

# Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA)



## Test Security and Administration Manual August 2025

**NOTE: Important updates to last year's manual are highlighted, found on pages noted below.**

- Page 8 – Clarifies new policy for submission of LEA Test Security Plans
- Page 13 – Clarifies applicable tests for the Testing Schedule policy
- Page 16 - Clarifies Testing for Homebound Students
- Page 19 – Clarifies that music may not be played within the testing environment

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### **DeSSA Vendor and Department of Education Help Desks**

For questions regarding the *DeSSA Test Security and Administration Manual* or security practices and requirements, please contact the Office of Assessment and Accountability (OOAA) at (302) 857-3391 or [Dusty Shockley](#), Education Associate for Test Security and Administration at the Department of Education.

For questions or additional assistance with use of the online testing system, please contact the vendor Helpdesk for each specific assessment. When contacting a Helpdesk, provide as much detail as possible about any issues encountered.

TEST and VENDOR	PHONE & EMAIL
DeSSA ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies Cambium Assessment	877-560-8331 <a href="#">EMAIL LINK</a>
DeSSA ALT ELA, Math, and Science Dynamic Learning Maps	855-277-9751 <a href="#">EMAIL LINK</a>
DeSSA ACCESS 2.0 for MLLs DeSSA ALT ACCESS 2.0 for MLLs Data Recognition Corporation	855-787-9615 <a href="#">EMAIL LINK</a>
School Day SAT College Board	855-373-6387 <a href="#">EMAIL LINK</a>

## **Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA)**

### **Introduction**

The Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) is a combination of national and state level administered assessments. The measured outcomes of each assessment and the state standards assessed vary with each test. The assessments are utilized for a variety of purposes, including determining the strengths and needs of students as well as the instructional program.

This Test Security and Administration Manual has been approved by [the Director of the Office of Assessment and Accountability](#) and will be reviewed and revised, as needed, on an annual basis. All District Test Coordinators (DTCs), School Test Coordinators (STCs), Test Administrators (TAs), and support staff involved in the testing administration are required to review and adhere to this security and administration manual, coordinated security training, and Delaware State Code and Regulations.

The Office of Assessment and Accountability reports the results of the following assessments delivered to Delaware students:

#### ***National-Level Assessment***

- National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) – Grades 4 and 8

#### ***State-Level Assessments***

- ACCESS 2.0 for Multilingual Learners (MLLs) – grades K–12
- ALT ACCESS 2.0 for MLLs – grades K–12
- DeSSA English Language Arts and Mathematics Summative – grades 3–8
- DeSSA ALT – Reading and Mathematics, grades 3–8 and 11, and Science grades 5, 8, and 10
- DeSSA Science – grades 5, 8, and High School Biology
- DeSSA Social Studies Summative – grade 11
- DeSSA Social Studies Through-Year Assessments – grades 4–8
- SAT School Day – grade 11

## **Test Security and Administration Overview**

### **Purpose of Manual**

[Title 14 – Education, Subchapter IV, State Assessment Security and Violations](#) and [Regulation 101, State Assessment System](#) govern the rules and regulations that ensure the security of the assessment administration, collection, and reporting of assessment data.

This Test Security and Administration Manual sets forth policies, procedures, and responsibilities for DeSSA assessments. This manual is intended to provide greater protection of DeSSA intellectual property, to deter and reduce test misadministration, and to maintain high program standards and integrity. This publication contains policy and guidelines prepared by the DDOE to build a common understanding of appropriate testing practices and to ensure district and school administrators, teachers, and other school personnel have the information required to uniformly administer DeSSA assessments in a secure manner. This manual may also be used to train staff and as a reference to structure security roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations.

All DeSSA items and test materials are secure and must be appropriately administered to protect the integrity, validity, and confidentiality of assessment instruments, items, prompts, and student information. Any deviation in test administration must be reported as a test security incident, as described in this manual, to ensure the continued validity of the assessment results. Failure to honor security and appropriate administration practices severely jeopardizes district and state accountability requirements and the accuracy of student data. Conduct that violates the security and confidentiality of a test is defined as any departure from the test administration procedures established in this security manual, state legislation and regulation, and other materials.

### **Importance of Test Security and Uniform Administration**

Maintaining the security and confidentiality and consistent administration practices of DeSSA assessments provides standard and equitable testing opportunities for all students. Test security and administration goals include:

- adhering to high professional standards;
- protecting the investment of resources, time, and energy;
- maintaining consistency across all testing occasions and sites;
- protecting student information and maintaining confidentiality;
- providing secure assessments that result in valid and reliable scores.

Test security incidents are behaviors prohibited during test administration (both online and paper-and-pencil) because they may affect the validity of the assessment, give a student an unfair advantage, or compromise the secure administration of the assessment. Whether intentional or accidental, failure to comply with security rules, either by staff or students, constitutes a test security incident.

### **Duty to Report**

Employees of a Delaware public school or district who have witnessed, been informed of, or suspect the possibility of a test security or administration incident that could potentially affect the integrity of the tests are responsible for reporting these incidents to the School and/or District Test Coordinator.

### **Consequences of Test Security Violations**

Administrators, certified and non-certified school staff, and students must adhere to appropriate security and administration practices. The most severe consequences of violations may include the invalidation of student test results, limitations placed on Delaware professional licensure, and/or liability for copyright infringement. See [Title 14 – Education, Subchapter IV, State Assessment Security and Violations](#) and [Regulation 101, State Assessment System](#).

Disciplinary measures for educators and school staff may be determined at the employment level based on a local education agency's policy and the severity of the test security violations. The Delaware Department of Education may also pursue its own sanctions of department-licensed individuals for testing irregularities and breaches.

## **DeSSA Roles and Responsibilities**

Every individual who interacts with the assessments, communicates test results, and/or receives testing information is responsible for test security. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Delaware Department of Education Staff
- District and Charter School Administrators
- District Test Coordinators
- School Test Coordinators
- Test Administrators
- Certified and Non-certified Public School Staff
- Students and the Community

**DDOE Office of Assessment and Accountability** will be responsible for:

- providing the DeSSA Test Security and Administration Manual and coordinated security and administration training;
- reviewing and resolving test security incidents submitted by District Test Coordinators;
- reviewing appeals for resets, reopens, grace period extensions, invalidations, and exemptions;
- monitoring test administration, test security, and participation for eligible students for all public schools.

## **Communication**

DTCs and STCs shall clearly define and communicate to all staff administering DeSSA assessments in writing (e.g., by email or through a learning management system) multiple times during the school year:

- all security and administration procedures established for a secure assessment in the local test security plan and in this Manual;
- unethical and inappropriate practices in preparing, administering, and scoring assessments (Appendix B);
- how the unethical and inappropriate practices will be monitored, what sanctions will apply for any violations of the practices, and under what circumstances such sanctions will apply to all staff (Appendix A and G).

## **Overall Assessment Security**

DTCs and STCs are responsible for the following overall assessment security and administration activities:

- Cooperate with DDOE in investigating any alleged inappropriate assessment practice.
- Report any observed test security or administration violation to the Office of Assessment and Accountability by completing the documentation in the DOE Helpdesk.
- Uphold the integrity and accuracy of the testing by preventing any dishonest or fraudulent behavior and promoting a fair and equitable testing environment.
- Ensure no one compromises test security or the accuracy of the test data score results by manipulating the test administration, demographic data, or the students' answers or data.
- Ensure student test scores are not disclosed to any unauthorized person.

- Prohibit the transfer of any student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) by email, in any electronic device, or in any other documents, either internally or to outside agencies.
- Encourage the community to voice any concern about any practice they may consider inappropriate by contacting the Office of Assessment and Accountability.
- Establish written procedures for investigating any complaint, allegation, or concern about an inappropriate practice. The procedures should ensure the protection of individuals' rights, the integrity of an assessment, and the integrity of assessment results.
- Prohibit the use of any assessment for purposes other than that for which it was intended.
- Remove or cover all displays related to instructional content (including for content areas not being assessed) prior to the administration of a state test.
- Prohibit possession of any electronic devices by students while taking a state test.
- Prohibit test administration procedures which result in excessive testing time.
- Refer to *Appendix F: What to Do After Testing* for requirements of after-testing policy.

#### Responsibilities of District and School Personnel in DeSSA

Action/Responsibility	District Test Coordinator (DTC)	School Test Coordinator (STC)	Test Administrator (TAs)
General oversight of secure DeSSA administration, including monitoring all test sessions within a school and ensuring participation of eligible students	X	X	
Provide physical or digital copies of the Test Security and Administration Manual to all school personnel	X		
Establish written procedures for investigating any test security incident	X		
Submit student test appeals (reopen, reset, invalidate, exempt)	X		
Monitor all test sessions within a school	X	X	
Create or approve testing schedules and procedures for the school (consistent with state policy) for all relevant assessments and content areas	X	X	
Verify student information prior to testing to ensure that the correct student receives the proper test with the appropriate supports	X	X	X

Ensure that technology and test platforms are updated for online testing	X	X	
Complete required test security and administration training by the deadline published by the OOAA	X	X	X
Verify completion of required test security and test administration training	X	X	
Report all test security incidents to STC			X
Report all test security incidents to DTC		X	
Report all test security incidents to DOE	X		
Verify student viewing of the Test Security video	X	X	X
Make students aware of the policy for electronic devices and the school/district consequences for violating the policy	X	X	X
Prohibit the transfer of any student's Personally Identifiable Information (PII) by email, in any electronic device, or in any other documents, either internally or to outside agencies	X	X	X

### Reporting Preliminary DeSSA Scores

Schools and districts shall not report publicly preliminary student results, whether individual or aggregated. Preliminary data may be shared with staff for internal purposes, such as a check of school/grade level targets or discussion about student placement. No data shall be shared with the public until released by the OOAA and approved by the State Board of Education.

### Test Security Plans

Each district and charter school shall adopt and enforce a plan setting forth procedures to ensure the security of all state assessments. This plan must encompass all public schools in the district, including district-sponsored charter schools. The plan will be requested on a regular basis by the DDOE as part of its normal DeSSA monitoring process that is communicated annually to DTCs.

The plan must be maintained by the DTC and published digitally or physically for all staff. To protect the security of the state assessments, each district and charter school must establish the plan to be consistent with the procedures outlined in this document, and it must address the following criteria:

- Identification and training of personnel authorized to have access to or administer the DeSSA;

- Procedures for test administrators to follow when monitoring students during test sessions, such as walkthrough checklists;
- Procedures for monitoring test materials before, during, and after testing;
- Procedures to verify the identity and eligibility of students taking an assessment;
- Procedures to report any alleged violation in test administration or test security, including a [test security incident reporting form](#);
- Procedures that set forth [actions taken in response to a reported violation](#);
- Procedures for communication of test security procedures.

### **Responding to Test Security Violations**

The DDOE Helpdesk is required for documentation of test security incidents and shall be used by all districts and charter schools. Each District Test Coordinator shall have access to this application. The DTC is responsible for immediately investigating all confirmed or alleged testing violations to gather all necessary information. A DTC shall ensure all testing personnel are aware of their obligation to report testing violations and can easily access local reporting procedures.

Reporting requirements differ based on the severity of the confirmed or alleged violation. The contents of all reports submitted to the Office of Assessment and Accountability must clearly lay out the sequence of events and include the District or Charter School's determination in the matter. [Supporting documentation is required for all reported violations.](#)

### **Reporting Requirements**

DTCs must submit the required information to the DOE Helpdesk as soon as possible after discovery of a potential test security incident. Depending on the nature and severity of the incident, the OOAA may request the DTC take certain actions, such as interviewing students, limiting a Test Administrator's access to platforms during an investigation, or interpreting test results, to ensure a thorough and complete investigation. [Regulation 101](#) requires that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and reported within 5 working days.

The following items must be completed and submitted by the DTC to [fulfill OOAA requirements for reporting test violations](#):

1. Identify the level and specific type of security incident.
2. Gather statements or interview all individuals who were involved in or may have information about the incident and document, in writing, and must be signed and dated. Include role and title of each party submitting a statement.
3. Complete a summary of events and timeline including who was involved, why the incident occurred, and how the irregularity was discovered. Statements should provide details about how the individual was involved with the reported irregularity. Individuals implicated in an irregularity report should respond to all allegations.
4. Address and resolve all discrepancies (if any) in the information provided by the individuals involved.

5. Note at what school the incident occurred and during which administration, including information such as date, assessment, grade level, and subject area.
6. If the OOAA was contacted for guidance, document when the contact was made. If the district was granted permission to take a certain action or instructed on how to remedy an error, include that information in the report.
7. If the irregularity involved any examinees potentially gaining an unfair advantage on an assessment, include information regarding whether the district wants to invalidate the assessment or submit the test(s) to be scored.
8. Document the steps the district will take to ensure the irregularity does not reoccur, including whether the district has taken or will take disciplinary action.

### **Test Security Severity**

A test security incident is classified by its level of severity.

#### **Impropriety**

An impropriety is an unusual circumstance that has a low impact on the individual or group of students who are testing and has a low risk of potentially affecting student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. An impropriety should be reported to the DTC and STC immediately and in the DOE Helpdesk within 24 hours of the discovery of the incident.

#### **Irregularity**

An irregularity is an unusual circumstance that impacts an individual or group of students who are testing and may potentially affect student performance on the test, test security, or test validity. An irregularity should be reported to the DTC and STC immediately and in the DOE Helpdesk within 24 hours of the discovery of the incident.

#### **Breach**

A breach is a test administration event that poses a threat to the validity of the test. Breaches require immediate attention and escalation to the state level. Examples may include such situations as exposure of secure materials or a repeatable security/system risk. These circumstances have external implications. A breach requires immediate notification/escalation by telephone and email to the Office of Assessment and Accountability by the DTC, followed by documentation in the DOE Helpdesk.

[Click here for a chart that shows test security incident levels and examples of incidents.](#)

Examples of incidents marked with an asterisk (\*) may be referred by the Office of Assessment and Accountability to DDOE investigators for action related to licensure.

## **DeSSA Test Actions and Appeals**

The Office of Assessment and Accountability may reset, reopen, restore, invalidate, or exempt individual student assessments. These actions result from test security incidents or participation and eligibility requirements which are reported by DTCs through the DOE Helpdesk to the Office of Assessment and Accountability. An appeal shall be submitted by DTCs through the DOE Helpdesk to address incidents that are not security related, such as reopening an assessment for a student who becomes ill and is unable to resume testing until after testing has expired.

### **Reset**

Resetting a student's test removes that test from the system and enables the student to start a new test. The goal of the Reset Policy is for the correct student to receive the proper test with the appropriate accessibility supports.

Reset requests are most commonly triggered when a student has been misidentified, provided accessibility supports for which he or she is not eligible, or has not been provided documented accessibility supports. These are serious security incidents that expose unique secure tests to unauthorized persons and affect the validity and reliability of test results.

The DTC shall follow [reporting requirements](#) when requesting a reset of a student test.

- Explain the circumstances that led to the reset request, including the persons responsible for ensuring that the correct student receives the proper test with the appropriate accessibility supports.
- The reporting of the incident should identify actions taken by the DTC/STC to ensure such incidents are mitigated.

After reviewing the circumstances of an incident, the Office of Assessment and Accountability may elect only to document the testing irregularity rather than to reset the test. This decision would be made to reduce the testing time of a student and/or reduce multiple exposures to a secure test. If a reset is not granted, the student score will be reported.

### **Reopen**

Reopening a test allows a student to access a test that has already been submitted or has expired. The Office of Assessment and Accountability may reopen any test under the following conditions:

- if a student is unable to complete a test due to a technological difficulty that results in the expiration of the test;
- if a student is unable to complete the test before it expires due to an unanticipated excused absence (e.g. illness documented by a medical professional) or unanticipated school closure;

- if a student starts a test unintentionally — for example, selects a Mathematics PT (Performance Task) instead of an ELA (English Language Arts) PT—and the student is unable to complete the test before it expires;
- if a student unintentionally submits a test before he or she has completed it — for example, a student submits the ELA PT before completing Part 2.

A test that is reopened following expiration will remain open for 10 calendar days from the date it was reopened. When an *expired* test is reopened, the test will reopen at the location at which the student stopped the assessment. The student will be able to review items within the current segment of the test but cannot return to previous segments.

### **Invalidation**

Invalidating a student's test eliminates the test results, and the student does not receive a valid score for accountability purposes, and the student is not counted as a participant in the assessment. The Office of Assessment and Accountability may invalidate any test under the following conditions:

- a test security breach;
- misadministration resulting in invalid or unreliable scores;
- student misconduct resulting in invalid or unreliable scores.

After reviewing the circumstances of an incident, the Office of Assessment and Accountability may elect only to document the above conditions as testing irregularities rather than to invalidate the test. See [Regulation 101, Section 12](#) for details about invalidations.

### **Exemption**

An exemption appeal requests the Office of Assessment and Accountability to remove a student from eligibility for a specific assessment(s). [Regulation 101, Section 12.4](#) provides reasons why this may take place:

- a student is suffering from severe illness or injuries or the student has recently experienced severe traumatic events;
- a student is medically admitted to, or is ordered by the court to attend an alternative program;
- a student is serving time at an adult prison; or
- Other situations identified by the school and evaluated and approved by the Department.

The District Test Coordinator is responsible for submitting exemption requests to the Office of Assessment and Accountability according to the timeline published by the Department. Late requests will not be granted.

### **Secure Administration of DeSSA**

The following is a compilation of appropriate assessment practices related to the training of school personnel and uniform DeSSA administration. These practices should be used to determine whether a specific action related to the assessment is consistent with the principles of performing professional duties with integrity, honesty, and fairness to all. Adhering to these practices will help ensure the integrity of the assessment process and the reliability and validity of assessments and interpretation of results.

DTCs and STCs shall ensure all staff members have training and knowledge of these appropriate assessment practices and shall monitor the practices of all staff to ensure compliance.

### **Training**

- All personnel in a school environment shall complete the required test security and/or administration training and complete Appendix C, Test Security and Non-disclosure Agreement. Completed forms will be maintained by District or School Test Coordinators.
- Provide any other information and training necessary to ensure all appropriate staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to make knowledge-based decisions in preparing students for an assessment, to administer an assessment, and to interpret or use results of the assessment.
- Periodically review materials and practices related to preparing students for an assessment, administering an assessment, and interpreting or using assessment results to ensure the materials and practices are up to date.
- Verify that all training includes the Office of Assessment and Accountability and local policies regarding security incidents and possible outcomes or consequences for staff of failure to follow DeSSA policies.
- Prohibit any person without sufficient and appropriate knowledge, skills, or training from administering an assessment, accessing an assessment, or testing environment.
- Ensure that all non-certified personnel (such as substitutes, paraprofessionals, and student teachers), to be in the testing environment in a supportive role, shall take security training, complete the appropriate security and non-disclosure forms, and be supervised by a trained Test Administrator. Such non-certified individuals shall not be considered or trained as Test Administrators.

### **Administration**

Follow the testing procedures in the Test Administration Manual (TAM) for each specific assessment.

- Provide students with only the references or tools specifically designated in the test.
- Actively monitor students during test administration to ensure appropriate test-taking procedures and test security measures are followed. Always supervise students during testing sessions.

- Ensure all Test Administrators create a positive testing environment.
- Provide accommodations, as appropriate, for students with Individual Education Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, or Multilingual Learners (MLLs).
- Prohibit remote or home administration of any DeSSA online assessment.
- Administer online DeSSA tests only during the school day, in a school or district building, during testing windows established by the Office of Assessment and Accountability, while students are supervised by a trained Test Administrator(s).

### **Scheduling of Test Administration**

#### **One Test, One Day Policy**

DeSSA tests (except for the SAT) are untimed, and students are permitted reasonable durations to take them. Individual content area DeSSA tests (ELA CAT 3-8; ELA PT 3-8; Math CAT 3-8; Math PT 3-8; Science 5, 8, and HS Biology; Social Studies 4-8 and 11; ACCESS domains; DeSSA ALT) are expected to be completed in one continuous session.

A school's planned administration of DeSSA assessments shall follow the testing requirements set forth below.

- Schools shall plan for and provide a testing session of sufficient duration for students to complete a content area test in one sitting or session. This duration is at least 90 minutes. Any time needed to start computers, load the secure browser, and log in students is additional time that should be added on to the planned session.
- The Office of Assessment and Accountability recommends that a school follow its established 2-hour delay schedule on each testing day. This provides a 2-hour block to administer a test. Statewide data shows that most students will complete an individual content area assessment within that time frame.

STCs and DTCs are responsible for ensuring that testing session duration and schedules meet these requirements.

The purpose and intent of this policy is to maintain and promote uniform testing conditions across the state and to provide students with the time needed to complete a content area test within one session; to not create an undue testing burden on students or schools by extending testing beyond one day; to minimize disruption to instructional time over multiple days.

#### **Excessive Testing Time Procedures**

School and testing procedures which set the conditions for excessive testing time and thereby direct and guide a student response are violations of Delaware [Title 14, Subchapter IV, §172 State Assessment System Security and Violations](#) and the requirements of the DeSSA Test Security and Administration Manual. The administration of state assessments should follow the testing guidelines in the Test Administration Manuals (TAMs).

Setting procedures which result in excessive testing time is an unethical and prohibited practice. Administration procedures which result in excessive time added to a test session – even for an untimed test – are not allowable supports. Such procedures undermine the validity and reliability

of the assessment. Such procedures serve as preparation for the assessment that focuses primarily on the assessment instrument, including its format, rather than on the objectives being assessed.

Administration procedures that result in excessive testing time - well beyond the estimated time in the DeSSA Test Administration Manuals – is a form of coaching prohibited by state code. It is a violation of testing policy and practice for a School Administrator, Test Administrator, or Test Coordinator to coach or provide any type of assistance to students that may affect their responses. This includes both verbal cues (e.g., interpreting, explaining, or paraphrasing the test items or prompts) and nonverbal cues (e.g., voice inflection, pointing, or nodding head) to the correct answer. This also includes prompting students to take more time or work harder to complete an item or test. Examples of such coaching and testing procedures that lead to excessive testing time include:

- directing student completion of a constructed response item or performance task by requiring every student to prepare a rough draft before typing in a final version (students are allowed to prepare a rough draft if they choose, but cannot be told or required to do so);
- requiring students who are finished a section or set number of items to wait for other students to finish rather than move forward to complete items;
- requiring any student to use a specific strategy, or a subset of students to use the same strategy, to complete a task or prompt;
- requiring all students to work at the same pace or pause at the same item number;
- requiring that no student continue past a prescribed number of items before pausing the test for the entire group.

Providing or setting conditions that encourage excessive testing time – even on an untimed test – is not an allowable support.

Uniform and stable administration is required to ensure a valid, reliable, and fair assessment system. Continued excessive testing time procedures will result in action from the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

- The school(s) will be placed on a one (1) year probationary period.
- The school(s) shall provide the testing procedures for all grades shown to have excessive testing time in writing to the Director of Assessment and Accountability, submitted through the DOE Helpdesk by the District Test Coordinator.
- The school(s) will be subject to annual site visits by Office of Assessment and Accountability staff to verify valid, uniform testing conditions and a suitable testing environment for all staff and students.

### **Accessibility Supports**

It is a test security irregularity and an unauthorized administration when a student(s) takes all or part of a secure DeSSA assessment under the following circumstances:

- the student is provided with ineligible accessibility supports;
- the student is not provided with documented accessibility supports;
- the student is misidentified and starts or completes a test meant for another student with a different ID.

In such circumstances, the student test may be reset, depending on the number of items taken before the incident is recovered and the severity of the error by the Test Administrator(s) and Coordinator(s). These circumstances are evidence of school personnel failing to properly monitor assessment administration and/or failing to confirm proper identification of students being administered the assessment. Such actions by school personnel violate [14 Del. C. §172](#) (Appendix A in the DeSSA Test Security Manual).

### **Students qualifying for and receiving homebound instruction**

Students qualifying for and receiving homebound instruction for medical or disciplinary purposes or as an approved accommodation shall be provided testing in a paper/pencil format and not with an online assessment. Such homebound students are identified as unable for health or safety reasons to be physically present in the school environment. Although such students are receiving homebound services and instruction, they remain eligible for all relevant DeSSA assessments and shall take paper/pencil assessments under direct (in the physical proximity) supervision of a trained and certified Test Administrator. LEAs are responsible for ordering test materials and ensuring secure administration of the paper/pencil test by a certified test administrator.

### **Testing After Hours (not during the school day)**

#### **Testing on a Staff workday (e.g. in-service) when no other students are present**

Schools may request to administer online DeSSA assessments to homebound students after the school day has ended and most students have left the school or on occasions such as professional development days when staff is present but most or all students are not. The purpose of this accommodated administration procedure is to provide an equitable testing opportunity to schools and students with significant technical or logistical issues that prevent administration of a paper/pencil test to a homebound student(s).

To make this request, DTCs shall:

- ensure that the testing is monitored by a certified Test Administrator and School Administrator;
- ensure that the testing is conducted in a secure test environment that follows all other relevant security and administration procedures;
- ensure that tested students receive all accommodations for which they are eligible;

- use the secure DOE Helpdesk to provide the reason(s) for such a request, including the names of monitoring staff, the student ID(s), and which tests are scheduled for administration.

If a student tests on such occasions without approval from the OOAA, the test(s) shall be invalidated, and the incident shall be documented as evidence of a testing irregularity for all personnel involved in the unauthorized administration.

### **Electronic Security**

DTCs and STCs are responsible for the following electronic security activities:

- Ensure each authorized user accesses the electronic testing environment using a unique username and password. Staff is prohibited from sharing usernames and passwords for use in accessing the electronic testing environment.
- Ensure administration of online assessments is permitted only through the student interface via a secure browser in a controlled setting.
- Unless needed as an accommodation, no copies of the test items, stimuli, reading passages, writing prompts, or any test materials may be made or otherwise retained.
- Develop an electronic policy to include prohibiting usage of cell phones and other electronic devices in the testing area (see Appendix E).

Student names with IDs cannot be sent in the body of emails because IDs are considered Personally Identifiable Information (PII) protected by FERPA law. Email is not secure because it is subject to records requests that could compromise student PII. Student IDs are a particular concern for Test Security as they are part of student test logins.

### **Physical Security**

The DTC is responsible for any test booklets created or received by a school/district. The DTC should maintain a record of the booklets sent to each school in accordance with the TAM.

Before each test administration, materials must be stored and distributed according to instructions provided with the test. Tests must be always secured during test administration, including all breaks in the testing sequence. All test booklets and answer sheets, if applicable, must be counted, reconciled, and returned to a centrally located, locked, and secured area immediately upon the completion of each daily testing session.

Secure all state test materials prior to, during, and following each test administration and always prohibit unauthorized access to secure test questions. Test materials should be stored in a locked and secured central location by the DTC or STC — not limited to, and including, scratch paper.

Return all secured test materials to the publishing company following the procedures outlined in the TAM. Maintain a record of the shipment to verify submission. Establish and implement

procedures to ensure maximum test security and limit access of secure materials to authorized personnel only.

**Secure Management of Printed Materials** is required for paper-pencil tests and print on request materials approved for student use as an accommodation.

- Print-on-demand requests must be processed by a Test Administrator during test administration. The decision to allow students to use print-on-demand must be made on an individual student basis and is available only for students with an IEP (Individual Education Programs) or Section 504 Plan. A student that is approved to test with this accommodation may not test in a group, only individually.
- Before the Test Administrator approves the student's request to print a test item, the Test Administrator must ensure that the printer is on and is monitored by staff that have completed Test Administrator and Test Security training.
- The printer must be in the same secure room as the student taking the assessment. This request needs to be individually made for each item by the student. The printed test materials must be immediately shredded by the School Test Coordinator upon completion of the assessment by the student.

#### **Destruction of Printed Materials and Scratch Paper**

All test materials must always remain secure. Printed test items/passages, including embossed braille printouts and scratch paper, must be collected and inventoried at the end of each test session and then immediately shredded. DO NOT keep printed test items/passages or scratch paper for future test sessions except as noted below for performance tasks.

#### **Exception: Use of Scratch Paper on Performance Tasks (PTs)**

- The only exception to the requirement governing the prompt destruction of printed materials and scratch paper is when notes are used during the ELA and Math Performance Tasks (PTs) and an individual student administration extends beyond the expected testing time. (See the prohibitions against setting procedures that create excessive testing time and the One Test, One Day policy.)
- To ensure students using scratch paper for notes have the same allowance as students using the online notes, TAs should collect students' scratch paper at the completion of Part 1 of the PT and securely store it for students' use during Part 2 of the PT.
- Prior to collecting scratch paper for use in a subsequent session, TAs should ensure students have written their names (or some appropriate identifying information) on the notes so they can be redistributed securely.

## Testing Environment

This table shows security requirements of the testing environment. The testing environment includes what a student can see, hear, or access (including access via technology).

<b>Before Testing</b>	
<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Instructional materials removed or covered</b>	<p>All instructional materials must be removed or covered, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>any content information displayed on bulletin boards, chalkboards, or dry-erase boards, including student work;</li><li>any charts or graphics that contain literary definitions, maps, mathematical formulas, etc.;</li><li>any material that might assist students in answering questions.</li></ul>
<b>Student seating</b>	Students are seated with space between them to minimize opportunities to view each other's work or provided with tabletop partitions. A distance of 4 feet is generally considered reasonable.
<b>Signage</b>	Place a "Testing—Do Not Disturb" sign on the door and post signs in halls and entrances rerouting and/or quieting hallway traffic. Prominently display signage warning against use or possession of electronic devices.

## During Testing

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Quiet environment</b>	Provide a quiet environment without distractions that might interfere with a student's ability to concentrate or might compromise the testing situation. A Test Administrator shall not play music or other sounds within the testing environment for any reason.
<b>Students supervised</b>	Students are actively supervised during the entire administration process.
<b>Access to electronic devices and allowable resources</b>	Students only have access to, and use of, allowable resources identified in the testing directions, by an approved accommodation, and/or in the Test Administration Manual that are permitted for each specific assessment (or portion of an assessment). Students shall not access unauthorized electronic devices that allow availability of outside information, communication among students, or photographing or copying test content.

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<b>Access to assessments</b>	Only students who are testing can observe assessment items. Students who are not being tested or unauthorized staff must not be in the room when a test is being administered. Trained TAs may also have limited exposure to assessment items in the course of properly administering the assessment; however, even TAs and other staff may not actively review or analyze any assessment items. TAs and other staff may not open a student's paused or exited test to review it for completion or any other reason without the student present for the purpose of completing the test.
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### **During and After Testing**

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<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>No access to test materials</b>	TAs are not permitted to review or record student responses in the testing interface or students' notes on scratch paper.  Unless needed as an approved accommodation, no copies of the test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts may be made or otherwise retained.  Descriptions of test items, stimuli, printed reading passages, or writing prompts may not be retained, discussed, or released to anyone.  Test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts shall not be used for instruction.  Staff and TAs may not review, discuss, or analyze test items, stimuli, reading passages, or writing prompts at any time, including before, during, or after testing. No answer key may be developed for a test or test items.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Title 14, Subchapter IV State Assessment System Security and Violations**

#### **§ 170 Definitions.**

For purposes of this subchapter only, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

- (1) "Assessment administration" means the range of activities from the initial procurement of secure assessment materials including those delivered via the computer through testing and the return of secure assessment materials to the Department or its agents;
- (2) "Assessment site" means the physical location of the assessment administration, including a computer lab, classroom, or other room;
- (3) "Department" means the Delaware Department of Education;
- (4) "Individual" means a student, teacher, administrator, local or state school board member, or other employee, agent or contractor employed by the Delaware public school system whether local or at the state level, and including an employee, agent or contractor of a charter school;
- (5) "Log-in" means the process of accessing the assessment website;
- (6) "School district" means any school district, special school or charter school created pursuant to the provisions of this title;
- (7) "Secure browser" means the computer browser that prevents the student from accessing functions of the computer that are not allowed during assessment;
- (8) "State Assessment System" means the assessment program established pursuant to subchapter III of this chapter, including the assessments administered pursuant thereto; and
- (9) "Student identification number" means the unique identification number assigned to each student in the State under which his or her student records are maintained.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 70 Del. Laws, c. 186, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 23-25.)

#### **§ 171 Security and data procedures.**

(a) The Department shall promulgate rules and regulations to ensure the security of the assessment administration, training of personnel and collection and reporting of assessment data.

(b) The Department's rules and regulations shall provide for:

- (1) The security of the printed materials during assessment administration and the storage under lock and key of all secure assessment materials, including answer documents, before and after assessment administration;
- (2) Procedures to safeguard computer access information and use of the secure browser, including the printing of assessment content;
- (3) The proper administration of assessments and the monitoring of assessment administrations by school district personnel; and
- (4) Procedures for the accurate and timely collection, storage and retrieval of state assessment system materials and data.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 26-30.)

## **§ 172 Assessment behavior violations.**

It is an assessment security violation for an individual to fail to follow state assessment system administration procedures promulgated by the Department, and no individual shall:

- (1) Give any examinee access to secure assessment items or materials except in the regular course of an authorized administration of the state assessment;
- (2) Give unauthorized individuals or other persons access to secure assessment items or materials;
- (3) Copy, reproduce, use, or otherwise disclose in any manner inconsistent with assessment security regulations and procedures any portion of the secure assessment materials;
- (4) Provide answers during the assessment administration either orally, in writing, or by any other means to an examinee;
- (5) Coach any examinee during assessment administration by giving the examinee answers to secure assessment questions or otherwise directing or guiding a response or by altering or interfering with the examinee's response in any way;
- (6) Fail to follow security regulations and procedures for the storage, distribution, collection and return of secure assessment materials or fail to account for all secure assessment materials before, during and after assessment administration;
- (7) Fail to properly monitor assessment administration, including permitting inappropriate collaboration between or among individuals; fail to remove or cover non-allowable resources from the assessment site during the assessment administration; or fail to destroy scratch paper used by students during the assessment administration;
- (8) Fail to prohibit students from accessing or using electronic equipment (e.g., cellular phones, personal digital assistant devices, iPods, electronic translators), other than those authorized for use by the Department for the assessment administration;
- (9) Fail to confirm proper identification of students being administered the assessment or intentionally give a student the wrong student identification number during the log-in, causing any student to log in and take the assessment under another student's records;
- (10) Fail to collect and destroy any materials bearing student identification number(s) and student name(s) used to provide student(s) with this information during the assessment administration;
- (11) Produce unauthorized copies of assessment content from the computer website; fail to properly destroy authorized copies; or allow copies to be taken outside the assessment site;
- (12) Allow assessment administration by unauthorized personnel or personnel who have not received assessment administration certification;
- (13) Administer secure assessments on dates other than those authorized by the Department;
- (14) Participate in, direct, aid, counsel, assist, encourage or fail to report any of the acts prohibited in this subchapter; or
- (15) Refuse to disclose to the Department information regarding assessment security violations; or

(16) Refuse to cooperate in the investigation of a suspected breach of assessment security, whether such investigation is conducted by a school district or the Department. The investigation shall include a review of mitigating circumstances, if applicable.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 31-41.)

### **§ 173 Data reporting violations.**

School districts and individuals shall not:

- (1) Fail to report assessment scores, numbers of students administered the assessments, any other data element required to be reported to the Department;
- (2) Report incorrect or otherwise inaccurate assessment scores, numbers of students administered the assessments, or any other data element required to be reported to the Department;
- (3) Exclude a student from participation in the state assessment except in accordance with the regulations of the Department;
- (4) Refuse to disclose to the Department information concerning a violation of the foregoing data reporting requirements; or
- (5) Refuse to cooperate in the investigation of a suspected data reporting violation, whether such investigation is conducted by a school district or the Department. The investigation shall include a review of mitigating circumstances, if applicable.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, §§ 42, 43.)

### **§ 174 Civil sanctions for violations**

(a) A student who violates any of the provisions of § 172 of this title shall be subject to the following:

- (1) At the discretion of the Department, the assessment score of such student may be invalidated and the student may be declared ineligible to retake the assessment until the next official testing opportunity; and
- (2) Such disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the student's school district.

(b) An individual other than a student who knowingly violates any of the provisions of this subchapter shall be subject to the following:

- (1) Such personnel sanctions as might otherwise be imposed by the individual's employer for an act of misconduct;
- (2) A hearing conducted by the Professional Standards Board to determine revocation of any license issued to such individual pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 12 of this title; and
- (3) Payment of any costs incurred by the State or Department as a result of the violation.

(73 Del. Laws, c. 81, § 1; 78 Del. Laws, c. 53, § 44.)

## **Appendix B**

### **Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) Educator Unethical Practices**

#### **Unethical Practices in Preparing Students for Assessments**

When preparing students for assessments, staff members shall not engage in any:

- Preparation activity that undermines the reliability and/or validity of inference drawn from the assessment results;
- Practice that results solely in increasing participation rates, scale scores, or performance levels on a specific assessment instrument, without simultaneously increasing the student's achievement level as measured by other tasks and/or instruments designed to assess the same content domain;
- Practice involving the reproduction of actual assessment materials, through any medium, for use in preparing students for an assessment;
- Preparation activity that includes questions, tasks, graphs, charts, passages or other materials included in the assessment instrument or in a parallel form of the instrument, and/or materials that are paraphrases or highly similar in content to those in actual use;
- Preparation for the assessment that focuses primarily on the assessment instrument or a parallel form of the instrument, including its format, rather than on the objectives being assessed;
- Practice that supports or assists others in conducting unethical preparation activities.

#### **Unethical Practices in Administering and Scoring Assessments**

When administering and/or scoring assessments, staff members shall not:

- Use an assessment instrument for purposes other than that for which such instrument has been validated;
- Engage in a practice that results in a potential conflict of interest or exerts undue influence on those administering or scoring the assessment, which would make the assessment process unfair to some students;
- Modify the procedures for administering and/or scoring the assessment resulting in non-standard conditions for one or more students;
- Engage in a practice that allows people without sufficient and appropriate knowledge and skills to administer and/or score the assessment;
- Engage in an administration or scoring practice which produces results contaminated by factors not relevant to the purposes of the assessment;
- Exclude one or more students from an assessment solely because the student has not performed well, or may not perform well, on the assessment and/or because the aggregate performance of the group may be affected;
- Coach or guide a student's responses during an assessment through any type of gesture, facial expression, use of body language, comment, or any other action;
- Provide students with any definitions of words or terms contained in the actual assessment instrument either immediately preceding or during the administration of an assessment;

- Correct or alter student responses to an assessment task during or following the administration of an assessment; and
- Support or assist others in unethical practices during the administration and/or scoring of assessments.

**Appendix C: DeSSA Test Security and Administration Manual**  
**Office of Assessment and Accountability**  
**Universal Test Security and Non-disclosure Agreement**



**Security Certification – Complete Prior to Test Administration**  
**FOR USE WITH ALL DeSSA ASSESSMENTS**

**I do hereby certify that I have received, understand, and agree to abide by the DeSSA Test Security Manual governing the Assessment System, supported by Subchapter IV, Chapter 1, Title 14 of the Delaware Code and Regulation 101, State Assessment System, which enumerate potential violations of test security and provides the sanctions for such violations.**

I do hereby certify, warrant, and affirm that I will faithfully and fully comply with all DeSSA security and administration requirements and practices, including:

**SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND PRACTICES**

- That no person has in any way copied or reproduced any part of a secure test, including any part of a student response, without expressed written permission from the Delaware Department of Education or as explicitly specified in the instructions for the assessment.
- That I will not disclose, describe, or discuss specific test/assessment questions verbally, in writing, or by any other means, including dissemination through social media, to any other person.
- That no person has corrected, altered, or guided student responses to a secure test.
- That no unauthorized person has access to or inspected or viewed any part of a secure test.
- That I will take actions to prevent students from accessing electronic devices during the administration of a required state assessment.
- That I will not use a personal electronic device in an inappropriate manner, except as specified in Appendix E of the Test Security and Administration Manual.
- That I will report any suspected violations of test security or confidentiality to the District Test Coordinator, School Test Coordinator, or school administrator.

**SECURITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- That I understand my obligations concerning the security and confidentiality of all DeSSA assessments.
- That I understand student information is confidential, and I am obligated to maintain and preserve the confidentiality of this information.
- That I am aware of the range of penalties that may result from a departure from the documented test administration procedures for the state assessments, and I am aware of the range of penalties that may result from a violation of test security and confidentiality.

- That, when proctoring any DeSSA assessment, I will ensure all students for which I am responsible have viewed the DeSSA Test Security Video for Students, found at the links below:

DOE Test Security for Students Grades 3-5 <https://youtu.be/UmMgazwnd7U>

DOE Test Security for Students Elementary SPANISH <https://youtu.be/P-B-KCtiXvw>

DOE Test Security for Students Grades 6-11 <https://youtu.be/eoICnxYll2k>

By signing my name to this document, I am assuring the Delaware Department of Education, the local education agency (district and/or school), and its contractor(s) that I will abide by the above conditions and all such found in the DeSSA Test Security Manual, Subchapter IV, Chapter 1, Title 14 of the Delaware Code, and Regulation 101, State Assessment System.

I hold the following roles within DeSSA administration (check all that apply):

- Department of Education staff
- District Administrator
- District Test Coordinator
- School Test Coordinator
- Principal / Assistant Principal
- Test Administrator
- Special Education Coordinator
- Support Staff
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

<b>PRINT NAME</b>	
<b>DISTRICT/CHARTER</b>	
<b>SCHOOL</b>	
<b>SIGNATURE</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	

This form shall be retained at the district or school level by an authorized administrator.

## **Appendix D**

### **Policy on Electronic Devices**

Under direction of the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE), schools must enforce a strict electronic device policy during standardized testing to maintain test security. This policy applies to all national, state, and district-level DeSSA administered assessments that are identified in this document.

The term *electronic device* includes any personal, non-educational device with an on-off switch, *except for medical equipment*, most commonly cell phones and smart watches, tablets, laptops, or other computers. **A student may not retain possession of an electronic device (e.g. iPad, laptop or desktop computer) on which he or she took a DeSSA assessment after testing is completed, while in the testing environment, and while other students remain testing.**

No electronic device should disturb the testing environment, whether it belongs to students or staff. Test Administrators may keep any personal devices powered on but in silent mode, for use only in the event of an emergency. A Test Administrator shall not interrupt the testing environment through texting, speaking, or other personal electronic device use, except in the event of an emergency.

**Schools must take actions to inform students that using or bringing an electronic device into the testing area violates school and state policy.** Such actions to inform students include:

- posting signage;
- viewing the Student Test Security Video;
- reading the standard script in test administration manuals;
- gathering electronic devices from students prior to testing.

Taking these actions should be a general practice and noted in reports from schools to the DTC.

**Violation of this policy is grounds for confiscation and a search of the device.**

The following procedures for students must be implemented when test materials are distributed or utilized:

1. Electronic devices must be turned completely off. They may not be on “silent” or “vibrate” modes.
2. Electronic devices may not be in a student’s possession, including in pockets or otherwise stored in clothing, or in the immediate proximity, such as underneath the desk.
3. Electronic devices must be stored in a secure location away from students.

If an electronic device is found on a student during or after testing, testing administrators and schools must adhere to the following procedures:

1. Confiscate the electronic device. Contact the STC and the DTC.

2. If the circumstances provide a reasonable basis to search it, the device will be checked for pictures, texts, transmissions by social media applications, and any other recent use related to security of the test.
3. Upon completion of the testing session, interview the student regarding use of the device.
4. Enforce school/district disciplinary action.
5. The DTC shall report the test security incident in the DOE Helpdesk following the reporting requirements of this Manual.

**Appendix E**  
**What to Do When Guide**

**MEDICAL**

ISSUE	ACTION
A student becomes sick during testing.	Pause the student test and allow the student to return during make-up session(s) to finish. DTC reports the incident in the DOE Helpdesk as an impropriety.
A student is being treated as an in-patient in a non-DSCYF mental health facility during the testing window.	Submit a request for an exemption. Keep medical documentation on file at the district office. See exemption policy.
A student has a note from a doctor that states the student should not test for a medical reason.	
A student who wears glasses or takes medication daily is without them on testing day.	Postpone testing for the student and have the student take the test later in the testing window.
There is a death in the family or other traumatic event before or during the testing window.	Determine whether the student can be tested at the end of the testing window — if that will not be feasible, submit a request for an exemption through the DOE Helpdesk.

**STUDENT BEHAVIOR / STUDENT CONDUCT / STUDENT REFUSAL**

ISSUE	ACTION
A student is chronically truant.	Do not submit an incident report. No exemption will be granted.
A student is present at school but refuses to take the test at any time during the testing window.	
A student is removed from test session due to student misbehavior: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A testing behavior violation occurs.</li> <li>● A student is cheating.</li> </ul>	Pause student test and report incident to the DTC. Enforce district policies for student misconduct.

## ROSTERING / ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORTS

ISSUE	ACTION
A student does not show correct accommodations in DeSSA platforms, prior to the test being started by the student.	Review settings in DeSSA testing platforms for accuracy. If the settings are correct, submit a DOE Helpdesk ticket.
A student starts a test with accommodation(s) for which they are not eligible.	DTC reports the incident in the DOE Helpdesk as an irregularity.
A student starts a test without their accommodation(s) available on the test.	Ensure all accommodations are correct on the DeSSA platform for specific students.
A student who has test accommodation(s) has not been provided one or more of these accommodations during a test session.	The student test may be reset or scored and reported after investigation. See the Appeals Policy.
A student qualifies for English as a Second Language services, but the student's parent / guardian / caregiver has withdrawn him or her from such services.	If a student meets the criteria to be identified as an MLL, a student may receive accommodations even if withdrawn from services. Review the Accessibility Guidelines to determine whether a student can be excluded from the ELA/literacy assessment.
A student moves out of the school before all test sessions are completed.	Student can complete testing in a new district if moving within the state — no action is necessary. If the student moves out of state or country, submit an exemption request.
A student does not show up at the school in which currently enrolled.	Review attendance and student record applications. If the student is correct in these applications, submit a DOE Helpdesk ticket.
A student moves into the school in the middle of the testing window. He or she has completed part of the test in a previous school.	Identify which test (content) sessions the student has or has not completed by reviewing the DeSSA platform participation reports. Test the student in make-up test sessions.
A student registers in school from out of state during the testing window.	The student should be administered all tests that he or she can complete before the testing window has ended. Provide the student with any required accommodations.

## Appendix F

### What to Do After Testing for Students

When administering an untimed test, students will finish at different times. This table provides guidance on activities for students when they complete a test. If you have questions about the appropriateness of an activity, contact [Dusty Shockley](#) in the Office of Assessment and Accountability.

Activity	Status	Rationale
Students leave the testing room and report to pre-designated, monitored holding area, with or without a scheduled activity	Recommended	Students are engaged
Students sit quietly in their seats	Allowed	This will be conducive to a quiet testing environment for others but may be difficult for some students
Students read a preapproved book or preassigned material	Allowed	Quiet, not a major security risk
Students write or draw in a journal, diary, or on any paper	<b>Prohibited</b>	Security risk that students may transmit item content
Students complete school assignments, even for content not related to the tested subject	<b>Prohibited</b>	Security risk with other students still testing
Students use an electronic device for any reason during testing. See Appendix D.	<b>Prohibited</b>	Electronic devices are not allowed in the testing room
		Security risk that students may transmit item content
Students talk or signal to other students	<b>Prohibited</b>	Distracting to other students and security risk
Students move about the testing room	<b>Prohibited</b>	Distracting to other students

## Appendix G

### Regulation 101, State Assessment System

#### **101 State Assessment System**

##### **1.0 Purpose and Definitions**

1.1 The purpose of this regulation is to outline the procedures, criteria, and responsibilities related to the state assessment system required pursuant to 14 **Del.C.** §151.

###### **1.2 Definitions**

The following words and terms, when used in this regulation, shall have the following meaning:

**“Alternate achievement standards”** means targets that define how well and how much students should know and do in the content to be considered proficient on the alternate assessment.

**“Alternate assessment”** means an assessment which is based on Alternate Achievement Standards which is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who cannot participate in the General Assessment even with appropriate accommodations. Per subsection 4.1, there are 2 types of alternate assessment in Delaware – Selected Response Alternate Assessment and Portfolio Alternate Assessment.

**“College readiness assessment”** means the statewide assessment used to measure student achievement of content standards and skills necessary to be successful in post-secondary education.

**“Delaware System of Student Assessment”** or **“DeSSA”** means the statewide system of assessments designed to measure student achievement of state content standards, including, but not limited to, general assessments measuring student achievement based on grade-level academic standards, alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, a college readiness assessment, an assessment for English Learners, a norm referenced assessment; or any assessment that may be administered or required as determined by the Department of Education for use in Delaware public schools.

**“Department”** means the Delaware Department of Education.

**“District Test Coordinator”** means an educator assigned by the district or charter school to be the primary contact for DeSSA information. The District Test Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the administration of state assessments within the district or charter. The District Test Coordinator is also required to complete training and be knowledgeable of proper test administration and test security and ensure that all personnel assigned to testing are adequately trained in proper test administration and test security.

**“English language proficiency assessment”** means an assessment that is intended to measure a non-native English speaker’s English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The English language proficiency alternate assessment is a similar assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

**“Extended standards”** means statements describing concepts and skills aligned to the content standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

**“General assessment”** means the statewide assessment used to measure student achievement of the content standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. This assessment does not include students who participate in an alternate assessment.

**“Invalidation”** means a response to an event or situation that occurs during the administration of an assessment which may result in a statistically unreliable or invalid score report for a student.

**“Local educational agency”** or **“LEA”** means a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within Delaware for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary or secondary schools in a school district, or for a combination of school districts. The term includes an educational service agency and any other public institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a public elementary school or secondary school.

**“National Assessment for Education Progress”** means a norm referenced assessment used statewide in selected schools and grades to measure academic achievement in various content areas including English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, and Science.

**“Portfolio alternate assessment”** means a form of alternate assessment aligned to the extended standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, in which evidence such as work samples, data sheets, photos or videos is gathered by the test administrator to document student achievement.

**“School Test Coordinator”** means the educator assigned by the school to be the primary contact for DeSSA information at the school level. The School Test Coordinator is responsible for coordinating the administration of state assessments within the school. The School Test Coordinator is also required to complete training and be knowledgeable of proper test administration and test security and ensure that all personnel assigned to testing are adequately trained in proper test administration and test security.

**“Selected response alternate assessment”** means a form of alternate assessment aligned to the extended standards in English Language Arts and Literacy, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies, in which the questions are presented to the student, and the student response is recorded by the test administrator to document student achievement.

**10 DE Reg. 676 (10/01/06)**

**14 DE Reg. 1340 (06/01/11)**

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

## **2.0 Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA)**

2.1 Delaware System of Student Assessments (DeSSA) is the statewide system of assessments used to measure student achievement which includes the following:

2.1.1 General assessments for both English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics; and

2.1.2 General assessments for both Science and Social Studies; and

2.1.3 Alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards for English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; and

2.1.4 Other assessments such as an assessment for English Learners, a norm referenced assessment, a college readiness assessment or any assessment that may be administered or required as determined by the Department.

2.2 All LEAs shall administer all applicable, required components of the DeSSA, including field test administrations. Any student repeating a grade level shall take any components of DeSSA that are required for that given grade level.

2.3 The Department shall determine the dates upon which the DeSSA assessments shall be administered and will advise the LEAs of those dates.

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

### **3.0 General Assessments**

3.1 General assessments shall be administered to:

3.1.1 All students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 in the areas of English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics;

3.1.2 All students in grades 5 and 8 in Science and students taking a high school Biology course; and

3.1.3 All students in grades 4 through 8 and 11 in Social Studies.

3.2 All students in tested grades in need of designated supports and accommodations shall be tested according to the Department's *Accessibility Guidelines for the Delaware System of Student Assessments* (DeSSA), as DeSSA may from time to time be amended.

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

### **4.0 Alternate Assessments**

4.1 There are 2 types of alternate assessment that shall be available to students in Delaware: selected response alternate assessment and portfolio alternate assessment.

4.2 Annual written notice of assessment options in a format and timetable approved by the Department, shall be provided to parents of students with disabilities who may be eligible to participate in an alternate assessment and shall:

4.2.1 Describe the purpose of statewide alternate assessments;

4.2.2 Identify the available statewide assessment options including general and alternate assessments; and

4.2.3 Identify the process by which a parent may initiate consideration of a student for portfolio alternate assessment.

4.3 Selected Response Alternate Assessment. Participation in the selected response alternate assessment is an annual decision made by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team through consideration of the criteria outlined in the *Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines*.

#### 4.4 Portfolio Alternate Assessment

4.4.1 A parent who believes that his or her child would not, despite accommodations, produce valid results on the selected response assessment may submit a written request to the LEA, in a uniform format as determined by the Department, no later than October 15th of the school year for which the portfolio alternate assessment is sought. For students who transfer into the LEA after October 15th, the process for participation in the portfolio alternate assessment will be outlined in the *Portfolio Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines*.

4.4.2 Upon receipt of the written request, the LEA shall convene an IEP meeting to consider the parent's request. The Department shall be informed of any student participating in the portfolio alternate assessment by December 15th of the school year for which the portfolio alternate assessment is sought.

4.4.3 Participation in the portfolio alternate assessment is an annual decision made by the IEP team including the LEA representative (e.g. administrator/designee) through consideration of the criteria outlined in the *Portfolio Alternate Assessment Participation Guidelines*.

4.4.4 In no event shall an IEP team, school or district advocate for parents to exercise the right to request a portfolio alternate assessment.

#### 4.5 Procedure for Design and Evaluation of Portfolio Alternate Assessments

4.5.1 The portfolio alternate assessment shall be a state developed assessment with the components of the design and evaluation determined by the Department, in consultation with stakeholder groups (e.g., Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens) and its assessment provider.

4.5.2 The portfolio alternate assessment shall assess students on Delaware's extended standards in English Language Arts (including communication), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies as well as additional domains such as life skills, self-determination, community-based instruction, or vocational training. The additional domains may be aligned with students' IEP goals but are not limited to skills on the IEP.

4.5.3 Educators shall gather and document evidence of student achievement with regard to the content standards and additional domain areas, in accordance with the portfolio design and student progress criteria as determined by the Department, in consultation with stakeholder groups (e.g., Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens) and its assessment provider.

4.5.4 Portfolios submitted by teachers on behalf of students shall be evaluated using a scoring rubric as determined by the Department, in consultation with stakeholder groups (e.g., Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens) and its assessment provider. Only the portions of the portfolio aligned to the extended standards shall be included in the State, LEA and school accountability.

#### 4.6 Alternate Assessment - Unusual Number Review

##### 4.6.1 Combined Alternate Assessment Review

4.6.1.1 At the end of each test window the Department shall calculate the number of students receiving a Performance Level 3 and 4 in both the selected response alternate assessment and the portfolio alternate assessment for each LEA.

4.6.1.2 If that number exceeds 1% of the total number of students participating in the general assessment and alternate assessment combined within that LEA, the Department shall conduct a review.

##### 4.6.2 Portfolio Alternate Assessment Review

4.6.2.1 At the end of each test window the Department shall calculate the number of students participating in the portfolio alternate assessment for each LEA.

4.6.2.2 If that number exceeds 10% of the total number of students participating in both the selected response alternate assessment and portfolio alternate assessment within that LEA, the Department shall conduct a review.

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

### 5.0 Levels of Performance

5.1 There shall be 4 levels of student performance relative to the content standards on the State's general and alternate assessments administered to:

5.1.1 All students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 in English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics; and

5.1.2 All students in grades 5 and 8 in Science, and students taking a high school Biology course; and

5.1.3 All students in grades 4 through 8 and 11 in Social Studies.

5.2 The cut points for Performance Levels 1 through 4 shall be determined by the Department with the consent of the State Board of Education, using advice from a standard setting body. The standard setting body shall utilize a proven method for setting standards on test instruments that utilizes student assessment data in making the recommendation. Said levels are defined and shall be determined as follows:

5.2.1 Performance Level 4: A student's performance in the tested domain goes well beyond the fundamental skills and knowledge required for students to be at adequate understanding. Students in this category show mastery and thorough understanding of the Delaware content standards beyond what is expected at the grade level. The cut points for Performance Level 4 shall be determined by the Department, with the consent of the State Board of Education.

5.2.2 Performance Level 3: A student's performance in the tested domain indicates an understanding of the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware content standards. Students in this category show mastery and have adequate understanding of the Delaware content standards at grade level. The cut points for Performance Level 3 shall be determined by the Department, with the consent of the State Board of Education.

5.2.3 Performance Level 2: A student's performance in the tested domain shows a partial or incomplete understanding of the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware content standards. The cut points for Performance Level 2 shall be determined by the Department, with the consent of the State Board of Education.

5.2.4 Performance Level 1: A student's performance in the tested domain shows minimal understanding and evidence of an inability to apply the fundamental skills and knowledge articulated in the Delaware content standards.

**7 DE Reg. 51 (07/01/03)**

**8 DE Reg. 425 (09/01/04)**

**10 DE Reg. 676 (10/01/06)**

**14 DE Reg. 1340 (06/01/11)**

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

## **Sections 6.0 – 9.0 (Suspended pursuant to the annual appropriations bills beginning in FY08)**

### **10.0 Security and Confidentiality**

10.1 In order to assure uniform and secure procedures, the DeSSA shall be administered pursuant to the DeSSA Test Security Manual, as DeSSA may, from time to time, be amended.

10.1.1 Every district superintendent, charter school leader, District Test Coordinator, school principal, and School Test Coordinator shall sign the certification provided by the Department regarding assessment security before, during and after assessment administration.

10.1.2 All individuals participating in the administration of any general and alternate assessment shall complete corresponding training and affix their signature to the DeSSA Security Form. These individuals include district superintendents, charter school leaders, District Test Coordinators, School Test Coordinators, school principals, school counselors, certified teachers, and any non-certified professional or support staff.

10.1.3 Violation of the security or confidentiality of any assessment required by the Delaware Code and Title 14 of the Delaware Administrative Code shall be prohibited.

10.1.4 Procedures for maintaining the security and confidentiality of an assessment shall be specified in the appropriate assessment administration materials, as determined by the Department pursuant to 14 **Del.C. §170** through **§174**.

#### **10.2 Procedures for Reporting Security Incidents**

10.2.1 School Test Coordinators shall report any potential test security incidents to the District Test Coordinators immediately following procedures established by the Department.

10.2.2 District Test Coordinators shall report all potential test security incidents immediately to the State Director of the Office of Assessment following procedures established by the Department.

10.2.2.1 Within 5 working days of the incident the District Test Coordinator shall file a written report with the State Director of the Office of Assessment that includes the sequence of events leading up to the situation, statements by everyone interviewed, and any action either disciplinary or procedural, taken by the district or charter school.

10.2.2.2 Following a review of the report by the State Director of the Office of Assessment and the Associate Secretary, an investigator from the Department may be assigned to verify the district or charter school report.

10.2.2.3 The assigned investigator shall meet with the district or charter school personnel involved in the alleged violation. The meeting will be scheduled through the District Test Coordinators, and the investigator shall be provided access to all parties involved and to any witnesses. The assigned investigator will investigate with due diligence towards timely resolution.

10.2.2.4 The investigator shall report the findings to the Associate Secretary. Following the review, the Associate Secretary shall make a decision and recommendations for further actions including licensure actions in accordance with 14 **Del.C. §1218**.

10.2.2.5 All information and records shall be kept by the Investigations Unit of the Department, per its standard protocol. The assigned investigator will investigate with due diligence towards timely resolution.

**10 DE Reg. 676 (10/01/06)**

**14 DE Reg. 1340 (06/01/11)**

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

## **11.0 Procedures for Reviewing Secure Materials from the State Assessment System**

11.1 A student's current teacher, an eligible student, or a student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver may request to review the general assessment questions for a specific student or students subject to the following provisions:

11.1.1 Any request to review a general assessment item shall be done on a form developed by the Department which will include a list of permissible item types for review. The completed and signed form shall be sent to the State Director of the Office of Assessment.

11.1.2 A teacher's request shall include an appropriate reason for reviewing the student's assessment. Appropriate reasons shall include the following: concerns about incorrect scoring; suspicion of misattribution of scores; or other reasons acceptable to the Department.

11.1.3 The Department shall be allowed sufficient time to secure a copy of the student's assessment questions and corresponding responses from the assessment vendor.

11.1.4 The Department shall arrange a mutually convenient time and location for a meeting to review the assessment information with the requesting individuals. At the time of the appointment, the individual shall: provide proper identification upon arrival, sign a confidentiality document, remain with a Department staff member while reviewing the assessment questions, and take nothing out of the viewing area.

11.1.5 The Department shall review the procedures for viewing the items for a specific student or students, assist the individuals with understanding the score results, and keep records of all reviews.

**4 DE Reg. 464 (09/01/00)**

**5 DE Reg. 620 (09/01/01)**

**8 DE Reg. 425 (09/01/04)**

**14 DE Reg. 1340 (06/01/11)**

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**

## **12.0 Invalidations and Special Exemptions**

12.1 There may be invalidations for students taking any general or alternate assessments. An invalidation is a response to an incident, event, or situation that occurs during the administration of the assessments which may result in a statistically unreliable or invalid score report for a student. Invalidating a student's test eliminates the test results, and the student does not receive a valid score for accountability purposes, and the student is not counted as a participant in the assessment. The Department may invalidate any test under the following conditions:

12.1.1 A test security breach;

12.1.2 An improper or irregular administration resulting in unreliable scores, whether intentional or accidental; or

12.1.3 Student misconduct resulting in unreliable scores.

12.2 After reviewing the circumstances of an incident, the Department may elect only to document the above conditions as testing irregularities rather than to invalidate the test.

12.3 Reporting of events or situations that occur during assessment.

12.3.1 The school building principal or designee shall notify the District Test Coordinator in writing within 24 hours of incidents, events, or situations that the principal reasonably believes may result in an invalid score report for a student.

12.3.2 The District Test Coordinator shall notify the Department staff person assigned to the district or charter school for assessment security purposes as soon as the Coordinator learns of events or situations which may result in invalidation. The District Test Coordinator shall submit an Incident Report Form within 3 business days of the events. Written reports from the building principal or designee and any staff must be included with the Incident Report.

12.3.3 The State Director of the Office of Assessment for the Department shall determine whether the reported events warrant invalidating a student's score and such decision shall be final.

12.4 There may be special exemptions for students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 for English Language Arts and Literacy and Mathematics; students in grades 5 and 8 in Science, and students taking a high school Biology course; and students in grades 4 through 8 and 11 in Social Studies.

12.4.1 A special exemption may be available when any 1 of the following applies:

12.4.1.1 The student is suffering from severe illness or injuries or the student has recently experienced severe traumatic events;

12.4.1.2 The student is medically admitted to, or is ordered by the court to attend an alternative program;

12.4.1.3 The student is serving time at an adult prison; or

12.4.1.4 Other situations identified by the school and evaluated and approved by the Department.

12.4.2 The District Test Coordinator shall submit a Request for Special Exemption to the State Director of the Office of Assessment at the Department according to the timeline published by the Department. A copy of the healthcare provider's statement shall be required for subsection 12.4.1.1 in the preceding subsection and shall be maintained as documentation at the school or district.

12.4.2.1 The State Director of the Office of Assessment shall convene a review committee of not less than 3 Department staff to review requests for special exemptions.

12.4.2.2 The Office of Assessment shall decide whether a request for a special exemption should be granted. The Office of Assessment shall notify the District Test Coordinator of the decision. The Office of Assessment decision shall be final.

12.4.3 Consequences of Special Exemptions.

12.4.3.1 Any special exemption granted by the Department is limited to the assessment period for which it was requested and does not carry forward to future assessment administrations.

12.4.3.2 Students who are granted a special exemption shall not be included in the participation rate calculation for school and district accountability pursuant to **14 DE Admin. Code 103**, subsection 2.4.

**4 DE Reg. 464 (09/01/00)**

**5 DE Reg. 620 (09/01/01)**

**5 DE Reg. 2115 (05/01/02)**

**7 DE Reg. 51 (07/01/03)**

**7 DE Reg. 325 (09/01/03)**

**8 DE Reg. 425 (09/01/04)**

**9 DE Reg. 1175 (02/01/06)**

**10 DE Reg. 676 (10/01/06)**

**10 DE Reg. 1425 (03/01/07)**

**14 DE Reg. 1340 (06/01/11)**

**18 DE Reg. 556 (01/01/15)**

**28 DE Reg. 220 (09/01/24)**