



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Mick Zais
Superintendent

1429 Senate Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Elizabeth Jones, Director, Office of Assessment

DATE: November 21, 2014

RE: Update on Assessments for Spring 2015

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) has been actively working with ACT, Inc., to plan for the spring 2015 statewide administration of ACT Aspire™, The ACT®, and the ACT WorkKeys® tests. With the exception of students who are eligible for alternate assessments, ACT Aspire, and The ACT tests in reading, English, writing, and mathematics must be administered to all students in grades 3–8 (ACT Aspire) and grade 11 (The ACT). The ACT WorkKeys must also be administered to all eleventh graders. Eleventh grade students should be determined using the 9GR PowerSchool definition—students in the third year after their initial enrollment in the ninth grade.

In compliance with state statutory requirements, the ACT Aspire and The ACT tests will be administered in paper and pencil format only during spring 2015. Upon the advice of ACT, Inc., ACT WorkKeys will also be offered in paper and pencil format only during spring 2015. Please note, ACT Aspire, The ACT, and the ACT WorkKeys tests are timed tests, which will be a significant change for South Carolina students.

Per ACT, Inc., there are only two spring 2015 options for scheduling The ACT test and make-up dates. The March administration is not possible in that the make-up test date is during spring break for one-third of the districts. The make-up test date for the April administration is not ideal, therefore, the April administration with a May make-up date was chosen. Specific dates for spring 2015 testing are included in the attachment.

Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities – Currently the SCDE and ACT, Inc., are working to address issues related to accommodations and testing students with disabilities, as required by 34 C.F.R. §300.60(b). ACT, Inc., stated that clarification relative to this matter will be provided as soon as possible. Upon resolution of these issues, the SCDE will disseminate immediate guidance to districts and IEP teams.

Alternate Assessments – Students with significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible for alternate assessments will participate in the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) Alternate Assessments in English Language Arts and Mathematics and in the SC-Alt science and

social studies assessments. The NCSC will be administered to alternate assessment eligible students who are ages 8–13 and 16. These are the ages of students who are typically in grades 3–8 and 11. The SC-Alt science and social studies tests will be administered to eligible students who are ages 9–13. Alternate assessment eligible students who are age 16 will not take an alternate science or social studies test in spring 2015.

Science – Each district also has the option of administering the ACT Aspire science test at no cost to the district. The administration of The ACT test to grade 11 students is being funded by the state for accountability purposes. While The ACT science test score is not needed for accountability purposes, students who desire that ACT, Inc. report The ACT composite score to colleges, scholarship agencies, or other entities must take The ACT science test: therefore, districts must offer The ACT science test. The SCPASS science and social studies tests must be administered to students in grades 4–8. The End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP) assessments must be administered in English 1, Algebra1/Mathematics for the Technologies 2, Biology, and U.S. History and the Constitution.

If you have any questions for the Department regarding The ACT or the ACT WorkKeys please contact Kevin Fatica at (803) 734-8282 or kfatica@ed.sc.gov. For questions regarding ACT Aspire please contact Sheila Graybeal at (803) 734-8649 or sgraybea@ed.sc.gov. For questions regarding testing students with disabilities, please contact Suzanne Swaffield at (803) 734-8274 or sswaffie@ed.sc.gov.

For questions concerning ACT process and procedures, please contact ACT as specified below.

The ACT and ACT WorkKeys General Inquiries

Phone: (800) 553-6244, ext. 2800

E-mail: statetesting@act.org

The ACT and ACT WorkKeys Accommodations Questions

Phone: (800) 553-6244, ext. 1788

E-mail: ACTStateAccoms@act.org

ACT Aspire General Inquiries and Accommodations Questions

Phone: (888) 802-7502

E-mail: ACTAspire_Implementation@ACTAspire.org

Attachment

cc: District Test Coordinators
School Test Coordinators
District Special Education Directors/Coordinators