TO: District Superintendents
     Superintendents of Schools
     Principals of Public, Religious, and Independent Schools
     Leaders of Charter Schools

FROM: Betty A. Rosa, Commiss

SUBJECT: Statewide Implementation of Computer-based Testing

DATE: June 1 , 2022

The purpose of this memo is to provide details regarding the New York State Education Department's (NYSED or "the Department") plans for statewide implementation of computer-based testing (CBT) for the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Tests, the Elementary-level (Grade 5) and Intermediate-level (Grade 8) Science Tests and the New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT).
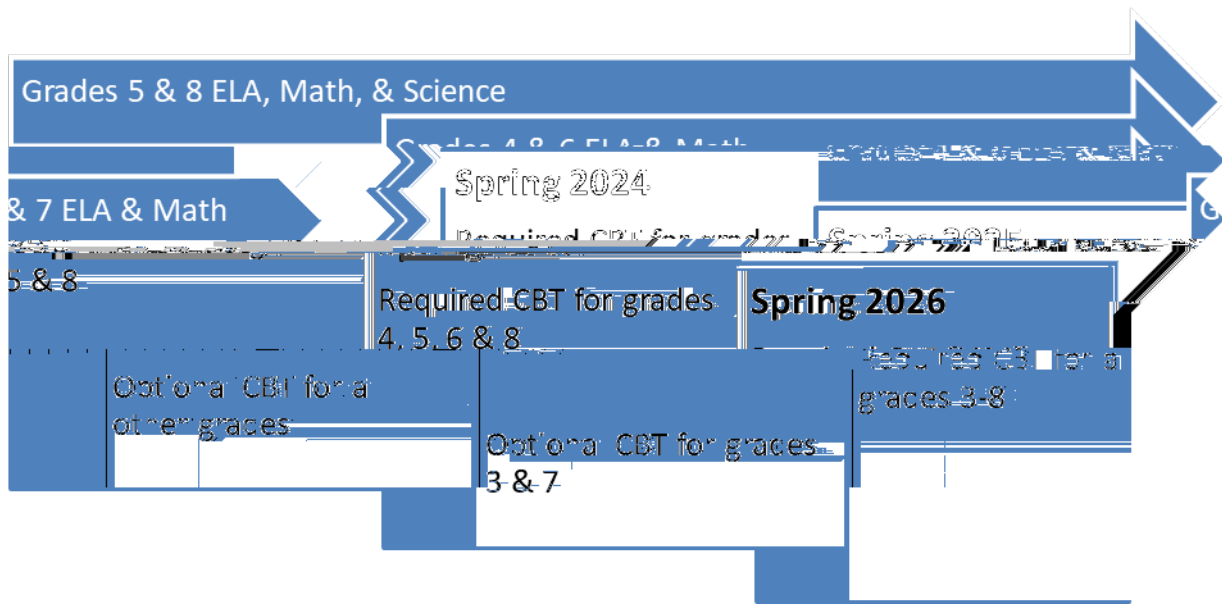
Computer-based testing has be 0 Tdw [(M66.04288 51 ())]T86 (t)-6.4t3g178 0 Tnc)ss4 EM(u

The transition to computer-based testing for the Grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics testing program began with optional participation in computer-based field tests in 2016. This was followed by optional participation in CBT in the spring operational tests in 2017 and schools have been provided the opportunity to choose their testing format since that time. Although technical issues occurred in 2019, NYSED is confident in the contractor's improvement measures including a move to cloud-based servers (Amazon Web Services) and the robust quality assurance steps implemented in preparation for the 2020 test administration which was ultimately cancelled. The Spring 2021 administration period successfully tested over 140,000 students and NYSED is confident in the system capabilities necessary for scaling up participation. Several weeks ago, more than 230,000 students from over 1,000 schools participated in CBT with no significant technical concerns.

In the past two school years, schools and districts have made unprecedented investments in technology infrastructure and educator training to ensure that students could receive instruction in a variety of computer-based modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Historic infusions of federal and state funding in the form of COVID-response grants and state aid increases have made available critical fiscal resources that can assist districts and charter schools needing to upgrade their infrastructure and devices. With the availability of these unprecedented resources, NYSED is moving forward with an implementation plan for computer-based testing that will allow districts to make strategic investments that will support 21st Century teaching, learning, and assessment.

Plans for Full Implementation of CBT in Grades 3-8

Since the introduction of CBT in the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math testing program, the optional nature of participation in CBT for this program has impacted opportunities to fully harness the benefits of testing on computer. Such potential advantages include faster turnaround of student results, additional flexibility in administration windows, reduced administrative preparation, reduction or elimination of standalone field testing, an exploration of adaptive testing models, and fiscal savings for districts. Many of these options reduce burdens on teachers and school staff which can translate into additional instructional time for students.

Grades 5 & 8 ELA, Math, & Science

& 7 ELA & Math

Spring 2024

Required CBT for grades 4, 5, 6 & 8

Spring 2026

Optional CBT for other grades

Optional CBT for grades 3 & 7

The implementation model requires the oldest students in each grade band (i.e., 3-5 and 6-8) to transition to CBT first. Grade 3 students will not be required to test on computer until the final year, Spring 2026. This model has proven successful in many other states that have already fully implemented computer-based testing at the elementary- and intermediate-levels. Additionally, the order of grade-level implementation in each subsequent year ensures that students continue to test on computer once they have started, regardless of the school or district the child attends.

Plans for Implementation of CBT for NYSESLAT & NYSITELL

The implementation of required computer-based testing for the NYSESLAT will also begin in Spring 2024. However, this model will transition fully to CBT that year for all grades, except for Grades K and 1 which will remain as paper-based tests. As with the full implementation of the computer-based NYSAA in one year, NYSED can best support educators and students taking the NYSESLAT if Grades 2-12 transition simultaneously. The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) will also be available on computer for Grades 2-12 beginning in Spring 2024. All schools field testing for the NYSESLAT in Grades 2-12 will move to computer in Spring 2023 in an effort to provide an opportunity for students, teachers, and administrators to become familiar with the testing system prior to full-scale implementation.

Additional Guidance on CBT Implementation

Additional and more specific guidance for the implementation of computer-based Grades 3-8 Tests and NYSESLAT will be forthcoming in the 2022-23 school year. For those schools that have already participated in CBT, there will be very few changes from their current experience. NYSED is grateful for the ongoing partnerships with those schools that have participated in CBT. This work has resulted in the improvement and refinement of CBT administrations. As more schools implement CBT, NYSED looks forward to providing support to ensure a seamless rollout for schools.

Questions about computer-based testing should be directed to the Office of State Assessment via email at CBTsupport@nysed.gov or by calling (518) 474-5902.