored in the calculator

This calculator policy is intended to be a general description of what is not allowed. It is not meant to be an exhaustive list of specific calculators, devices, or technologies that must not be used on the PSSA or Keystone Exams. Please note that as technology changes, this policy may also change.

Appendix F:

Code of Conduct for Test Takers



CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEST TAKERS

DO ...

- Listen to, read, and follow all directions given.
- Ask questions if you do not understand the directions.
- Read each question carefully, especially multiple-choice items that ask for the “best answer.” Also, be sure to read any open-ended items carefully before responding.
- Be careful when marking your answers so that you do not skip spaces or fill in the wrong sections.
- Make sure to completely fill in the bubble for the answer(s) you select and erase completely any answers you change.
- Keep your eyes on your own test.
- Try to answer each test item.
- Check that you have completed all the test items in the test section before closing your test booklet or submitting your final responses online.
- Report any suspected cheating to your teacher or principal.

DO NOT ...

- Have notes in your possession during the test.
- Have any unapproved electronic devices (cell phones, smartphones, smartwatches, etc.) in your possession during the test. Note, you may have approved calculators, if applicable, during the test.
- Share a calculator with others.
- Use the bubbles in the answer booklet to either eliminate possible incorrect answers or possible correct answers by making marks in multiple bubbles and erasing. Mark only the bubble for the correct answer(s) you have chosen.
- Talk with others about questions on the test during or after the test. (Students should be assured that they may discuss the testing process or issues of concern with their parents/guardians.)
- Take notes about the test to share with others.
- Leave an online test session until the session is complete or until instructed to do so.
- Use social media to post information about the test and/or test items.

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2025
HANDBOOK FOR ASSESSMENT COORDINATORS



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