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TO: District Superintendents of Schools  
Superintendents of Public and Nonpublic Schools  
Principals of Public Schools  
Principals of Nonpublic Schools

FROM: Gerald E. DeMauro

SUBJECT: Changes in 2003 Grades 4 and 8  
English Language Arts and Mathematics Field Test Administrations

In 2003, all schools that administer Grades 4 and 8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests will also be administering “mini” field tests.

Field testing is a crucial step in the New York State test development process. Data from the analysis of field test scores are used to ensure that only items that meet professional testing criteria for validity and fairness are included on the operational test. Item-by-item field test data are also used to compose test forms that are equal in difficulty, so that students have the same opportunity to demonstrate their level of achievement of the standards regardless of which administration of the test is taken.

In 2003, Grades 4 and 8 ELA and mathematics field tests are changing. They are going from full form field tests that were administered in a sample of statistically representative schools to much shorter versions of field tests (“mini” field tests) administered in all schools. Administration time for these mini field tests is 20 to 30 minutes.

By including all schools in shorter field tests, the field test burden is lightened and fairly distributed. More importantly, this field test design ensures that field test data are based on student performance at the time of the operational test, and that the data are based on a fully representative population of the State.

The operational tests will remain as Test Book 1’s and Test Book 2’s, and the mini field tests will be in separate Test Book A’s. The mini field tests will be administered on a separate day before the operational test so that student performance on the operational test is not affected.

The test administration dates are as follows:

**2003 Test Administration Dates**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Field Test Dates</b>	<b>Test Administration Dates</b>	<b>Makeup Dates</b>
Grade 4 ELA	Monday, Feb. 3*	Tuesday, Feb. 4- Friday, Feb. 7**	Monday, Feb. 10- Wednesday, Feb. 12
Grade 4 Math	Monday, May 5	Tuesday May 6- Thursday, May 8	Friday, May 9- Tuesday, 13
Grade 8 ELA	Monday, Jan. 13*	Tuesday, Jan. 14- Friday, Jan. 17**	Tuesday, Jan. 21- Wednesday, Jan. 22
Grade 8 Math	Monday, May 5	Tuesday, May 6- Wednesday, 7	Thursday, May 8- Friday, May 9

\* These field tests consist of multiple choice questions only. Field tests for Grades 4 and 8 ELA constructed response items will be administered by a statistically representative sample of schools around the time of the operational tests.

\*\* Public school districts and nonpublic schools should select specific dates (three for Grade 4 and two for Grade 8) within the test administration windows specified above.

**Questions & Answers Regarding Test Book A's (mini field tests)**

**How long will students be given to complete the Test Book A's?**

For English language arts, students will be given 15 minutes; for mathematics, they will be given 20 minutes.

**Will the mini field tests include both multiple choice and constructed response items?**

For mathematics, mini field tests will include both multiple choice and constructed response items; for English language arts, mini field tests will include only multiple choice items.

Separate field tests for constructed response items for Grades 4 and 8 ELA will be administered in a sample of statistically representative schools around the same time as the operational tests. The ELA constructed response field test for Grade 4 will be administered two weeks after the operational test, and for Grade 8 within a window spanning the week before and the week after the operational test. Schools that are chosen to participate in these separate field tests for ELA constructed response items will be contacted directly by CTB/McGraw-Hill.

**Will there be a separate answer document for Test Book A?**

No. Students will write their answers directly in Test Book A. There will be one Test Book A for each student taking the operational test.

**Will all students who take the Grades 4 and 8 ELA and mathematics operational tests be expected to participate in the mini field tests?**

Yes. Test Book A's will be available in Braille, large-type, and the same alternative languages as the operational tests.

**In 2003, will there be any changes in the way schools administer and score the operational tests and how schools handle the student answer documents?**

No. In 2003, the operational tests will be administered and scored the same way they were in 2002. Student answer documents will also be treated the same way (sent to regional scanning centers or to the State Education Department in the case of nonpublic schools).

**What if school is cancelled due to inclement weather on a day designated for a field test administration?**

Schools should use one of the make-up dates to administer the mini field test.

**What if a student is absent on the day the mini field test is administered?**

If a student is absent on that day, he or she will not take the mini field test.

**What will be schools' responsibilities for ordering, receiving, storing, labeling, administering, and returning Test Book A's?**

*Ordering Test Book A's*

Schools do not need to place a special order for Test Book A's. All schools that order any of these four operational tests will receive Test Book A's in the same quantity and format as Test Book 1's and Test Book 2's. It is important that schools adhere to the designated deadlines for ordering operational tests so that the information is received in time to prepare the Test Book A's needed for each school.

*Receiving Test Book A's*

Schools will receive the Test Book A's in a separate shipment from CTB/McGraw-Hill during the same period of time that they receive the operational tests from the State Education Department. If schools do not receive their Test Book A's within the designated time period, they should contact CTB/McGraw-Hill by fax, using a form in the *School Administrator's Manual*.

*Storing Test Book A's*

Test Book A's are considered secure materials for the entire time they are at the school, and they need to be stored and handled the same way as other secure test materials.

*Labeling Test Book A's*

Schools will be provided with individual student identification labels for the Test Book A's, and they are responsible for ensuring that the labels are affixed to the individual books according to the instructions that they will receive.

*Administering Test Book A's*

Instructions for administering Test Book A's will be included in the Teacher's Directions for the operational test. Teachers who will be administering these tests should read the instructions in advance.

*Returning Test Book A's*

Test Book A's will be returned to CTB/McGraw-Hill in the box in which they arrive. Schools will be provided with a pre-addressed return label. Schools are responsible for returning the exact number of tests books that they receive. Test Book A's are individually numbered and will be inventoried by CTB/McGraw-Hill when they are returned.